

## Important Vocab for the Editorial

1. **unfair** (adjective) – unjust, inequitable, prejudiced, biased; unequal, uneven.
2. **vaccine** (noun) – a biological preparation that improves immunity to a particular disease.
3. **inequity** (noun) – unfairness, unjustness, one-sidedness, partisanship, partiality, favouritism.
4. **containment** (noun) – an act of keeping something (harmful) under control (it means quickly identifying cases of coronavirus through testing, placing infected individuals in isolation, tracking who infected persons might have been in contact with and potentially quarantining those who came into contact with infection so that the disease doesn't continue to spread).
5. **measure** (noun) – action, step, procedure.
6. **in the midst of** (phrase) – in the middle of.
7. **raging** (adjective) – wild, strong, severe, acute, very bad.
8. **(with) each passing day** (phrase) – day by day.
9. **abdicate** (verb) – reject, disown, turn down, give up, abandon (a responsibility).
10. **vaccine equity** (noun) – the equitable distribution of vaccines (worldwide).
11. **vaccination** (noun) – treatment with a vaccine to protect against a particular disease; immunization.
12. **a free hand** (phrase) – licence, freedom, latitude, leeway, flexibility.
13. **universal** (adjective) – relating to all people; all-inclusive, all-embracing, comprehensive.
14. **fall through the cracks** (phrase) – to not be noticed; to go unnoticed, to be overlooked.
15. **immunisation** (noun) – the process whereby a person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease, typically by the administration of a vaccine. Vaccines stimulate the body's own immune system to protect the person against subsequent infection or disease.
16. **vaccinate** (verb) – inoculate, administer, introduce (with a vaccine to provide immunity against a disease).
17. **criterion** (noun) – basis, standard; specification, guideline. (criteria is the plural form of criterion).
18. **beneficiary** (noun) – recipient, receiver.

19. Universal Immunisation (Programme) (UIP) (noun) – Immunization Programme in India was introduced in 1978 as ‘Expanded Programme of Immunization’ (EPI) by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. In 1985, the programme was modified as ‘Universal Immunization Programme’ (UIP) to be implemented in a phased manner to cover all districts in the country by 1989-90 with one of the largest health programmes in the world. In India’s national Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP), the policy is defined, vaccines procured and supplied by the Union government and vaccination implemented by State governments.
20. precedent (noun) – model, exemplar, example, pattern; previous example/instance, prior instance.
21. probably (adverb) – most likely, in all likelihood, all things considered, perhaps.
22. thereby (adverb) – as a result of that.
23. ill-conceived (adjective) – absurd, ridiculous, not carefully planned.
24. shell out (phrasal verb) – pay out, spend, expend.
25. recipe (noun) – formula, method, technique, system, procedure, process, means, way.
26. exacerbate (verb) – intensify, increase, heighten; aggravate, worsen, compound.
27. undertake (verb) – begin, start; engage in, become involved in; try, attempt.
28. pandemic (noun) – the worldwide spread of a new disease; The illness spreads around the world and typically affects a large number of people across a wide area.
29. cost (verb) – result in damage to, harm, damage; cause the loss of something.
30. enormously (adverb) – extremely, very, hugely.
31. in terms of (phrase) – with regard to, regarding/concerning, in connection with.
32. livelihood (noun) – means of making a living with the basic necessities (food, water, shelter and clothing); means of support, subsistence, source of income.
33. due to (phrase) – because of, owing to, on account of, as a result of.
34. lack of (noun) – absence, unavailability, deficiency, scarcity.
35. factor in (phrasal verb) – take into account, take into consideration, consider.
36. garner (verb) – reserve, put away, gather, collect, accumulate.

37. **transparent** (adjective) – open/candid, forthright, straightforward, honest.
38. **collectively** (adverb) – as a whole/group.
39. **earmark** (verb) – reserve, set aside, set apart.
40. **uncharted** (adjective) – unexplored, unknown, unfamiliar, strange.
41. **uncharted territory** (phrase) – unknown area.
42. **lead to** (verb) – result in, cause, bring on, give rise to.
43. **likely** (adverb) – probably, in all probability, presumably, no doubt, doubtlessly.
44. **last** (verb) – continue, go on, carry on, keep going, proceed, be prolonged.
45. **pandemonium** (noun) – turmoil, disorder, uproar, chaos, mayhem, confusion.
46. **profiteering** (noun) – an act of making an excessive/illegal profit.
47. **in the thick of** (phrase) – in the most active or central part of a specific (& complex) situation or activity; a central/major role in a situation.
48. **unlikely** (adjective) – not likely.
49. **result in** (phrasal verb) – cause, bring on, bring about, call forth, give rise to.
50. **roll-out** (noun) – official launch/introduction.
51. **mitigation** (noun) – alleviation, reduction; lessening.

### Unfair and dangerous: On vaccine inequity

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#### Vaccine inequity will make containment measures more difficult

In the midst of a raging second wave, which is touching new peaks each passing day, the Central government has abdicated its responsibility to **ensure vaccine equity through free vaccination** for the poor across all age groups. While State governments were never consulted or given prior notice about the change in **vaccination policy**, giving the two vaccine manufacturers a free hand to decide the price at which vaccines will be sold to State governments has made universal **COVID-19** vaccination a difficult task to achieve. A **large percentage of those aged 18-44 years** does not have the resources to pay for vaccines and hence will fall through the cracks. So, the States will have to take a leading role in the free

immunisation programme. While nearly two dozen States have already committed to vaccinate for free the target population, it remains to be seen if they use any criteria to identify the beneficiaries. Never before has universal immunisation of nearly 600 million people been left to State governments and the private sector while the Union government restricts itself to vaccinating for free just 300 million. With this precedent, States will probably be required to vaccinate children too, when vaccines become available, thus burdening them even further and thereby actively promoting vaccine inequity. If making States pay for vaccines is an ill-conceived idea, forcing them to shell out more than what the Union government pays for the same vaccines is a sure recipe for exacerbated vaccine inequity. With vaccination being the only safe way to end the pandemic, undertaking any exercise that leaves a large population unprotected will cost the country enormously in terms of lives and livelihoods.

While the Union government has already allocated ₹35,000 crore for COVID-19 vaccination in this Budget and also committed to provide further funds if required, it will spend less than ₹10,000 crore to vaccinate for free all above 45 years. While the sudden change in policy is therefore not due to lack of financial resources, the State governments, which have not factored in funds for vaccination, will now be required to garner funds for the same. There is hence a great compulsion to make pricing more transparent and allow States to collectively bargain for a lower price and assured timelines to receive supplies. The current policy, which has earmarked 50% supplies to State governments and private hospitals, takes the States and the companies to a completely uncharted territory leading to competition among States, and between State governments and private hospitals. Vaccine shortage from both manufacturers is likely to last a few months. The combination of policy pandemonium, profiteering by vaccine manufacturers in the thick of the pandemic and vaccine shortage is unlikely to result in a smooth roll-out of vaccines for the target group. This could lead to a dangerous situation where containment and mitigation measures become even more difficult.