



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Lymphatic Filariasis". This topic has relevance in the Social Issues section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)?

For Mains:

GS 2: Social Issues

Lymphatic Filariasis in India?

Why in the news?

The World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed that the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) has successfully eradicated Lymphatic Filariasis (LF).

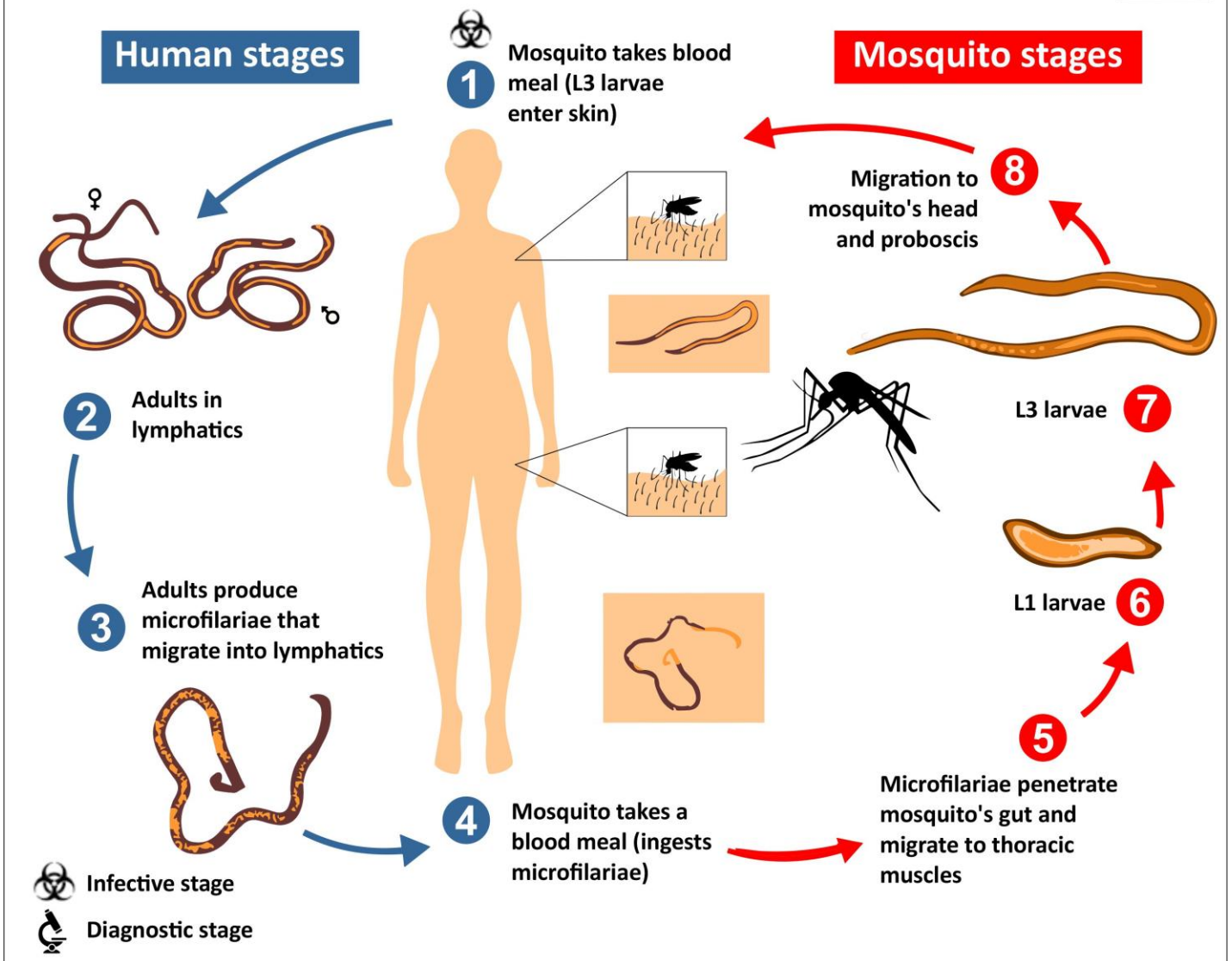
Context

- Lao PDR has eliminated Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) in 2023, becoming the second country to achieve this milestone after Bangladesh.
- This achievement follows the successful elimination of trachoma as a public health hazard in 2017.
- WHO declared this achievement, marking significant progress in combating neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

About Lymphatic Filariasis (LF):

- LF, also known as elephantiasis, is a mosquito-borne infectious disease caused by filarial parasites, including *Wuchereria bancrofti*, *Brugia malayi*, and *B. timori*.
- *Culex* mosquitoes serve as vectors for transmitting these parasites to humans through mosquito bites.
- The parasites invade lymph vessels, leading to conditions such as hydrocele (scrotal swelling) and lymphedema (swelling due to lymph fluid buildup).

