

With the widening digital divide majority of the rural population is excluded from the vaccination drive in the country. Do you agree with this view? Comment.

The penetration of Internet and digital services from public and private entities is seen as an "Indicator of Social progress and Economic development".

Reasons for "Digital Divide"

- * lack of digital literacy and basic awareness
- * NSO's "Survey on Household Social consumption on Education" highlights huge digital inequality, only 4.4% of rural households have Personal computer, internet penetration is 14.9%.
- * very high "Access and Utilization Gap"
- * lack of "Digital and Financial Inclusion".

These problems also impacts "COVID-19 Vaccination drives" in rural areas to a large extent.

Measures to increase number of vaccinations in Rural regions :-

- * Decentralizing the process of "Vaccine Administration" in PHCs
- * Training the Rural Health Workforce like "ASHA Healthworkers", "Auxiliary Nurse Midwives", "Community Healthcare Volunteers"
- * Walk in Registrations for rural areas.
- * Awareness on "Dosage" and "monitoring the side effects" must be carried out

Steps taken and which must be further strengthened by the Government (Centre and state)

- 1). Bharat Net (optical fibre internet connectivity) Project
- 2). e-Kranti → electronic delivery of services
- 3). CSC → Common Service Centres as Special Purpose Vehicle
- 4). PM-WANI → WiFi Access Network Interface (Public WiFi Portals)
- 5). PM Aadarsh Gram Yojana (Smart village). 6). PM Gramin Digital to promote digital skills and literacy → Saksharta Abhiyan

Conclusion :- The existing schemes and measures for Digital inclusion must be strengthened and implemented at all levels, training the healthworkforce, awareness campaigns and rallies about the importance of vaccines in local languages can greatly help.