

Health ministry launches 'Phool Khil Jayenge,' a song celebrating child health and immunization

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A public service message in the form of a music video 'Phool Khil Jayenge' was launched by minister of health and family welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan. Also present were renowned lyricist and Member of Parliament Javed Akhtar, actor Shabana Azmi, singer Sonu Nigam, and music director Lalit Pandit.

The song highlights the importance of immunization in saving lives of Indian children, given that 14 lakh children under 5 years of age die every year in India due to preventable diseases, like pneumonia and diarrhea. Just last month, the Prime Minister's Office announced the introduction of four new vaccines: rotavirus, rubella, polio (injectable), and an adult vaccine for Japanese Encephalitis in districts with high

The lyrics of the song have been written by well-known poet, scriptwriter and Rajya Sabha MP Javed Akhtar, and Bollywood actors Farhan Akhtar and Vidya Balan feature in the video. Prominent singers Sonu Nigam and Alka Yagnik sang the song and music director Lalit Pandit composed the music.

The minister also highlighted that his ministry is committed to tackling child mortality and ensuring that the benefits of immunization reach all sections of society, regardless of social and economic status.

A panel discussion titled 'The Right of Every Child to Survive and Thrive,' set the tone for the evening, moderated by Bachi Karkaria. The panelists included Health Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, the Health Secretary, Mr Lov Verma, the Additional Secretary from the Ministry of Health, Mr CK Misra, Mr Javed Akhtar, Mr Sonu Nigam and Mr Lalit Pandit.

The panel lauded the Government's initiative for expanding the Universal Immunization Programme and providing free vaccines against 13 life threatening diseases to 27 million children annually.

Member of Parliament and lyricist, Javed Akhtar said: "It's an honour to be a part of an initiative to raise awareness about the importance of immunization. We wanted to convey this message through simple and effective lyrics and we hope we have

been able to achieve that. It is my sincere hope that we don't lose young lives to diseases for which vaccines exist and that all children in India have access to immunization."

Actor Farhan Akhtar said from Mumbai, "As the father of two young daughters, I relate to the need to protect children from life-threatening and preventable diseases. I believe parents who do not immunize their children do them a great disservice and risk their lives. I am very happy to have been part of this endeavor to raise awareness about the need to immunize every child in this country."

Bollywood singer Sonu Nigam added, "I believe that as role models we play an important role in spreading these messages, and what better way than to participate in this campaign. Every child has the right to good health, and one of the easiest ways to ensure this is through immunization. I therefore appeal to all parents to get their children immunized without fail."

Currently, more children die in India each year than in any other country. Annually, more than 14 lakh children under five die in India. Once children survive the first month, infectious diseases are the biggest threats to their survival despite being preventable. Diarrhea and pneumonia account for more than 4,36,000 deaths among Indian children aged 1-59 months of age.