Lymphatic Filariasis



Effective Treatment and Global Progress:

- Mass drug administration (MDA) is the most cost-effective approach to treating LF and preventing its transmission.
- WHO recommends a triple therapy combination of ivermectin (I), diethylcarbamazine (D), and albendazole (A) for MDA against LF.
- Multiple rounds of MDA, covering over 65 percent of the population in LF-endemic areas, are necessary for success.
- Over the last 15 years, the global population requiring LF interventions has decreased by 53 percent due to the Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis initiated in 2000.

Lymphatic Filariasis in India:

- India is actively working to eliminate LF, with certain states bearing a significant disease burden.
- States like Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, and Bihar account for approximately 60 percent of lymphedema cases in India.

- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare launched a nationwide campaign called “Sarva Dawa Sevan” or Mass Drug Administration (MDA) in high-burden districts across states like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra.
- India’s goal is to eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis by 2027, three years ahead of the global target, showing a strong commitment to combating the disease.

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding Lymphatic Filariasis (LF):

1. Lymphatic Filariasis is a mosquito-borne infectious disease
2. It is caused by filarial virus

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Consider the following statements regarding Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) and its treatment:

1. Culex mosquitoes serve as vectors for transmitting Lymphatic Filariasis to humans through mosquito bites.
2. The triple therapy combination for Lymphatic Filariasis includes ivermectin, diethylcarbamazine, and albendazole.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: C

Q.3 Examine the efforts and challenges faced by India in its quest to eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) by 2027.

Rishabh

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE VERDICT

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “Same-Sex Marriage Verdict”. This topic has relevance in the “Polity and Governance” section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

*Fundamental Rights under Art 21?
Special Marriage Act?*

For Mains:

*GS1: Society
GS2: Polity and Governance
GS2: Social Justice*

*Institution of Marriage?
Impact of Same-Sex Marriage?
Rights of Homosexual Individuals*

Why in the news?

A five-judge panel of the Supreme Court delivered a judgment regarding petitions advocating for the rights of LGBTQ community members to marry and make family-related choices.

Same-Sex Marriage

- Same-sex marriages involve two individuals of the same gender. They are not legally recognised in India.
- This matter is crucial as it pertains to the fundamental human rights of LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and many other terms), recognising and safeguarding their relationships.
- Legalising same-sex marriage would not only grant legal status and protection to LGBTQ+ couples but also foster societal acceptance and diminish discrimination.

Plea for Marriage Equality

- On November 14th, 2022, two same-sex couples filed writ petitions in the Supreme Court seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriages in India.
- The petitions were centred around the constitutionality of the Special Marriage Act of 1954 (the Act).

Critical Issues in the Case:

1. **Is marriage a fundamental right for LGBTQ+ individuals?**
2. **Does excluding LGBTQ+ marriages from the Special Marriage Act 1954 constitute discrimination under Article 14 of the Constitution?**
3. **Do the LGBTQ+ couples have the right to adopt?**
4. **Can LGBTQ+ couples be allowed to enter into a civil union?**

Verdict of the Supreme Court

- A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court presided over by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud declined to confer legal recognition to same-sex marriages.
- In a split decision, two judges, including the CJI and Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, acknowledged the possibility of civil unions for queer couples but constituted the minority opinion.
- Meanwhile, the majority, consisting of three judges, asserted that the matter squarely falls within the legislature's jurisdiction.

