

Nationwide Mass Drug Administration campaign for Lymphatic Filariasis elimination

India on mission mode to eliminate Filaria by 2027

August 13, 2024

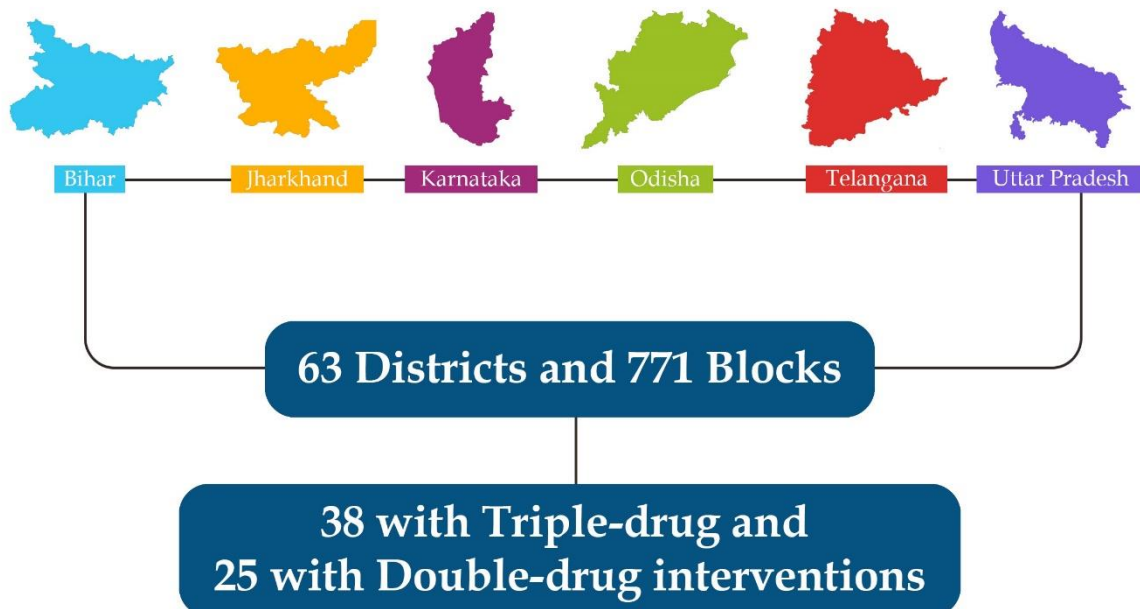
Introduction

Lymphatic filariasis disease is one of the world's leading causes of long-term disability. While it is not fatal, it significantly impairs quality of life, leading to severe physical debility and imposing substantial social and economic burdens on affected individuals, their families, and entire communities. In response, India is undertaking an extensive measure to combat and control the disease by running a massive Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaign.

Nationwide MDA Campaign for Lymphatic Filariasis Elimination

The second phase of the Bi-annual Nationwide Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaign for Lymphatic Filariasis elimination has recently been launched. This phase targets 63 endemic districts in Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh. It involves a door-to-door administration of preventive medications in these areas, pushing India closer to achieving its goal of eliminating Lymphatic Filariasis ahead of the global target.

Second Phase of MDA Campaign 2024



As part of the second phase of the MDA campaign, preventive measures are being implemented across 63 districts (comprising 38 triple-drug and 25 double-drug areas) and 771 blocks in 6 states.

