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Experts hope India to get COVID-19 vaccine by March 2021

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Safety, efficacy and distribution without discrimination of COVID-19 vaccines are as important as its accessibility



The world at large pins hopes that vaccine will be the next big thing to prevent the increasing curve of COVID-19. Currently, the researchers are racing to create one, but how long it will take to come to the fore is a curious question; and by what time entire India will get access to COVID-19 vaccine? Where do we stand in COVID-19 vaccine development?

All these aspects were brought to discussion during Episode-9 of the HEAL-Thy Samvaad, organised by the 'Healthcare Advocacy Group' — HEAL Foundation in association with the International Council for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD) on Oct 15 2020.

In his address Dr Suresh Jadav, Executive Director, Serum Institute of India, Pvt Ltd, Pune, said, "India may get COVID-19 vaccine by March 2021 provided the regulators signal with the processes fast as multiple manufacturers are working on it."

"We can produce 700-800 million vaccine dosages every year once the things are streamlined," added Dr Jadav.

While speaking on the COVID Vaccination & Consumers Rights, Prof Bejon Kumar Misra, International Consumer Policy Expert, Founder, JAGOGRAHAK.COM, Editor, The Aware Consumer, said, "Definitely, the vaccines will be a vital component in finally addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. In a nutshell, safety, efficacy and distribution without discrimination of COVID-19 vaccines are as important as its accessibility."

While speaking on the accessibility conundrum of COVID vaccine Dr JL Meena, Joint Director, NHA, said, "Of course, to have a check on the upsurge of COVID-19 infection, the vaccine is quintessential. However, the biggest challenge lies in its accessibility."

Elaborating on the status of the vaccine development, Samir Deb, Pharmaceutical Professional, Consultant Vaccine & Public Affairs Consultant, South East Asia, said, "Vaccine development is a burning issue across the world now. Worldwide, there are 40 candidates in the race of vaccination. In India, three vaccines are going in the phase-3 clinical trial. However, COVID-19 crisis requires accelerated pathways for vaccine development."

Atul Sharma, Founder & Managing Director, HealthScape, said, "Historically, we never expected any unprecedented pandemic like COVID-19 but within a year, we are at the verge of vaccine development. And now, we are prioritising how to allocate the vaccines to a high-risk population."