Improving Immunization and VPD Surveillance following COVID-19 Pandemic - India

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WHO declared COVID pandemic on 11 March 2020
- India locked down on 24 March 2020
- More than 31.7 million cases (second highest globally) and 425,000 deaths reported

15 April 2020 MHA order: All health services – including immunization are essential and need to be functional nationwide

MoH issued guidelines to undertake safe vaccination during the COVID pandemic restrictions
Immunization Guidelines

• Micro-plans modified to identify immunization sites beyond containment zones and COVID care centers

• Guidance issued to procure additional logistics required to prevent COVID transmission at session sites

• COVID-appropriate behaviours implemented at session sites:
  - Face-mask, sanitizer, soap and water, dis-infection of seating
  - Staggered vaccination of beneficiaries for social distancing
Nearly 1.6 million ANMs and ASHAs trained on COVID infection prevention and control – helped to resume safe immunization during the pandemic.
High Population Immunity Maintained to Sustain Polio Free Status

- Polio Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs) continued during the pandemic:
  - 1 NID + 1 SNIDs each year (Second SNID planned in September 2021)
- SIA guidelines revised to include infection prevention measures during vaccination
  - Micro-plans updated and Health-workers oriented
- 417 million doses of OPV administered through SIAs in 2020 and 2021

SIA Quality Maintained: More than 97 % children found vaccinated at the end of activity

**Monitoring- Jan 2021 NID**
Number of children checked: 332,000
Percent Found vaccinated 97.2%

Source: End-of-round survey
Intensified Mission Indradhanush: Reaching Children who have Missed Vaccination During the Pandemic

Data triangulated for risk prioritization:
- Immunization coverage
- VPD surveillance data
- Other demographic risk factors

250 high risk districts identified for Intensified Mission Indradhanush
- 1 million children and 224,000 pregnant women vaccinated during Feb-March 2021

Coverage improvement plans for 192 medium risk districts
Continued Programme Reviews to Monitor Implementation During the Pandemic

More than 200 state task force and 4000 district task force meetings reviewed immunization programme during Jan 2020 - April 2021

Reviews conducted with programme officers in 16 key states.
COVID Appropriate Behaviors Practiced at Session Sites, 2020-21, India

- Staggered approach to avoid overcrowding
  - Yes: 87%
  - No: 13%

- Physical distancing followed at session
  - Yes: 74%
  - No: 26%

- Care givers wearing face mask
  - None: 24%
  - Some: 40%
  - All: 36%

- Vaccinators wearing face mask
  - Yes: 90%
  - No: 10%

Source: RI Concurrent Monitoring Data (July 2020 to March 2021)
N=216,500
Highest ever Penta-3 coverage achieved between Jan - March 2021

*Data Source: HMIS data on 30 June 2021
Deep dive undertaken (27July - 5 Aug) to identify reasons for delayed and missed vaccination to guide corrective actions

Improvement planning based on specific reasons

14 districts

In 7 states identified for deep dive
Impact of COVID on Surveillance Sensitivity

Number of cases

* Data as on 31 July 2021
Review conducted in 12 districts based on regional representation, population size, surveillance indicator performance, and VPD cases/outbreaks

- 144 health facilities included in review

Interviews conducted:
- 241 medical officers (MO)
- 148 frontline workers (FLW)
- 286 caregivers

Key findings
- During March-July 2020, OPD load decreased 61% and AFP cases decreased by 72% as compared with same time period in 2019
- 99% MOs reported that they did not miss any AFP case during May-July 2020
- FLWs and parents stated they would seek healthcare for AFP during pandemic and seek health care near their home (PHCs, CHCs, private facilities)
Corrective Actions Taken for Strengthening of VPD Surveillance

- **Active case searches** (telephonic and in-person where feasible)
- **Network aligned** to altered health seeking behavior during the pandemic
- **Sensitization** of FLWs and mobilisers to report VPDs
- **Engagement** of private health facilities, faith healers and quacks
- **WhatsApp videos** on VPD surveillance created for MOs and FLWs
- **Surveillance data review** for appropriate action
Innovations to Maintain Surveillance Sensitivity during travel Restrictions

Active Case Searches (ACS)

- **2019**: 100%
- **2020**: 81%
- **2021**: 25%

Surveillance Workshops

- **2019**: 100%
- **2020**: 79%
- **2021**: 18%

Telephonic ACS and virtual workshops were innovated to adapt to COVID restrictions

* data as on 31 July 2021
Summary

• India reported second highest number of COVID cases globally
  - Two waves observed with restrictions imposed

• Immunization and surveillance included under essential health service
  - Services resumed during restrictions following infection prevention measures

• Efforts being made to maintain surveillance sensitivity
  - Surveillance network aligned to modified health seeking behaviour
  - Efforts being made to sustain surveillance improvements

• Efforts being made to identify, and reach missed children
  - Surveillance, immunization and demographic factors used for risk prioritization
  - Observations of deep dive to develop strengthening plan

• Highest ever immunization coverage reached during Jan- March 2021

• MoHFW remains committed to reach every last child in the country
Thanks