



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

Ramping Up the Fight Against Cervical Cancer — Beyond Vaccination

THE HINDU

26 March 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED

SOCIAL ISSUES

SCIENCE & TECH

GS PAPERS

GS2

GS3

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](https://bharatnotes.com)

CURATED & WRITTEN BY



Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator •

linkedin.com/in/epicbharat

Ramping Up the Fight Against Cervical Cancer — Beyond Vaccination

 The Hindu

26 March 2026

GS2

GS3

 Save

 The Hindu

4 tags ▾



INTERVIEW ANGLE

"India accounts for 23% of global cervical cancer cases despite the disease being almost entirely preventable through HPV vaccination and screening. What systemic failures explain this paradox?"

WHY IN NEWS

India launched a nationwide free HPV vaccination drive on February 28, 2026, targeting 14-year-old girls. India records over 1.2 lakh new cervical cancer cases and approximately 80,000 deaths annually — the highest absolute burden globally.

The Editorial Argument

The Hindu editorial argues that while the national HPV vaccination campaign is a landmark public health intervention, vaccination alone is insufficient. India must simultaneously scale up cervical cancer screening (currently covering less than 2% of eligible women), address rural-urban disparities, tackle vaccine hesitancy, and build treatment infrastructure to meet the WHO 90-70-90 targets by 2030.

India's Cervical Cancer Burden

METRIC	DATA
New cases annually	~1.2 lakh (1,23,907 — Globocan 2022)
Annual deaths	~79,000
India's share of global cases	~23%
Leading cause of cancer death among women (India)	2nd (after breast cancer)
Screening coverage	<2% of eligible women
HPV prevalence (high-risk types)	~5-8% among women aged 15-59

HPV Vaccination — The National Programme

FEATURE	DETAIL
Launched	February 28, 2026
Target group	Girls aged 14 years
Vaccine	Made-in-India quadrivalent HPV vaccine (Cervavac by Serum Institute of India)
Dosage	Single dose (following WHO's 2022 recommendation for single-dose efficacy)
Delivery	Through schools and Anganwadi centres via Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)
Cost	Free under government programme; market price ~Rs 2,000-4,000 per dose

Cervavac — India's Indigenous HPV Vaccine

Developed by the Serum Institute of India (SII) in collaboration with the Department of Biotechnology (DBT):

- **Type:** Quadrivalent (targets HPV types 6, 11, 16, 18)
- **HPV 16 and 18:** Cause ~70% of cervical cancers globally
- **HPV 6 and 11:** Cause ~90% of genital warts
- **Approval:** DCGI approval received July 2022
- **Significance:** India becomes self-sufficient in HPV vaccine production, reducing dependence on Gardasil (Merck) and Cervarix (GSK)

The Screening Gap

Vaccination protects future generations, but the ~300 million women currently aged 30-65 remain unprotected — they need screening. India's screening infrastructure is severely inadequate:

SCREENING METHOD	AVAILABILITY	WHO RECOMMENDATION
Pap smear	Limited to urban hospitals; requires trained cytologists	Every 3 years (age 21-65)
VIA (Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid)	Available at PHCs; lower sensitivity	Every 5 years
HPV DNA test	Most accurate; available only at tertiary centres	Preferred method; every 5-10 years

The editorial recommends HPV DNA testing as the primary screening tool — it can be self-collected, processed in batched labs, and has the highest sensitivity (~95%) for detecting high-risk HPV infections before they progress to cancer.

WHO 90-70-90 Targets (by 2030)

The WHO Global Strategy to Eliminate Cervical Cancer sets three targets:

- ❶ **90%** of girls fully vaccinated with HPV vaccine by age 15
- ❷ **70%** of women screened with a high-performance test by age 35 and again by 45
- ❸ **90%** of women with cervical disease receiving treatment

India's current status against these targets:

- Vaccination: Campaign just launched (February 2026) — coverage <5%
- Screening: <2% coverage (target: 70%)
- Treatment: ~60-70% of diagnosed cases receive treatment (target: 90%)

Vaccine Hesitancy

The editorial notes that vaccine hesitancy — fuelled by misinformation about HPV vaccine causing infertility — remains a significant barrier. The 2009 PATH-ICMR HPV vaccine trial controversy (deaths during trial in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat led to a Parliamentary Committee inquiry) continues to cast a shadow over HPV vaccination acceptance in India.

UPSC RELEVANCE

HPV types 16/18, Cervavac manufacturer (SII), WHO 90-70-90 targets, cervical cancer statistics, UIP

Health policy — vaccination programmes, screening infrastructure, rural-urban health disparities, women's health

Science & Technology — indigenous vaccine development, public health innovation

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

CERVICAL CANCER IN INDIA:

New cases: ~1.2 lakh/year; deaths: ~79,000/year

India's share of global cases: ~23%

Screening coverage: <2% of eligible women

Cause: HPV (Human Papillomavirus) — types 16 and 18 cause ~70% of cases

HPV VACCINATION (INDIA):

National programme launched: February 28, 2026

Vaccine: Cervavac (Serum Institute of India, quadrivalent)

Target: Girls aged 14; single dose; via UIP

HPV types covered: 6, 11, 16, 18

WHO single-dose recommendation: April 2022

WHO 90-70-90 TARGETS:

90% vaccination by age 15

70% screening by age 35 and 45

90% treatment for cervical disease

Timeline: By 2030

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

SII: World's largest vaccine manufacturer by volume (Pune)

DBT: Department of Biotechnology (co-developed Cervavac)

PATH-ICMR trial controversy: 2009; led to Parliamentary inquiry

VIA: Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid — low-cost screening at PHCs

HPV DNA test: Gold standard; ~95% sensitivity; self-collection possible

Sources: [The Hindu](#), [WHO](#), [ICMR](#)



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujyari](#) →<https://ujyari.com/editorials/2026/03/cervical-cancer-hpv-vaccination-screening/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing](http://bharatnotes.com) → bharatnotes.com