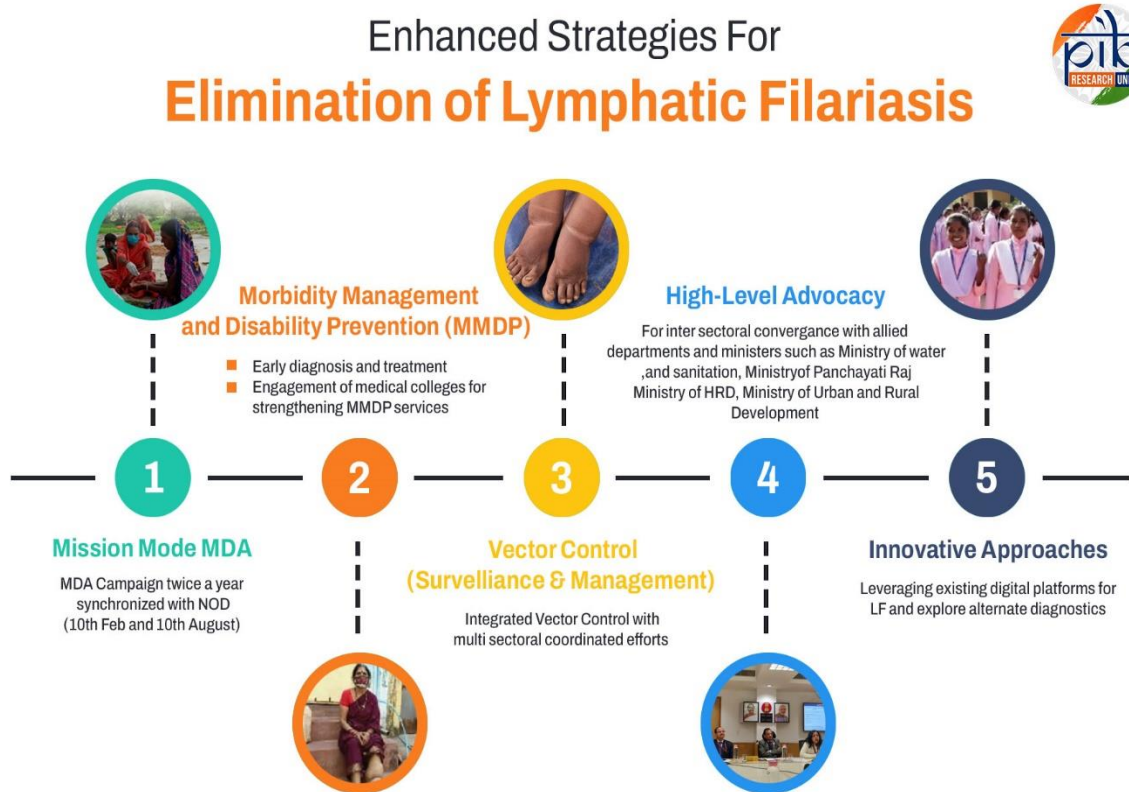
This phase emphasizes not only the distribution of medications but also ensuring their consumption to maximize the campaign's effectiveness and achieve its goals.¹

Notably, the first phase of the Bi-annual MDA campaign 2024, which covered 96 districts across 11 states, achieved a national coverage rate of 95% of the eligible population.

MDA Campaign

India's efforts to eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) have made substantial strides with the introduction of the Enhanced Strategy for LF Elimination by 2027. This strategy incorporates a mission-mode Annual Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaign, held biannually on February 10 and August 10, alongside National Deworming Day (NDD).

India has implemented a comprehensive five-pronged strategy to combat LF, which includes Mission Mode Mass Drug Administration (MDA), Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention (MMDP), Vector Control (Surveillance and Management), High-Level Advocacy, and Innovative Approaches.



