General Studies-2; Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health,

Malaria cases in India

1) **Introduction**
   - India accounted for 6% of global malaria cases and 7% of deaths caused by it in 2016, according to World Malaria Report 2017 by WHO.
   - In contrast, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan achieved malaria-free status in 2015 and 2016 respectively.
   - India is one of the 15 countries that carry 80% of the global disease burden, according to the report.

2) **Malaria cases in India**
   - In India Malaria deaths in 2016 is the highest in the entire Southeast Asia region.
   - Majority of malaria cases in the country occur in its bordering districts, forests and tribal areas.
   - Odisha, the highest endemic state of India, reported an increase in malaria cases in 2016
   - There has been a spurt in vector-borne diseases among children due to lack of preventive measures.
   - Large number of cases treated in the private sector, are not reported to the government
   - 80% of malaria cases occurring among 20% of India's population in 200 high-risk districts
   - Malaria is not just a serious health issue, it adversely affects socio-economic conditions of the communities.

3) **Key impediments**
   - A key impediment to eliminating malaria is a weak surveillance system.
   - India was able to detect only 8% of cases which shows the poor surveillance mechanism in India
   - Lack of sustainable and predictable international and domestic funding
   - India due to low funding per person at risk and resistance to certain insecticides — is only expected to achieve a 20%-40% reduction.
   - Risks posed by conflict in malaria endemic zones
   - The emergence of a drug-resistant strain of the malaria parasite in south Vietnam which is close to India's north-eastern border
   - Considering India's vast territory, it is often difficult to implement mobile measures during population movement between states and union territories.

4) **National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination**
   - India's National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination was launched recently to eliminate the mosquito-borne infection by stopping local transmission by 2030.
   - The goal is to control the mosquitoes that spread the infection and human exposure to them
   - The focus will be on district-base planning, implementation and monitoring.

5) **Other Countries**
   - Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan were certified malaria-free in 2016, and 21 countries are on track to eliminate malaria by 2020
   - Zambia's "zambitious" goal to be malaria-free by 2021.

6) Way Forward

- A multi-pronged approach, focusing on high-burden areas and vulnerable groups, and supporting states in their efforts to eliminate malaria
- Prevention of infection and early diagnosis and treatment are critical to stop transmission.
- The state governments must declare malaria as a notifiable disease, letting private hospitals to report about it to the health department.
- Robust surveillance and data collection is essential
- To prevent the disease, insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) have been proven very effective
- Scaling up the use of nets and indoor residual spraying and other mosquito-control measures are crucial
- Malaria control is one of the best humanitarian investments
- We need to invest current resources more efficiently and expand overall financing
- Involving the private sector, both formal and informal
- India must learn from the success story of Sri Lanka invoking health diplomacy and get rid of this deadly disease in the coming years.
- Harnessing innovation and research along with monitoring and surveillance, and community participation.

7) Conclusion

- Work has begun, but it needs to be accelerated to meet India's target to eliminate malaria by 2030.