

## 3rd ICMR Serological Survey

### Why in news?

Recently ICMR has released its 3<sup>rd</sup> serological survey to ascertain the spread of COVID-19.

### What does the report say?

- It shows that nearly one in five Indians (270 million) may have been infected & there has been a three-fold rise in infections when compared to the 2<sup>nd</sup> serological survey.
- There has also been a five-fold rise of the infection in those aged 10-17 years & 3<sup>rd</sup> edition includes a serological survey of doctors, nurses and paramedical staff.
- This reveals that nearly 25% of this composition are infected which is significantly above the national average.
- It emphasises that significant proportion of people are still potentially vulnerable, underscoring the need to be vaccinated and continue with social distancing and use of masks.

### What does this vary from other surveys?

- ICMR survey-results appear to be more conservative in estimating the true spread of disease when compared to city-focused serology surveys in Delhi and mathematical modelling estimates.
- Experts say that there is declining trend in infections since September and there is absence of multiple peaks in corona virus cases and speeding up herd immunity.
- But neither ICMR survey nor city-wide survey evaluated how long antibodies persist and if certain virus mutant variants can overcome the protection from antibodies.

### What are the concerns?

- It is now no longer useful to know that 80% of India is still vulnerable given that vaccines are available.
- Rather, such surveys must shift focus on certain questions- rise in spread among teenagers and children mean that they must be vaccinated earlier

than the scheduled time.

- It should focus on whether companies should accelerate trials to test protection in children and rise in cases in rural India mean that they be given vaccines earlier.
- ICMR and the government health facilities must coordinate with a broader spectrum of specialists to investigate on these questions which can be used to guide and modify vaccination policy.

**Source: The Hindu**