Summary of Judgement of the Supreme Court

Aspect	Supreme Court Judgment Summary
Marriage as a Fundamental Right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate on marriage as a fundamental right. • CJI Chandrachud disagreed, emphasizing legal regulation's significance. • Majority agreed.
Special Marriage Act Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-neutral interpretation plea for the Special Marriage Act. • CJI Chandrachud opposed, while Justice Bhat concurred with exclusion of same-sex couples.
Queer Couples' Right to Adopt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge against CARA's adoption guidelines. • CJI struck down specific rules, highlighting discrimination against queer couples. • Majority acknowledged discrimination and called for legislative action.
Civil Unions for Queer Couples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing debate on civil unions for LGBTQ+ couples. • CJI suggested a committee to determine rights, while Justice Bhat emphasized community choice without prescribing.

- **Marriage a fundamental right**
 - Petitioners argued for recognising a fundamental right to marry a person of one's choice under the Constitution. This recognition would place an obligation on the state to protect this right.
 - **Minority View (CJI Chandrachud)**
 - Disagreed with the petitioners, stating that marriage may not be fundamental but gains significance through regulation.
 - Marriage's importance is linked to the benefits it provides through legal regulation.
 - **Majority View (Agreed with CJI)**
 - Distinguished between what is "fundamentally important to an individual" and an enforceable fundamental right.
 - Personal preference and social status are fundamental to marriage but don't necessarily justify it as a fundamental right.
- **Special Marriage Act Interpretation**
 - The case pleads for a gender-neutral interpretation of the Special Marriage Act (SMA), which governs civil marriages.
 - SMA, enacted in 1954, enables inter-faith or inter-caste marriages without religious conversion.
 - Petitioners sought to interpret "marriage" as between "spouses" rather than "man and woman" or remove gender-restrictive SMA provisions.
 - **Minority View (CJI Chandrachud)**
 - Opposed expansive interpretation, considering it a legislative matter.
 - Reading down SMA could risk hindering marriages of people from different religions and castes.
 - **Majority View (Justice Bhat)**
 - Concurred with the conclusion.

- SMA's provisions and objectives intend civil marriage for heterosexual couples from different faiths, excluding same-sex couples.
- **Queer Couples' Right to Adopt a Child**
 - Petitioners argued that Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) guidelines prohibiting unmarried couples from joint adoption discriminate against queer couples.
 - **Minority View (CJI)**
 - - Struck down specific CARA regulations, asserting they don't exclude unmarried couples from adopting.
 - Believed that the exclusion of same-sex couples reinforces disadvantages faced by the queer community and shouldn't be based on individuals' sexuality.
 - **Majority View**
 - Acknowledged discrimination against queer couples in adoption.
 - Agreed that marital status doesn't make someone morally superior or a better parent.
 - Noted that legislative changes should be addressed by the parliament and executive, as protections and entitlements often stem from marriage in various laws.
- **Civil Unions for Queer Couples**
 - There was ongoing debate over recognising civil unions for LGBTQ+ couples as an interim measure.
 - Several US states allowed civil unions before full marriage rights were granted by the US Supreme Court.
 - Petitioners argued that civil unions are not a sufficient alternative to marriage and could convey inequality.
 - **Minority View (CJI)**
 - Linked the right to form intimate relationships with freedom of speech and expression.
 - Advocated for recognising a range of entitlements from such relationships.
 - Mentioned forming a committee to determine rights for queer couples in unions.
 - **Majority View (Justice Bhat)**
 - Disagreed with the idea of prescribing a "choice" of civil unions.
 - The state should facilitate this choice for those who desire it, allowing the community to agree on the outcome.

The road ahead for granting marriage rights to LGBTQ+ couples and establishing civil unions is intricate. This involves crafting new laws and revising existing ones, a substantial legal reform requiring careful consideration, consultations, and thorough drafting. It also requires a significant shift in the perspective on family law.

Sources:

[Why Supreme Court's same-sex marriage verdict opens no doors for queer people | Explained News – The Indian Express](#)

Q1. With reference to the Special Marriage Act, consider the following statements:

1. The Act enables inter-faith or inter-caste marriages without religious conversion.
2. The minimum age for marriage under SMA is 21 years for both males and females.
3. After marrying under the SMA, an individual is considered separate from their family concerning rights such as inheritance.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. Right to clean air
2. Right to enter into a relationship
3. Right to privacy
4. Right to Marriage

How many of the abovementioned rights are under the scope of Article 21?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (c)

Q3. Discuss the constitutional and legal challenges associated with recognising same-sex marriages in India.

Gaurav

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