



India's Vaccination Success Story

For Prelims: Vaccination, Public health Interventions, Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), National Health Family Survey, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Universal Immunization Programme (UIP), Mission Indradhanush, Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV), Accredited Social Health Activist.

For Mains: Significance of Indian Vaccination Programmes.

Why in News?

As India has achieved remarkable feats with **childhood vaccination and continues to do so with Covid-19 vaccination**.

- It has overcome challenges across time and geography to **reach much of its population**, ensure last-mile delivery, finance a sustained large-scale operation at the government level, and develop and sustain trust among the people.

What is Vaccination?

▪ About:

- The act of **administering the vaccine into the body** to help the immune system develop immunity from a disease is **termed as vaccination**.
 - Vaccination is one of the most **cost-effective public health interventions**, which saves lives by protecting people, especially children, from dreadful vaccine-preventable diseases.

▪ Significance:

- According to a recent study, vaccines have **prevented up to 3.7 crore deaths** in the last 20 years in low- and middle-income countries alone.
- **Economic and Social Benefit:**
 - It's estimated that for every rupee invested in immunization against 10 pathogens in **Lower Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)** from 2021-30, the return on investment will be 52 rupees.
- Since the discovery of the smallpox vaccine over two centuries ago, vaccines have effectively reduced the burden of diseases such as polio, measles, tetanus, whooping cough, influenza, and lately, Covid-19.

What are the India's Achievements in Vaccination?

▪ Background:

- India has a long history of successful vaccination with historical accounts of inoculation dating back to the 18th century.
 - After being declared smallpox-free in 1977, India launched the **Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI)** in 1978 and introduced the Bacillus Calmette-Guérin vaccine (**BCG**), Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (**DPT**), and Oral

poliovirus vaccines (**OPV**) vaccines.

- [National Health Family Survey \(NHFS\) Data](#):
 - The childhood vaccination rates have consistently improved over the last two decades with the proportion of children who are **'fully vaccinated' reaching 76% as per the latest National Health Family Survey.**

▪ **Initiatives and Achievements:**

- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**
 - India has consistently **contributed to the global [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)** by focusing on the immunization of newborns, infants, children, and pregnant women.
- **Universal Immunization Programme (UIP):**
 - Under it, India provides **vaccines against 11 diseases nationally and one disease sub-nationally.**
 - Further, targeting close to 2.7 crore newborns and 2.9 crore pregnant women every year.
- **Mass immunization campaigns:**
 - India launched an ambitious **Measles-Rubella (MR)** vaccination drive and **vaccinated over 3 crore children in three years** which **prevented** tens of thousands of **measles deaths** in children.
- **Mission Indradhanush:**
 - Since 2014, immunization activities have been intensified with catch-up rounds such as [Mission Indradhanush](#) **to ensure that full immunization coverage of 90% is achieved and sustained across the country.**
- The **Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)** was introduced and scaled up using Made-in-India vaccines to prevent rotaviral diarrhea and pneumococcal pneumonia in children.
- **Use of Technology:**
 - The use of technology like the **Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN)** system that digitizes the entire vaccine stock management, their logistics and temperature tracking at all levels of vaccine storage from national to the sub-district.
- A multi-faceted approach by the government helped the **entire population to achieve public ownership to be [polio-free](#) in 2014.**

What were the challenges faced by India during various vaccination drives?

- **Supply chain disruption during Covid-19:**
 - During the pandemic, lockdowns led to **disruptions in routine immunization services and the closure of health facilities.**
- **Vaccination Hesitancy:**
 - There was global collaboration to bring out vaccines at an unprecedented speed, also observed an **'infodemic-fueled' vaccine hesitancy in people who previously trusted vaccines.**

What are the Reasons for India's Success in Vaccination?

- **Capacity Building in Health:**
 - India has built up its **biomedical enterprise including research and development, and manufacturing capacity.**
 - The indigenously produced Rotavirus and PCV vaccines, and the speed with which India was able to indigenously produce two Covid-19 vaccines, are examples of the return on these investments.
- **Infrastructure:**
 - India also built its delivery infrastructure by **establishing cold chain systems**, and by developing and training a community health cadre of workers who established last-mile services.
- **Behavioural Communication campaign:**
 - The infrastructural developments were accompanied by an improvement on the **demand side through social and behavioural communication campaigns.**
- **Creating Awareness and Engagement:**

- India uses various available platforms of communication to convey consistent and accurate information.
- Community health workers such as **Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHAs)** and **Anganwadi workers** go door-to-door to provide information and identify the missed-out children and pregnant women for any due dose.
- While **national leaders and celebrities spreading messages through mass media has proven to be useful**, engagement with local community influencers who are “closer” to people has also tremendously helped build vaccine confidence.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question:

Prelims:

Q. ‘Mission Indradhanush’ launched by the Government of India pertains to (2016)

- (a) immunization of children and pregnant women
- (b) construction of smart cities across the country
- (c) India’s own search for the Earth-like planets in outer space
- (d) New Educational Policy

Ans: A

Exp:

- **Mission Indradhanush is an immunization scheme launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GoI on 25th December, 2014.**
- Depicting seven colours of the rainbow, it aimed to cover all those children by 2020 who are either unvaccinated, or are partially vaccinated against seven vaccine preventable diseases which include diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, measles and hepatitis B.
- The mission is technically supported by WHO, UNICEF, Rotary International and other donor partners. **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

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