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# A vaccine for every child: How a govt portal is set to change immunisation map

Part of a quiet digital revolution that is set to change the way maternal and child healthcare is delivered across the country, U-Win is likely to be launched on August 15.

Written by **Anonna Dutt** [Follow](#)

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 **NewsGuard**

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A child vaccination centre. (Express Photo by Anonna Dutt)

Sitting in a porta cabin at Tindli village in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur district, ASHA worker Reena Patel uses her smartphone to fill in details of a month-old baby on U-Win, the government's new childhood vaccination management portal.

Part of a quiet digital revolution that is set to change the way maternal and child healthcare is delivered across the country, U-Win is likely to be launched on August 15. It is expected to be a gamechanger for primary healthcare, marking a transition from the existing vaccination cards that ASHA and other healthcare workers update manually to a completely digital platform that will maintain records of the vaccination journey of every child in the 0-5 age group.

Tindli village is part of the government's pilot project – currently on in 64 districts – to register pregnant women and children on U-Win. The project was set rolling from Tindli in August last year, when Patel became the first ASHA worker in the country to register a child on the U-Win platform.



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A healthcare worker helps a pregnant woman get her shots. (Express Photo by Anonna Dutt)

Patel has so far registered every child between 0 and 5 years in the village, feeding their details on the portal. “I went door to door and directly registered every child in my village on the portal. There are 55 children between the ages of 0 and 5 in my village right now,” she says.

Patel explains that every immunisation day, the portal automatically generates a list of children who are due for vaccination and sends SMS alerts on their parents’ phones. “These alerts will mention the vaccination dates and the nearest health centres where the children can be taken for their shots. We also remind parents a day ahead. So there is no question of children missing shots,” says Patel.



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A healthcare worker briefs parents on vaccination. (Express Photo by Anonna Dutt)

This real-time registration of children and the digital vaccination record on U-Win are aimed at reducing the number of “zero-dose” children (those who do not receive their first doses of vaccines for diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus), especially among migrant workers, who can get their children vaccinated at any centre in the country and without the hassle of carrying their child’s vaccination cards. The U-Win portal is one of the important steps towards halving the number of zero-dose children by 2030.

Besides details of children and pregnant women who are due for vaccinations, the U-Win portal will have a record of health centres and community health workers.

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Since August last year, all of Patel's peers — auxiliary nurses and midwives (ANMs) — and health centres in the Jabalpur division have been registered on the U-Win portal. While Patel logs in birth details, her co-worker Asha Chaudhary is responsible for immunising 450 children across eight villages, including Tinari.

“When children travel to their grandparents' homes, I tell the family to go to the nearest vaccination centre nearby and take the shots that they are due for. Mothers who may have got their first tetanus shot here can get the next one in their maternal village. There is no need to carry the vaccination booklet — all they need is their phone number to access the records at any centre,” says Chaudhary.

When her centre in Jhurjhuru held an immunisation day (usually done every Tuesday and Friday) she could immediately see an update of the shots received by one of the children under her care at a centre in Narsinghpur, 107 km away. She is now in the process of updating records of older children under her care, all born before the platform was rolled out.

With the project being pushed as part of the government's 100-day agenda, the health ministry is not only monitoring the status of children after they are born but tracking the progress of vaccine sites. “We've started a pilot to see how well it performs. We will soon have a digital record of the vaccinations for pregnant women and children,” said Union Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel at [The Indian Express](#) Idea Exchange session.

Dr Puneet Jaitley, professor of community medicine at AIIMS, said digital interventions such as these help take the immunisation programme to the last mile. “First, the SMS serves as a reminder and results in better compliance. Second, parents can get their children vaccinated in different cities and towns and don't have to worry about taking up work outside their village,” he said, adding that the data can be mined to improve coverage.

“You can identify the exact number of children who are unvaccinated in each locality and the reasons. You can then tailor your interventions accordingly,” says Dr Jaitley.

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Dr Jayaprakash Muliyl, epidemiologist and former principal of Christian Medical College-Vellore, says a digital record will help with targeted delivery of vac

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“For instance, when a measles outbreak happens, we often re-vaccinate people in the affected area. This might result in some children getting multiple doses while others remaining completely unvaccinated. But now that the portal has data on individual children, we can identify those who were not vaccinated and immunise them,” says Dr Muliyl.



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With all government delivery centres and some private hospitals in Jabalpur division registered on the portal, Chaudhary no longer needs to register newborns in her area. “The community health centre nearby records data of newborns and the three shots they get at birth — polio, hepatitis B and tuberculosis,” she says.

While the pilot project is at an advanced stage, teething troubles remain – from shortage of vaccine stores to lack of patient awareness. Besides, the project is hobbled by patchy internet connectivity in some of the remote parts of the district. Which is why Patel usually keeps a physical record, which she later uploads on the portal.



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As MP state immunisation officer Dr Santosh Shukla says: “The portal currently allows entry of data for a particular vaccination session for 24 hours. We have sought a 48-hour window so that the healthcare worker has more time to upload data.”