

Cancer in India

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Cancer in India: Burden, Policies, and Solutions

Context

- Cancer is a **major public health issue**, with **1 in 9 Indians** at risk (ICMR, 2023).
- A recent **ICMR study** found that people near **river drains** face **higher cancer risk** due to heavy metal contamination.
- **Cancer cases in India may rise to 15.7 lakh by 2025**, with late diagnosis and high treatment costs worsening the burden.

What is Cancer?

- A disease where **abnormal cells grow uncontrollably** and spread to other parts.
- Common types: **Carcinoma (Lung, Breast), Leukemia, Lymphoma, Sarcoma, Melanoma.**
- **Stages:**
 - **Stage I-III:** Localized or spread to nearby tissues.
 - **Stage IV:** Cancer has spread to distant organs.

Government Initiatives

1. Tertiary Care Cancer Facilities Scheme

- **Launched:** 2013-14 under NPCDCS.
- **Objective:** Strengthen tertiary cancer care.
- **Funding:** Up to ₹120 Cr for SCIs & ₹45 Cr for TCCCs (60:40 Centre-State; 90:10 for Northeast).

2. Ayushman Bharat - PM-JAY

- Covers **₹5 lakh per family per year**.
- Includes **Medical, Surgical & Radiation Oncology**.
- Covers all **senior citizens (70+)**, irrespective of income.

3. PM Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)

- **Low-cost generic medicines** via PMBJKs.
- Reduces **cancer drug costs by 50-90%**.

4. AMRIT Initiative

- Provides **cancer medicines at 60-70% discounts**.
 - Operates **190+ pharmacies** in major hospitals.
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Challenges

- **75% of cases detected late** (Stage III or IV).
 - **High treatment costs & lack of specialists**.
 - **Limited cancer hospitals** (62 for 1.4 billion people).
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Way Forward

- **Strengthening early detection & screening**.
 - **Expanding affordable treatment options**.
 - **Boosting cancer research & awareness campaigns**.
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Conclusion

Cancer remains a **growing challenge**, requiring **stronger prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment expansion** to reduce mortality and improve health outcomes.



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