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PSAIIF, Consumer Online Foundation appeals for easy accessibility of COVID-19 vaccines

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Prof Bejon Misra, Founder Director, PSAIIF, Founder Trustee, Consumer Online Foundation and his team congratulated The Prime Minister's Office & the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) for launching the world's largest vaccination drive to immunise India's young population against COVID-19 from May 1, 2021 onwards. Prof Misra's team, in a letter to the PMO & the MoHFW, has suggested ways to make the Covid vaccination exercise for everyone (above the age of 18) successful.

Stressing on the need to ensure equitable, uniform and maximum access to COVID-19 vaccines to people living in hard-to-reach areas and achieve comprehensive immunisation; the team has suggested a door-to-door immunisation strategy. This is in addition to giving people an option to seek an online appointment with specific allotted time slots to get vaccinated and avoid crowding.

Noting that India has the largest and fastest-growing dependent population with no significant income, the team has recommended subsidised vaccination for all college students and other dependents having no income of their own. This will make vaccines affordable and accessible to them thereby ensuring efficient and seamless execution of the vaccination drive.

Going a step further, Professor Misra's team advised providing vaccine access to people especially students, the migrant population, etc irrespective of the region or location. This is important as large population of India including migrant workers, tourists, and students are stranded in various states due to the surging COVID-19 wave.

"The government must, now, focus on addressing concerns related to vaccine supplies, pricing, efficacy, awareness and crowd management to make this program a grand success," said Prof Misra.

There is a lot of misunderstanding and confusion on the efficacy of the vaccines, Prof Misra's team has suggested the creation and provision of a vaccination kit enclosed with a manual of dos and don'ts before and after administration of the vaccine, a general prescription in case of potential side effects and operational helpline numbers in case of emergency, to eradicate panic and misinformation.