



The BORBHAG Group

Vaccines in the era of COVID 19: Key Takeaways

The fourth session of the BORBHAG Knowledge Series was held on 23rd October 2020 on “Vaccine development in the era of COVID”. The discussion brought together participants with diverse backgrounds including legal, policy and medical to explore the current landscape of vaccines and way forward in light of the COVID pandemic.

The discussion opened with a presentation covering various aspects of the vaccine development process, from the first vaccine prepared by Dr. Edward Jenner to one of the latest - AstraZeneca’s COVID-19 vaccine. Further, the development process for a vaccine was discussed across its defined phases highlighting that only 6% vaccines make it to the manufacturing stage. With the coming together of new-age vaccines such as mRNA vaccines, the presentation touched upon the gamut of vaccine technologies and the wider implications for healthcare. Lastly, the presentation provided an insight into the global financing models as well as emerging trends and questions that we face today – distribution, availability, and patent challenges.

Following the presentation, the discussion brought together an interesting set of questions - ranging from what does the timeline for the COVID vaccine look to how do we to prepare our infrastructure and policy for the next pandemic? While limited investment in the health infrastructure has been made in a country like India, we have also rolled the polio campaign which may allow India to handle the distribution challenges better than other countries. Furthermore, COVID-19 has made safety and hygiene practices of key importance and this must be constantly reiterated in the minds of people. The discussion also shed light on the operational complexities of a COVID vaccine in terms of population for administration (exclusion category, testing, schedule), financial implications, adverse event monitoring, manufacturing capacities and political economy, amongst others. With regard to infrastructure, NFHS 4 points to 62% full immunisation in India, indicating that there are still gaps – adding to this is the issues of storage – which will be critical considerations for distribution at the last mile.

In closing, the discussion brought out the fact that vaccines are a journey with a thousand heartbreaks. In the case of COVID it is an unravelling story, and globally we will continue to learn along the way.

For further information, please reach out to us at info@borbhag.com



BORBHAG Consultancy

Legal Advisors to
The BORBHAG Group



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