

India has achieved 99% DTP3 coverage in first quarter of 2021, highest coverage recorded till date

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There have been some media reports alleging that lakhs of Indian children may have missed their routine vaccinations due to disruptions caused by COVID-19 leading to increased risk of future outbreaks and deaths.

These reports are not based on facts and do not reflect the true picture.

It is clarified that since the outbreak of the pandemic, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been focused towards maintaining essential services including immunization under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP). The Ministry along with all States and UTs and development partners, has worked towards mitigating negative impacts of COVID-19 and taking urgent actions to ensure that children receive life-saving vaccines under UIP.

Furthermore, as a result of commitment of Government of India and public health workforce, the country has achieved 99% DTP3 coverage in the first quarter of 2021 (January - March) as measured by HMIS. This is the highest DTP3 coverage measured till date.

In order to mitigate negative impacts of COVID-19 on vaccination services, many other steps have also been taken. These include:

- A national guideline to safely continue immunisation services during the COVID-19 pandemic, including polio Supplementary Immunisation Activities (SIAs), has been developed.
- State and district level trainings on new guidelines are conducted to ensure safe delivery of vaccines as per COVID-19 guidelines and keeping CAB in mind.
- In order to identify reasons for missed vaccine doses, monitoring & supervision is being done by state and district task forces for prompt corrective action.
- High risk groups/areas (e.g. children who missed vaccination during COVID-19 outbreaks, districts with high vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs), districts with low vaccine coverage, etc.) for risk mitigation have been identified.
- Intensified Mission Indradhanush (Intensified Immunisation Drive) in identified 250 high risk districts was conducted wherein more than 9.5 lakh children and 2.24 lakh pregnant women were vaccinated.
- One national immunisation round and two sub-national rounds have been conducted to maintain high population immunity against polio.
- A Risk Communication and Community Engagement Strategy (RCCE) for COVID-19 has been developed and implemented. Integrated communication messaging for uptake of essential services including immunization which includes the urban area and RCCE capacity building modules has also

been developed and implemented for frontline workers and line department functionaries.

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