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Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA and IIHMR University, Jaipur have partnered to design two new online courses for vaccine policy makers and programme managers. The online programme which began on 17 October, will continue till December 13, 2020. From India, 53 participants have been selected to attend the programme, out of 64 who expressed interest.

The online programme received an overwhelming response, attracting 400 applications out of which 230 participants from the field of immunization and vaccine delivery have been shortlisted to attend the programme. The participants are from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Somalia.

The online programmes are aimed at educating policy makers and programme managers on using the tools of economics to optimize vaccine coverage during the challenges of COVID-19.

"Evidence on evaluating infectious disease and economic impact of vaccination are critical in informing national decision makers on the allocation of limited resources and in prioritizing interventions in the health sector. COVID 19 has thrown up new challenges for managing existing immunization programmes as well as preparing for the rapid deployment of the upcoming COVID vaccine. Our online courses aimed at helping immunization managers optimise vaccine delivery in these challenging time. We are happy that the programme has received an overwhelming response," said Prof. PR Sodani, president (officiating), IIHMR University, Jaipur, India Programme Lead.

Investments in vaccines provide a public health safety-net that help to strengthen health systems and avoid disease outbreaks which can be costly to control.

Most of the participants are working on positions like director, deputy director, consultant, technical advisor, medical officer, project coordinator, programme manager and officer working in the field of immunization and vaccine delivery. The participants are working in organizations like ministry of health and family welfare, Government of India, State ministries, WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, Tata Trusts, Clinton Health Access Initiative and IIT Kharagpur.

This is not the first association between the two educational institutions. During 2017-19 the IIHMR University, Jaipur and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA had jointly designed and conducted five capacity building workshops in India which benefitted 85 programme managers and policy makers from Bangladesh, Ghana, India Malaysia, Myanmar, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka.