

# Rota Talk

## NEWSLETTER



### Special Issue on Indian Islands

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## Cruise, Copter and Conviction: RRV reaching the farthest shores

The supply of vaccines, including Rotavirus vaccine, to these islands is by air from the stores located in the mainland. Vaccines are supplied to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands from the Government Medical Store Depot (GMSD) in Kolkata, which is around 1300 km away from the island. Similarly, for Lakshadweep, the vaccines are supplied from GMSD Chennai, which is around 880 km away. Subsequently, the vaccines are supplied to the inhabited islands by helicopters and small boats. Although the introduction of RRV happened during the monsoon season, the administration overcame all challenges to ensure that RRV reaches all cold chain stores prior to the launch.

In these islands, tele-connectivity is also a huge challenge. It is often difficult to telephonically connect with health functionaries in remote islands. Also, the internet connectivity is often erratic. In spite of these challenges, the trainings and all other preparatory activities were completed within the timelines.

Since launch, 4184 doses of RRV has been administered in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and 655 RRV doses in Lakshadweep (HMIS data till Feb'20).

## Rotavirus vaccine introduced across India

Beginning March 2016, the Rotavirus vaccine (RRV) was launched in a phased manner. Till 2018, 11 states had launched the RRV. In 2019, under the "100 days agenda" of the national government, RRV was rapidly scaled up to the remaining 26 states and union territories. In this issue, we focus on the RRV introduction in the Andaman & Nicobar islands and Lakshadweep. The Andaman & Nicobar islands and Lakshadweep are groups of islands located in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea respectively. The RRV was launched in Andaman and Nicobar islands in August 2019 followed by Lakshadweep in September 2019.



## RVV introduction: Andaman & Nicobar Islands

The state level participants from the islands of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep, which included the State EPI Officer (SEPIO) and medical officers (MOs), attended the regional level training of trainers (TOT) held at Chandigarh on 2-3 May, 2019. These participants were then the master trainers in their respective territories. They, along with the partner representatives, facilitated the next level trainings in the cascade pattern in their Islands.



The Andaman & Nicobar Islands are located in the east of the Indian mainland. They comprise of two island groups- the Andaman Islands and the Nicobar Islands. The capital of this territory is Port Blair. There are 572 islands in the territory, of which 38 are permanently inhabited. The total land area of the territory is approximately 8,249 sq km and the estimated total population (2019) is 4,34,192. There are five particularly vulnerable tribal groups who have been identified: Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, Sentinelese and Shompens.

As per the National Family Health Survey 4, the full immunization coverage is 73.2%, while the prevalence of diarrhoea in children less than 5 years is 5.3%. As per the Sample Registration System (SRS) Bulletin 2018, the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 9.



## Launch of the Rotavirus vaccine in Andaman and Nicobar Islands by the Health Secretary, Ms. Kriti Garg, IAS



Ms. Kriti Garg, IAS launching RVV at Port Blair



Dr. SP Burma, Director of Health, A & N at the launch



Rotavirus vaccination at Neil Island



Rotavirus vaccination at a Health Facility in South Andaman District

Following the regional ToT, a two-day state cum district ToT was conducted at Port Blair on 12-13 June, 2019. It was attended by a total of 23 participants, including medical officers from different health facilities, public health specialists from the Indian Navy and representatives from Medical College of Port Blair. It was facilitated by representatives from JSI, WHO and AEFI secretariat. The workshop was

presided over by Deputy Director Health cum SEPIO, Dr. Avijit Roy.

A one-day training was then conducted in 24 health facilities. A total of 280 vaccinators and mobilizers were trained. These field level trainings were conducted in the local languages with the standardized training materials developed by Government of India.



