



Polio Eradication

For Prelims: Polio, UN Sustainable Development Goals

For Mains: Polio and Initiatives to Eradicate it, Government Policies & Interventions

Why in News?

Recently, global leaders confirmed USD 2.6 billion in funding toward the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative's \(GPEI\) 2022-2026 Strategy](#) to end polio at the **World Health Summit in Berlin**.

What is the World Health Summit?

- The World Health Summit is an **international health conference**.
- WHS 2022 **aimed to strengthen exchange, stimulate innovative solutions** to health challenges, position global health as a key political issue and promote a global health conversation in the spirit of the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).

What is Polio?

- **About:**
 - Polio is a **crippling and potentially deadly viral infectious disease** that affects the nervous system.
 - There are three individual and immunologically distinct wild poliovirus strains:
 - Wild Poliovirus type 1 (WPV1)
 - Wild Poliovirus type 2 (WPV2)
 - Wild Poliovirus type 3 (WPV3)
 - Symptomatically, all three strains are identical, in that they cause irreversible paralysis or even death. However, there are genetic and virological differences, which make these three strains separate viruses which must each be eradicated individually.
- **Spread:**
 - The virus is **transmitted person-to-person mainly through the faecal-oral route** or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (for example, through contaminated water or food).
 - It **largely affects children under 5 years of age**. The virus multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Most people with polio do not feel sick. Some people have only minor symptoms, such as fever, tiredness, nausea, headache, pain in the arms and legs, etc.
 - In rare cases, polio infection causes permanent loss of muscle function (paralysis).
 - Polio can be fatal if the muscles used for breathing are paralysed or if there is an infection of the brain.
- **Prevention and Cure:**

- There is no cure, but it can be prevented through **Immunisation**.
- **Vaccines:**
 - **Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV):** It is given orally as a birth dose for institutional deliveries, then primary three doses at 6, 10 and 14 weeks and one booster dose at 16-24 months of age.
 - **Injectable Polio Vaccine (IPV):** It is introduced as an additional dose along with the 3rd dose of **DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus)** under the **Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)**.
- **India & Polio:**
 - **India received polio-free certification** by the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** in 2014, after three years of zero cases.
 - This achievement has been spurred by the successful **Pulse Polio Campaign** in which all children were administered polio drops.
 - The last case due to **wild poliovirus** in the country was detected on 13th January 2011.

What Initiatives have been taken to Eradicate Polio?

- **Global:**
 - **Global Polio Eradication Initiative:**
 - It was **launched in 1988 by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)**, by national governments and WHO. Presently, 80% of the world's population is now living in certified polio-free regions.
 - An estimated 1.5 million childhood deaths have been prevented, through the systemic administration of vitamin A during polio immunization activities.
 - **World Polio Day:**
 - It is observed every year on 24th October in order to call on countries to stay vigilant in their fight against the disease.
- **Indian:**
 - **Pulse Polio Programme:**
 - It was **started with an objective of achieving 100% coverage** under Oral Polio Vaccine.
 - **Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0:**
 - It was a nationwide immunisation drive to mark the 25 years of **Pulse polio programme (2019-20)**.
 - **Universal Immunization Programme (UIP):**
 - It was launched in **1985 with the modification to 'Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI)**. The objectives of the Programme include:
 - Rapidly increasing immunization coverage
 - Improving the quality of services
 - Establishing a reliable cold chain system to the health facility level
 - Introducing a district-wise system for monitoring of performance
 - Achieving self-sufficiency in vaccine production.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

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, Gol 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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