

## **Vaccine hesitancy**

### **Why in news?**

COVID-19 Vaccination drive is facing the challenge of vaccine hesitancy by the people.

### **What is Vaccine hesitancy?**

WHO defines it as delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines by the people despite the availability of vaccination services.

### **Who are all administered with vaccine?**

- Vaccines are so far made available to health-care and sanitation workers and other frontline staffs.
- They do not have a choice in the vaccine being administered but can decide not to be immunised.
- But as per the data provided by the Health Ministry, 9 States have coverage rate of over 70% & three States have less than 40% coverage.
- This is because Covaxin & Covishield vaccines are rolled out with insufficient evidence of its efficacy.

### **What are the advisories issued by the vaccine manufactures?**

- Now Bharat Biotech's Covaxin recipients have been informed that the vaccine is inadvisable for those with a history of allergies, fever and bleeding disorders.
- Those on medication, blood thinners and whose immunity has been compromised have also been told not to take the vaccine.
- It is also advised that vaccine should not to be given to the pregnant or the lactating women.
- A similar set of restrictions has been given to prospective recipients of Covishield too which is developed by the Serum Institute of India.

### **What are the steps taken to address vaccine hesitancy?**

- Hospitals have begun internal campaigns leaning on senior doctors to build confidence.
- Higher government officials say that not opting for a vaccine when it is

available amounts to dereliction in duty.

- Social media platforms are requested to make sure that users only get to see the credible, science-based information about the vaccines.

### **What can be done now?**

- It is expected that the vaccine coverage will be low in early days but it will get accelerated in the days ahead.
- Centre and the States should coordinate on sharing, investigating data & need to publicise the reasons for hesitancy.
- Government has to inspire confidence among public & need to monitor, report and be honest with the challenges it is facing.

**Source: The Hindu**

