

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1287

ANSWERED ON:17.08.2012

DEATHS OF CHILDREN DUE TO PNEUMONIA AND DIARRHOEA

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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) has released any report recently that stated India is listed among the top five countries across the world which lose a majority of the 2 million children worldwide who die each year due to easily preventable diseases—pneumonia and diarrhoea;

(b) if so, the details and the findings of the report; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY)

(a) & (b) Yes. UNICEF has published the report 'Pneumonia And Diarrhoea: Tackling the Deadliest Diseases For The World's Poorest Children', in 2012, which states that pneumonia and diarrhoea are the leading causes of death and account for 29 per cent deaths in children under the age of 5 years. They lead to loss of more than 2 million lives each year. About 90 per cent of deaths due to pneumonia and diarrhoea occur in Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia.

(c) Under the National Rural Health Mission, the steps taken by the Government for prevention and control of pneumonia and diarrhoea in children are as follows:

The Universal Immunisation Programme that covers 2.7 crore children in India each year, includes vaccines that prevent child hood pneumonia. These vaccines are DPT, Measles and BCG that protect against diphtheria, pertussis, measles and tuberculosis.

Vaccine against Haemophilus Influenzae Type B (Hib) infection has been introduced in the national immunization schedule for infants in the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the first phase.

Second Dose of measles is now being given in 21 states and Measles Supplementary Immunisation Activity (SIA) is being undertaken in 14 states with a target of covering more than 4 crore children. This will bring down mortality due to pneumonia those results from common infections following measles.

Promotion of early and exclusive breastfeeding offers protection against common childhood illnesses including diarrhoea and pneumonia. Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices are being promoted through the national health programme.

Vitamin A Supplementation programme covers children up to the age of 5 years and offers protection against diarrhoea and pneumonia by improving the immunity and is used as a preventive measure.

Promoting use of Zinc and ORS is one of the priority activities for child survival. Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) packets and zinc tablets are made available free of cost and mothers are taught how to use them.

Awareness is being created amongst mothers on sanitation and hygiene and in the communities about the causes and treatment of diarrhoea through health education.

Antibiotics for treatment of pneumonia and dysentery are made available through the public health system.

The community health workers and facility based health service providers are trained in the management of diarrhoea and pneumonia through the IMNCI (Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses) programme across the country.