

Dear All

After a year of dealing with COVID, there is lots of news about a vaccine in recent days. I tried to learn as much as I could about the vaccine and what we can expect. Here is what I learnt:

1. 'No one is safe until everyone is safe' This line from the Economist sums up the need for the vaccine in the current context.
2. There are about 200 vaccines in development, about half a dozen look promising. A few countries have given approval for the use of vaccine.
3. It is expected that the vaccine will be available for 3 % of the world's population in 2021, that means about 225 million people will get access to it. This raises the question of who will get first access to it. Most countries have prioritized health care workers as the first recipients of the vaccine.
4. Finding a vaccine or an answer is easy, producing it at scale is difficult. The world needs to find medical grade glass and needles to mass produce.
5. The supply chain for vaccine delivery will possibly be the biggest globalization exercise even amidst talk of nationalism and make in own country logic. Singapore is planning to use about 5 old Cargo 747 aircraft to fly in vaccine.
6. How will the vaccine be priced? A few governments have already announced free vaccine, in some local state elections in India politicians have made that promise.

*Which trade bloc you belong to is becoming important to get the vaccine. China has a road and belt initiative. China has three vaccines, and they are under test in Brazil and Pakistan right now*

*China has agreed to pay for the vaccine in two countries, e.g. Mexico and the Philippines. This will be a new kind of soft power and diplomacy. About 73 countries are part of the BRI, will all of them get free vaccine from China? I think it's a question of trusting the concept, the technology and the country producing the vaccine.*

*Trust comes from data points- As much as the vaccine is touted to be the answer and solution, it remains to be seen if it really will be the cure and the panacea for all. Will it have any side effects? The data is limited at this point but after 3-4 months, more indicators and metrics will provide more conclusive information of its efficacy.*

*Hope and trust - Would people trust a vaccine produced by US, UK, China or Russia? If one were to have to exercise a choice it would be interesting to see this play out. Hope is a big factor but so is trust.*

7. The vaccine needs stringent temperature control, one of the vaccines needs to be stored and delivered at minus 79 degrees. To give you a sense the temperature at 15 kms in space is about minus 60. This will mean the development of a cold chain delivery. Will covid vaccine be the reason for countries , especially emerging economies to invest in cold chain capability? This might well turn out to be like the digital revolution and a cold chain will have many different benefits in the coming years.
8. President elect Biden has said that he will take a vaccine when Dr Anthony Fauci says it's safe to do so. I think we will see people seeking trust in this rea and equally if things go wrong, we will see lots of litigation. Who will certify that a vaccine is safe? The company making it, the country, some institution like WHO? I think in this case the ordinary citizen will want everyone involved to certify the safety. Some new trust marks will come into play.
9. What happens when the vaccine is in full play by 2022, will the shift that happened now, i.e. work from home, lesser travel, fewer face to face meetings etc. , all go back? I don't know. Which part of our consumer behavior and which part of our office behavior will go back to normal when the vaccine is ready and available off the shelf? We are already hearing about an immunity visa for people who take the vaccine, interesting things will happen.

Feedback welcome

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