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

