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Eminent virologist allays fears

STAFF REPORTER

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Dr. T. Jacob John, retired professor of virology, Christian Medical College, Vellore, and chairman of National Expert Advisory Group on Measles Eradication said the Indian government has decided to eradicate measles by 2020, and hence, a mass campaign to administer Measles-Rubella vaccine was being carried out.

“Measles is under control but not eradicated in India. For eradication, we need to create 100% of children to be immune. What is being done now is a mass campaign for children up to 15 years. This is now being carried out in southern states now, and will move to northern States next. This campaign will be followed by routine vaccination with two doses of MR vaccine,” he explained. He was present at a meeting convened by the Health Department with heads of schools on Tuesday.

He stressed the need that 100% children should get vaccinated. “Rubella is an infection that can cause abnormalities in the unborn baby if the mother gets infected. It can cause damage to the heart, brain, eyes and ears in the unborn baby. Hence, rubella is piggybacked on measles vaccine to ensure 100% immunisation,” he added.