Significant Progress in MDA Campaign

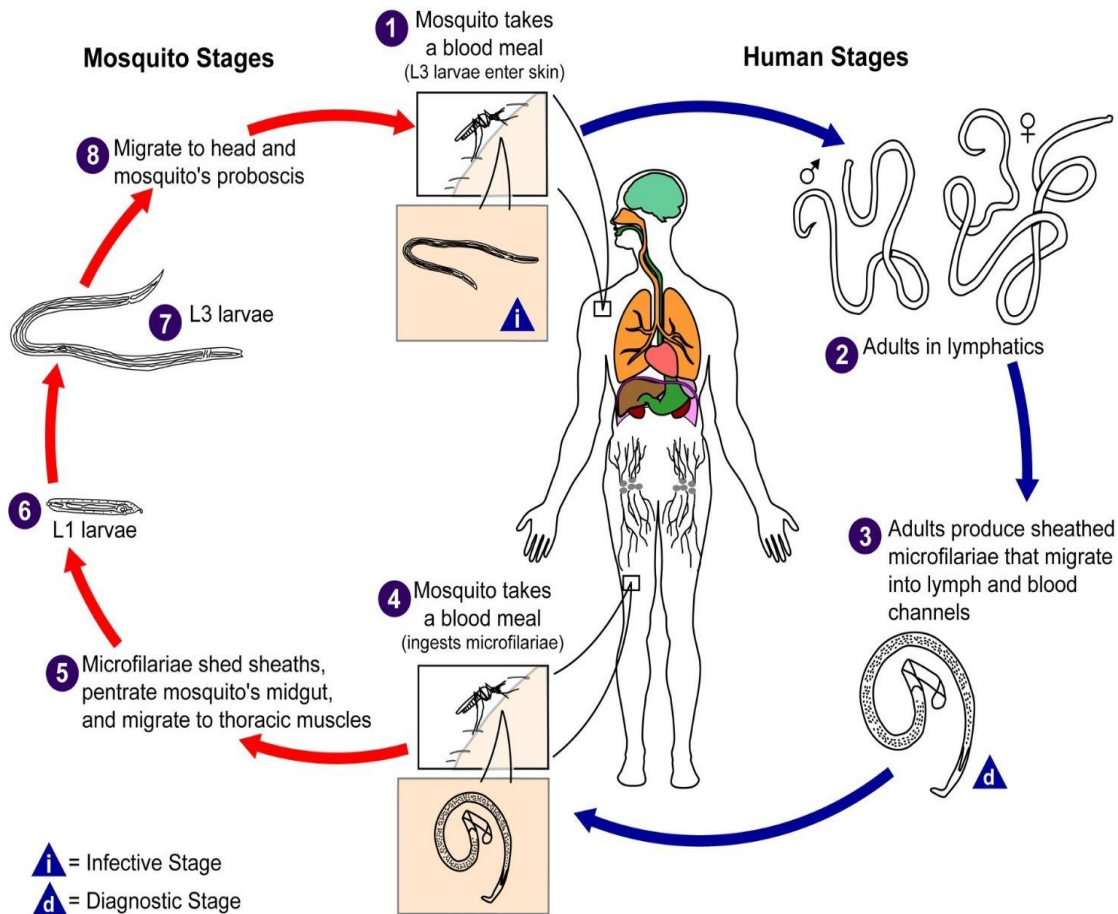
- **MDA Coverage:** In 2023, MDA campaigns reached 82% coverage nationally across 170 districts in 12 states. The first phase of the 2024 campaign achieved a 95% coverage rate in 96 districts across 11 states.

¹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2044057>

- **District Status:** As of now, 138 endemic districts have ceased MDA activities after clearing the Transmission Assessment Survey (TAS 1).

Lymphatic filariasis (LF)

Lymphatic filariasis (LF), commonly known as elephantiasis (Haatipaon), is a debilitating disease transmitted by the bite of a Culex mosquito that breeds in dirty or polluted water.



Life Cycle of Filarial Parasite²

The infection is typically acquired in childhood, causing hidden damage to the lymphatic system. The visible manifestations, such as lymphoedema, elephantiasis, and scrotal swelling (hydrocele), appear later in life and can lead to permanent disability.

As of August 2024, 138 (40%) of the total endemic districts have stopped MDA after clearing the Transmission Assessment Survey (TAS 1).

Additionally, 159 districts across 13 states are conducting Annual Mass Drug Administration, while 41 districts are at various stages of Pre-TAS/TAS. Five districts failed Pre-TAS due to a high microfilariae (mf) rate in 8 blocks, and 2 districts in Assam have postponed MDA to 2025.

² <https://ncvbdc.mohfw.gov.in/WriteReadData/l892s/43461824631532409675.pdf>

Way Forward

India is committed to eliminating Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) by 2027, marking a significant public health goal. With the Bi-annual MDA campaign for Filariasis, India is on its way to achieving the elimination target with intensive efforts to ensure high drug compliance rates and expand its preventive and management strategies.

Public awareness campaigns and community engagement are also being run to support these efforts. Additionally, ongoing research and adaptation of innovative solutions will play a vital role in overcoming obstacles and achieving the ultimate goal of a filariasis-free India.

References:

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Santosh Kumar/ Sarla Meena /Abhinandan Sharma