State training of trainers at Port Blair



Dr. Joyesh Mehta, WHO taking a session at station approach



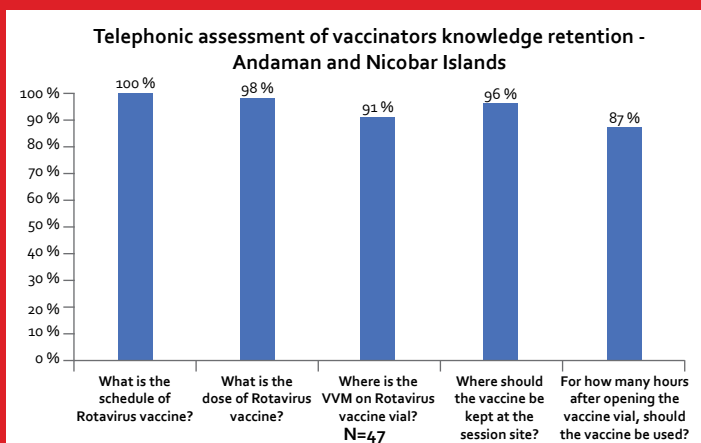
Dr. Krishna Kumar from AEFI secretariat facilitating a session



Dr. Avijit Roy, SEPIO and Dr. Tapash answering queries from participants

## Remote monitoring of training quality by telephonic interview

At the completion of all field level trainings, a telephonic assessment was conducted by the JSI team to understand the knowledge retention of the trainees. A total of 47 randomly selected frontline workers (vaccinators) were administered a structured questionnaire after obtaining their consent. The five questions asked assessed the knowledge of the respondents on key program domains. In four out of the five questions, more than 90% respondents could answer correctly.



## RVV introduction: Lakshadweep

Lakshadweep is India's smallest union territory. It is an archipelago of 36 islands with an area of 32 sq km. As per census 2011, the territory has a total population of 64,473, residing in the 10 inhabited islands. The capital is Kavaratti. As per NFHS 4, the full immunization coverage is 89%, while the prevalence of diarrhoea in children less than 5 years is 6.3%. As per SRS Bulletin 2018, the IMR is 14.



### Message of SEPIO - Lakshadweep



The Government of India started Rotavirus vaccination in India in 2016 in a phased manner to prevent Rotavirus associated diarrhea in under five children. GoI has included Lakshadweep Islands in 2019 in the fourth phase. We attended the Regional Training of Trainers at Chandigarh. State level trainings were conducted with the support of JSI. After the cascade of trainings in the islands, RVV was launched in all the 10 inhabited islands of Lakshadweep. Now RVV is given free of cost to all the eligible children in these remote islands near their residences. With no private sector in health, the vaccine was not available in Lakshadweep prior to the RVV introduction. This is a remarkable achievement for the UT as this will reduce Rotavirus related diarrheal hospitalizations and deaths. We are thankful to GoI and JSI India.

**Dr. Sabitha Hassan**  
SEPIO Lakshadweep

### Refresher training at Kavaratti

A two day refresher training was conducted at Kavaratti on 28 - 29 November, 2019. There were 24 participants including pediatricians, physicians, medical officers, cold chain handlers and nurses. Dr. Arindam Ray from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was the facilitator for the key technical sessions. The other facilitators were from JSI and AEFI secretariat-ITSU. The workshop was inaugurated by the Health Secretary, Dr. S Sundaravadivelu, IAS.



Dr. Arindam Ray taking the FAQ session



Hands on training by Dr. Syed FQuadri, JSI



Participants giving the pre-test before commencing the workshop

### Launch of the Rotavirus vaccine in Lakshadweep by the Health Secretary, Dr. S Sundaravadivelu, IAS



Dr. S Sundaravadivelu launches the RVV in Lakshadweep Island



Rotavirus vaccination at a session site in Kiltan Island in Lakshadweep

The uni-district union territory of Lakshadweep is known for its exotic beaches and lush green landscape. The name Lakshadweep in Malayalam and Sanskrit means 'a hundred thousand islands'. The children of the islands for the first time received the doses of RVV to protect them from diarrhoea due to rotavirus. This will bring more smiles and joy to the children of these pristine islands.



