

National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 deliberates on strategy to ensure COVID-19 vaccines' availability and its delivery mechanism

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National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19, met for the first time on 12th August. The meeting was chaired by Dr V K Paul, Member Niti Aayog along with Secretary (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) as co-Chair.

The expert group deliberated on conceptualization and implementation mechanisms for creation of a digital infrastructure for inventory management and delivery mechanism of the vaccine including tracking of vaccination process with particular focus on last mile delivery. They discussed on broad parameters guiding the selection of COVID-19 vaccine candidates for the country and sought inputs from Standing Technical Sub-Committee of National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI). The group delved on the procurement mechanisms for COVID-19 vaccine, including both indigenous and international manufacturing along with guiding principles for prioritization of population groups for vaccination.

The expert group discussed on the financial resources required for procurement of COVID-19 vaccine and various options of financing the same. Available options in terms of delivery platforms, cold chain and associated infrastructure for roll out of COVID-19 vaccination were also taken up. Further, strategy and follow-up action on all possible scenarios to ensure equitable and transparent delivery of vaccine was deliberated upon. Issues related to vaccine safety and surveillance were taken up and strategy for community involvement through transparent information and awareness creation were discussed.

India's support to its key neighbors and development partner countries for COVID-19 vaccines was deliberated upon. The expert group discussed that India will leverage domestic vaccine manufacturing capacity and will also engage with all international players for early delivery of vaccines not only in India but also in low and middle income countries.

The Committee also advised all the States not to chart separate pathways of procurement.

MV/SG

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