

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 258
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2025**

SPREAD OF DIPHTHERIA CASES IN PUNJAB

258 SHRI SATNAM SINGH SANDHU:

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

- (a) the steps taken to address the recent spread of diphtheria cases in Punjab;
- (b) the details on vaccination coverage for diphtheria in the State and the country;
- (c) the details of measures being implemented to improve awareness about diphtheria vaccination, especially in rural and underserved areas of Punjab to prevent further deaths and outbreaks; and
- (d) whether Government plans to strengthen the monitoring and reporting of vaccine-preventable diseases like diphtheria at the state and national levels to ensure quicker response and prevention in the future, if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY
WELFARE
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

- (a): Rapid response to all the reported cases was undertaken in the community by formation of rapid response teams, active case search of cases, administration of diphtheria containing vaccine in the community and antibiotic prophylaxis of close contacts.
- (b): The details of the diphtheria containing vaccination in the country and Punjab is at Annexure.
- (c): The Government has taken following steps to improve awareness about diphtheria vaccination especially in rural and underserved areas of Punjab to prevent further deaths and outbreaks:
 - i. Strengthening of routine immunization by head count survey by Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHAs) to identify left out and dropout children.
 - ii. Interpersonal communication by ASHAs.
 - iii. Appropriate use of social media platforms done in the state for mass community awareness.
 - iv. Special immunization week was conducted in the State from 23rd to 31st December 2024 to strengthen Pentavalent-1 coverage in the State.

(d): The Government of India has a robust nationwide network of Vaccine Preventable Disease (VPD) surveillance system in place, with strengthened capacity to record, report and analyze data on the disease burden and immunization coverage. At present, VPD surveillance system includes Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance for Polio, Measles-Rubella (MR) surveillance and Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus (DPT) surveillance, functioning across the country.

The surveillance is supported by dedicated laboratories under surveillance network. The outbreak response measures for the containment of the outbreaks, are carried out by the dedicated surveillance team, which includes outbreak immunization of the susceptible beneficiaries for the specific disease in the affected areas. Regular visit by State teams to the affected districts for supervision and monitoring of the activity is carried out.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (b) OF THE RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 258 REGARDING “SPREAD OF DIPHTHERIA CASES IN PUNJAB”

| Financial Year | India/State | Penta1 | Penta 2 | Penta3 | DPT 1 | DPT 2 |
|----------------|-------------|---|----------|----------|--------------|-----------|
| | | Age of the beneficiary for the due vaccination % coverage | | | | |
| | | 6 weeks | 10 weeks | 14 weeks | 16-24 months | 5-6 years |
| 2023-24 | India | 93.1 | 90.3 | 90.7 | 89.2 | 80.3 |
| | Punjab | 91.4 | 89.6 | 88.6 | 93.9 | 62.4 |
| 2024-25* | India | 91.2 | 87.3 | 88.3 | 87.1 | 70.7 |
| | Punjab | 86.0 | 83.2 | 82.8 | 86.9 | 76.3 |

*Data source HMIS, Apr-Dec 2025, accessed on 21st January 2025

Penta 1: Pentavalent vaccine 1st dose

Penta2: Pentavalent vaccine 2nd dose

Penta 3: Pentavalent vaccine 3rd dose

DPT 1: Diphtheria Pertussis Tetanus vaccine 1st booster

DPT 2: Diphtheria Pertussis Tetanus vaccine 2nd booster