

# 1 Urgent Need to Address Gap in COVID 19 Vaccination Coverage 2 among Refugees and Vulnerable Internal Migrants in India

3 Dr. Nilofur Banu

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## 6 **Abstract**

7 Introduction: COVID 19 vaccination is a important domain of this current emergency public  
8 health response to curb this pandemic situation, as we cannot afford to deal with recurrent  
9 out breaks of COVID 19, hence gaps in COVID 19 vaccination to be addressed and effectively  
10 gaps to be bridged.Methods: Largest vaccination drive in world was COVID 19 vaccination,  
11 started in phase manner based on the risk factors and exposure of the population, first phase  
12 was for health care worker end of first phase was for frontline workers and municipal workers,  
13 second phase was for gendral population above the age of 60 and 45-59 with co  
14 morbidities.Results: Government documents-ID proofs where needed to register the priorities  
15 population in the Co-WIN Portal and eventually will be vaccinated, refugees and internal  
16 immigrant who were eligible to get vaccination based on their age criteria were not able to get  
17 their vaccination due to lack of government documents and ID Proof.

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19 *Index terms—*

## 20 **1 Introduction**

21 ovel corona virus COVID 19 has caused an outbreak globally, affecting nearly 132,046,206 till date globally, 1  
22 COVID 19 disease manifest from milder disease (with symptoms of mild cough, sore throat, generalized body  
23 pain) to severe life threatening acute respiratory syndrome corona virus which has caused 2,867,242 death so far  
24 globally, 1,2 . With no proven drug to cure the diseases, the only way to escape from the diseases is prevention  
25 by maintaining social distancing, adopting safe and effective hygiene practice and vaccination.

26 Among all the preventive measures, vaccination is the most important health measure to minimize the spread  
27 of the infection which will significantly help us to curb the pandemic situation. Owing to this pandemic,  
28 immunization against COVID 19 is very essential, and thus it is very important to continue immunization  
29 services in all mere feasible areas to prevent recurrent outbreaks of COVID 19. This is a very important domain  
30 of this current emergency public health response to curb this pandemic situation, as we cannot afford to deal  
31 with recurrent out breaks of COVID 19, hence gaps in COVID 19 vaccination to be addressed and effectively  
32 managed . 3

## 33 **2 a) COVID 19 vaccination-world's largest vaccination drive**

34 On January 16 2021, India started first phase of largest vaccination drive -COVID 19 vaccination, to begin  
35 with, government started to prioritize the population, first priority was given to health care workers in all public  
36 and private health care facility and had eligibility criteriea which included all health care workers, supporting  
37 staff, helper ect who were at most risk of getting infected by COVID 19 by handling COVID 19 patients. 4 Prior  
38 registration of health care worker with government ID proof (other than adhaar card) along with employee id card  
39 (with the eligibility under government norms) was done and started vaccinating health care workers, 5 . At the  
40 end of first phase front line worker (engineers, revenue department staff, police officers, journalist) and municipal  
41 workers (sanitation workers in COVID care center, waste collectors, sweepers, waste processing plant operators  
42 engineer and segregator, vehicle drivers of government city bus, conductors, water tanker operators, cremation  
43 ground staff, maintenance staff) where vaccinated by walk in registration with ADHAR card in Co-WIN portal.

## 7 CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

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44 On march 1 2021, second phase of COVID 19 vaccination was started for general public to all above the  
45 age of 60 and 45-59 years of age with co morbidities, it was either through Aarogya Setu app (is a mobile  
46 application developed by the Government of India to connect essential health services with the people of India in  
47 our combined fight against COVID 19) registration or by walk in to allotted government and private health care  
48 facility and to register with ADHAR card, PAN card ,Indian passport, voter id ,driving license and smart card,  
49 MNREGA job card, official identity cards issued to MPs/MLAs/MLCs, pass book issued by Bank/post office,  
50 service identity card issued beneficiaries were registered in Co-WIN portal and after vaccinating, certificate  
51 was issued central/state Government and smart card issued by RGI under NPR in Co-WIN portal and after  
52 vaccination, vaccinator will update in portal that the beneficiary has been vaccinated, and message will to the  
53 beneficiaries to the linked mobile numbers of the beneficiaries from where the benefiter were able to down load  
54 the certificate of COVID 19 vaccination. 5

### 55 3 b) COVID 19 Vaccination's Digital platform boon to many 56 but curse to refugees and internal migrants

57 The Co-WIN System is cloud based platform that helps beneficiary to register, help create micro planning of  
58 sessions by the vaccinators and issue of certificates to the beneficiary who have been vaccinated ,it is consider as  
59 digital back bone of the vaccination drive in India, it is linked to Evin and SAFEVAC which help in cold chain  
60 monitoring and vaccine logistics planning, it is very good digital initiative 5 but Atmost concern is about the  
61 Refugees, it has been estimated that 250,000 current refugees and also asylum seekers has been left out and thereby  
62 have been Denied access to government-issued documentation it is not the case of only refuges but also many  
63 Vulnerable Internal Migrants who have to travel from less-developed part of the country to larger industrialized  
64 towns and many cities in search of better living. 6 According to the reports from recent census, in 2011, nearly  
65 456 million of internal migrants are there in India who amount to nearly one-third of Indian population. internal  
66 migrants despite of being Indian citizens, many of them find that mere crossing of a state border has put them  
67 in a similar condition of international refugees, further more they end up having no documentation which leave  
68 them with no legal recognition thereby they may not be eligible for government documents issued to citizens  
69 of India, such as passports and voting cards. ?? 7 It has been identified by UNHCR that many refugees have  
70 been denied the Aadhaar card on the basis that they do not belong to legal residents criteria. Internal migrants  
71 also face similar situation in obtaining Aadhaar, since many of the internal migrants have no documentation  
72 linked to their residence in any place. These issues became worse when the government of india made Aadhaar  
73 cards mandatory to be linked to obtains certain basic benefits like bank accounts, employment, advanced health  
74 care and also a mobile phone card. 6,8 c) Building a fairer, healthier world Nerveless, this refuges and internal  
75 migrants who may not possess the required ID proof as mentioned in the Co-WIN PORTAL to get them register  
76 as a beneficiaries 5 and thereby won't be able to get COVID 19 vaccination, refugee who live in unfavorable  
77 conditions are at most risk of COVID 19 infection and may be source of super-spreaders who may be potent  
78 carrier ?? 10 and even with adequate vaccination coverage of rest of the population we may still not be able to  
79 curb COVID 19 infection and spread efficiently.

80 Further more this year world heath theme-Building a fairer, healthier world, has rightly emphasized on the  
81 need to highlight particular group of population who does not enjoy the health benefits like other ,few such group  
82 who do not get health benefits like others are refugees and internal migrants. Getting health benefits is the  
83 fundamental right of every individual.

### 84 4 II.

### 85 5 Conclusion

86 Hence, the policy makers should take necessary steps to vaccinate refugees and internal migrants based on current  
87 age group criteria despite of them not able to furnish necessary document for registration and make an effort to  
88 link them to Co-WIN portal, in all vaccination centers for the benefits of individual and to the community there  
89 by we will be able to tackle this public health emergency in a much better way and there by curbing COVID19  
90 infection.

### 91 6 Source of support

92 None.

### 93 7 Conflicts of interests

94 None to be declared.

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