

Dr Vardhan: Need 'health sainiks' to achieve cent percent immunization

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"The fact that 14 lakh children do not live beyond the age of five is a matter of national shame. To change this reality the government needs the collective energy of the people, and should not rely on the government machinery", stated the union health minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan in New Delhi on August 20, 2014.

While launching a music video, "Phool khil jayenge" ("The flower will bloom"), on the subject of immunization, he asked for greater public participation. "Let's make a pledge here to become 'health sainiks' and each of us would strive to inspire other ordinary people to become health volunteers and work for a healthy nation," he said.

Dr Vardhan intends to replicate the means utilized to create a successful polio program during his tenure as Delhi's health minister when he had motivated hundreds of school children to become "polio sainiks". They were given the task of seeking out families with small children who needed polio immunization.

"Today, we are poised to replicate India's success with polio eradication. This was brought about by the unrequited and unpaid labour of thousands of people. We need many more such heroes and heroines to make Universal Immunization in India a success," the minister said during the panel discussion.

The five-minute film released on the occasion emphasises the importance of providing immunity from diseases to a child through timely inoculation.