## /// Stories from the field

### »» Success Story

I received training from my Medical Officer before introduction of RVV and now I am confident in administering the vaccine. The community is also aware of the benefits of the RVV as the ASHA and Anganwadi workers keep briefing the community about the importance of RVV in local language. A child suffering from severe diarrhoea due to Rotavirus often needs hospitalization. However, reaching the nearest PHC is difficult as boat services are not available at all times. The introduction of RVV will reduce the episode of rotavirus diarrhoea and thus children will not require hospitalization.



*Ms. C Razia, ANM- Campbell Bay, Nicobar islands*

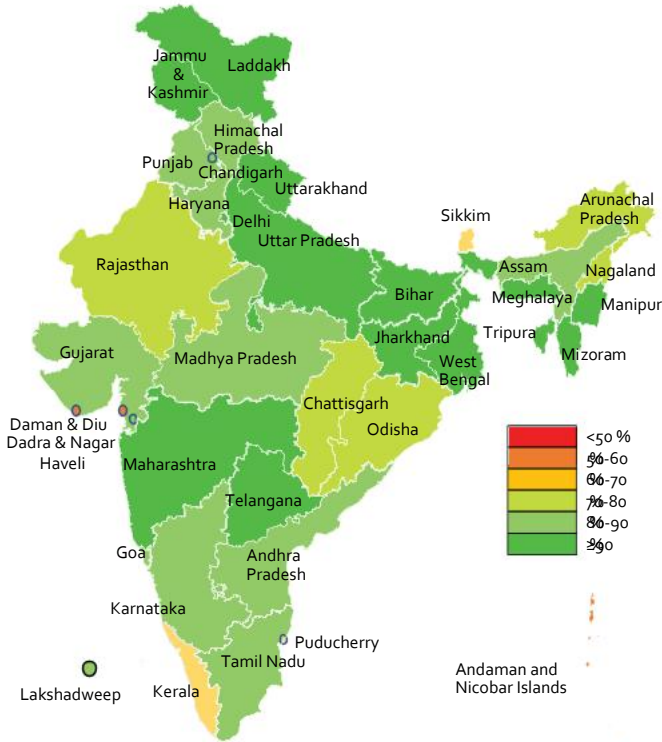


### The Jarawa Community

The Jarawa tribes with an estimated population of 341 inhabit the western coasts of South & Middle Andaman islands. They are leading their normal life of hunting and gathering. The Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, in consultation with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and A & N Administration has finalized a policy on the Jarawa Tribe of Andaman Island. The policy was notified in December, 2004 and is being implemented strictly to ensure protection and welfare of the Jarawas. A buffer zone of 5 km radius has been notified around the Jarawa reserve.

To enable the Jarawas to avail health care services, exclusive wards have been provided at the Primary Health Centres at Tushnabad, Kadamtala and also at the tertiary care centre- G.B. Pant Hospital, Port Blair. They are also being provided immunization services, including administration of the newly introduced RVV.

# Rotavirus vaccine coverage dashboard: RVV-1 dose (Mar'19 to Feb'20)\*



\* for states/UTs which launched RVV in 2019, the data is analysed for the period- the month following introduction in all districts till Feb'20

Doses	Coverage from Mar'19 to Feb'20 (in millions)
RVV 1 <sup>st</sup> Dose	18.05
RVV 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dose	16.47
RVV 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dose	15.53
Total	50.05

Source: HMIS Data

## Rota quick facts:

Do you know?

- ✓ RVV is now available in all Government health facilities across the country free of cost.
- ✓ 11 Indian states/UTs use Lyophilized vaccine and remaining states/UTs liquified vaccine; both are interchangeable.
- ✓ In India, after the introduction of RVV, there is more than 40% reduction in infants hospitalized with acute gastroenteritis.

## Mind Power Game

Complete the words with hints from the image



+



= ?



+

IMMUNITY

= ?



+



= ?

ROTA

+



= ?



+

PER

= ?

## Answers:-

Please scan the QR Code



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