

Mission Indradhanush

Full immunization against preventable childhood diseases is the right of every child. With a view to provide this right to every child, the Government of India launched the Universal Immunization Program (UIP) in 1985, one of the largest health programs of its kind in the world.

Despite being operational for over 30 years, UIP has been able to fully immunize only 65% children in the first year of their life and the increase in coverage has stagnated in the past 5 years to an average of 1% every year. To strengthen and invigorate the program and achieve full immunization coverage for all children at a rapid pace, the Government of India launched Mission Indradhanush in December 2014.

Mission Indradhanush will ensure that all children under the age of two years and pregnant women are fully immunized with all available vaccines.

Why Full Immunization is Essential?

Simply put - because children are dying due to entirely preventable diseases.

Every year in India, 5 lakh children die due to vaccine-preventable diseases.

Another 89 lakh children remain at risk, because they are either unimmunized or partially immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Partially immunized and unimmunized children are most susceptible to childhood diseases and are at a much higher risk of dying as compared to fully immunized children. If that were not reason enough, immunizing children can go well beyond saving individual lives. It can help in preventing large-scale outbreaks of diseases as well as keeping the disease under control in an area, thus reducing the stress on an already burdened health system.

Thus, full immunization is critical if we want to reduce child mortality and progress on socio-economic indicators.

Mission Indradhanush: Goals and Rationale

The ultimate goal of Mission Indradhanush is to ensure full immunization with all available vaccines for children up to two years and pregnant women.

The Mission is strategically designed to achieving high quality routine immunization coverage while contributing to strengthening health systems that can be sustained over years to come. In the last few years, India's full immunization coverage has increased only by 1% per year. The Mission has been launched to accelerate the process of immunization and achieve full immunization coverage for all children in the country. The Government has identified 201 high focus districts across 28 states in the country that have the highest number of partially immunized and unimmunized children.

Mission Indradhanush will target these districts through intensive efforts and special immunization drives to improve the routine immunization coverage in the country.