Covid-19: Vaccine Development

What is the issue?

- The development of vaccine for the Covid-19 is a need of the time.
- However, the governments should continue with routine immunisation as well as robust health measures for Covid-19.

How far are we from developing a COVID-19 vaccine?

- Developing vaccines is a time-consuming and resource intensive process.
- It takes up to 10-15 years from the discovery of a novel way to produce a vaccine to the licensure of a vaccine for commercial use.
- There are unprecedented levels of data sharing and global collaboration for the development of a coronavirus vaccine.
- Therefore, with a full push, a coronavirus vaccine (at least an investigational one) can be developed within 18 months to 2 years.

Will discovering a vaccine end the Covid-19 fight?

- With more than 100 candidate vaccines already in development, the response from the scientific community and industry is unprecedented.
- But, vaccine development on its own isn't enough.
- There is no global system to oversee the allocation of vaccine supply.
- Many countries with the capacity to manufacture at the required scale will face pressure to supply them first to their own population.
- Before a vaccine is developed, **global access agreements** are needed.
- There will need to be some type of **agreement on priority use.**
- The health workers should probably be the most important, followed by high risk and finally, the general population.

Will the Covid-19 fight disrupt routine immunisation programmes?

- The Covid-19 outbreak is a reminder that infectious diseases know no borders.
- The importance of **preparedness** and **early detection** cannot be overemphasized.
- Investing in **strong primary healthcare** and **immunisation systems** is the first line of defence against threats to global health security.

- The number of people missing out vaccines is likely to rise substantially.

How can countries mitigate such risks?

- The governments should continue with their **routine immunisation** as well as robust public **health measures for Covid-19**.
- Without routine immunisation, the outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases will overwhelm the health system on top of Covid-19 challenge.
- Strong routine immunisation ensures people are protected against the spread of infectious disease.
- Beyond routine immunisation, **procuring emergency stockpiles** are an important aspect of global epidemic preparedness.
- These stockpiles are a last-resort insurance policy that guarantees vaccines will always be available for rapid delivery when needed.

Source: The Indian Express

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering