



Reaching devotees with immunization during Ajmer Urs

During the Ajmer Urs more than 10,414 children were immunized and 102 resistant families mobilized for polio vaccination. The event, a commemorative celebration held in the memory of Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti a highly respected sufi saint, saw a turn out of 2,00,000 devotees from West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Nepal and Uttar Pradesh. As per tradition the devotees halt at the dargah in Bareilly and thereafter proceed to Ajmer via Delhi.

To ensure that not a single child is missed the Uttar Pradesh health department, WHO-NPSP and the SMNet deployed 15 teams for 10 days at all the critical entry and exit points and worked together to motivate devotees to immunize their children. A health camp for devotees was set up with the support of T.T.K, a non governmental organisation. Polio material such as banners and posters were displayed on the Ala Hazrat Express ferrying devotees from Bareilly to Ajmer. Simultaneously the intervention was coordinated in Uttaranchal and Rajasthan.



The Ala Hazrat Express displays the polio banner and posters

Imam motivates families for Routine Immunization drive

Maulana Mohd. Masoom, the Imam of Chakhamid village in Begusarai district of Bihar, has been actively supporting the polio programme for several years. Every Friday after prayers, he holds meetings near the local mosque and asks people to get their children regularly vaccinated.

With his support the RI status of children in the village has improved, with lesser number of drop-outs.



Maulana Mohd Masoom in a meeting with parents

Jalsa at Samastipur advocates for immunization

SMNet organised a jalsa (congregation) to advocate for polio and routine immunization from 20-22 June in Morwa Sharif, Bithan Block of Samastipur district of Bihar. Nearly 10,000 people participated from across the state and 149 children were immunized. Meetings were conducted with Imam and madarsa teachers. Announcements were made encouraging people to vaccinate their children and polio and routine immunization posters and banners were displayed at prominent places during the Jalsa.



Children holding a banner during the jalsa

DID YOU KNOW ?

- ◆ The transmission of the most dangerous type 1 polio (P1) dropped to record low levels in 2010 with UP not reporting any P1 case since November 2009 and Bihar since September 2010.
- ◆ This year India has reported one case of P1 while there were 9 P1 and 20 P3 cases last year during the same period.
- ◆ The first and only wild poliovirus type 3 (WPV3) in Asia in 2011 has been reported from Pakistan with onset of paralysis in a 16-month-old child on 9 June in the difficult-to-access Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region.

From brick kiln chimneys to polio towers

To constantly remind the high-risk population of the brick kiln workers about the importance of polio immunization, polio messages are now being printed on the brick kilns of Bihar. The message reads: "Polio-free India. Two drops of protection. Every child every time." The size and height of the chimneys makes the messages visible from a distance.



One of the chimneys with the polio message

AWW counsels families on Infant & Young Child Feeding practices

Chandrawati Devi, an AWW of Imadpur village in Gadhpura block, Begusarai, Bihar has been working tirelessly to educate the womenfolk of her area on infant and young child feeding practices. Having been trained by UNICEF on child care practices, she tracks every newborn child and counsels the mother & caregivers on the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding, diarrhea management and the use of zinc and ORS.



Chandrawati counsels a mother on child care practices

OUR STAR MOBILIZERS



Kanchan interacting with women and the social map she has drawn

Kanchan Kumari is a CMC from Bihar polio high risk Khagaria district where flooding during the rainy season increases the number of missed children. A highly motivated CMC working in Baluahi area Kanchan ensures no child is left unimmunized. She has prepared an excellent area profile which includes a detailed social map. This helps her identify resistant families and chalk out a targeted plan to counsel them with the help of local influencers. Her creatively done up diary lists out Anganwadi Centres in her area, SMNet representatives of the sub-region, local influencers, ANMs, supervisors, private health facilities/ hospitals, schools/ colleges, temples and mosques in the area.

The sincerity with which Kanchan regularly updates her area profile reflects her commitment and dedication to eradicating polio. She is among the many CMCs who form the core of the SMNet and ensure that every last child is reached with polio vaccination.

Tracking nomadic congregation for polio immunization

A nomadic congregation in Uttar Pradesh's high risk Ghaziabad district provided a platform to immunize 2647 children. UNICEF's SMNet with support of government and partners counselled groups which came from Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh for the Pooth mela. They camped around the shrine of Late Hukum Singh Bajaniya, a deified figure worshipped by the community. Polio banners were displayed at strategic points, health camps organized and A/V shows screened during the week long event.



A member of the nomadic community with her recently immunised child

QUOTABLE

"Now it all comes down to this: The final chapter, the final push in the fight to rid the world of a killer that has devastated millions of lives. And we all have the truly historic opportunity - the historic duty - to write that final chapter together and eradicate polio forever."

Anthony Lake
Executive Director
UNICEF

POLIO FACTS

For the first time India has not reported any case of polio for seven consecutive months. This is the longest period in the history of polio eradication in India.

There has been no case of polio this year since the case reported from the Panchla block of Howrah in West Bengal on 13 January.