Smart cities must have a vector control component, says health ministry official

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New Delhi: The smart cities must have a vector control component which needs to be included in strategic planning for urban development, said a top government official from Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at ASSOCHAM Dialogue on Protecting Communities: Vector Control in Action summit held in New Delhi.

Globally, around 80% of the entire population is at risk of one or more vector-borne diseases. While, 77% of the global burden of communicable disease is attributable to VBDs as well, said Dr N S Dharmshaktu, Principal Advisor on Public Health, Health Ministry.

“We need web based reporting on Vector Borne Diseases (VBDs). Also, make malaria treatment training mandatory for Doctors & Public Health Workers”, said Dr Dharmshaktu.

Addressing the inaugural address Dr P K Sen, Director, NVBDCP, Health Ministry said, about 60% decline in Malaria cases in 2018 so far compared to the same time in 2017. With the steady decline of malaria cases in India, the signs are positive that its prevention and control

measure are working effectively.

Additionally, facilitating the adoption of integrated vector management and ensuring the implementation of vector control services in rural and urban areas can shrink the disease burden much faster in India, added Dr P K Sen.

He further said the cases of dengue rising globally whereas mortality has reduced from 3%-4% to below 1%, said Dr P K Sen.

In his address, ASSOCHAM's secretary general, Mr Uday Kumar Varma lauded the commendable work done by the governments, both at the centre and in the states in bringing down the transmission intensity of vector-borne diseases in our country.

He also said that determination on both sides i.e. the government and the private sector would go a long way in further containing the spread of vector-borne diseases and reversing the trend by effectively dealing with challenges like dearth of skilled manpower and promoting use of latest advancements in medical technology.

Dr Arun Kumar, Head of Environmental Science, Bayer South Asia said, Vector Borne Diseases (VBDs) pose a significant risk to India due to rapid urbanization, increased movement of people and goods & environmental changes. These diseases impede economic development through direct medical costs and indirect costs such as loss of productivity, in addition to enormous mortality. All the common VBDs are preventable and Vector Control along with community education can play a significant role in disease prevention.

At Bayer, we are actively engaged in helping organizations across the globe to sustainably manage insect vectors, which transmit diseases and cause human sickness and mortality. Bayer has recently signed "Zero by 40," a global declaration with the vision to eradicate Malaria by 2040 through research, development and supply of innovative Vector Control solutions, said Dr Arun Kumar.

Mr Matloob Hassan, Director, Azoth Analytics said, Vector-borne diseases pose a major public health problem around the world. Globally, more than 347 million cases of vector-borne diseases including Malaria, Dengue, Chikungunya, Kala-azar, Japanese Encephalitis, Lymphatic Filariasis and Zika, were reported in the year 2017. Therefore, diminishing their impact is a worldwide priority.