

## India: Vaccine Drive in Uttar Pradesh Goes Awry, Villagers Jump into River to Evade Jab

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*Despite a sustained campaign and widespread publicity, vaccine hesitancy continues to prevail in the [rural hinterlands](#) of Uttar Pradesh where the pandemic is spreading its tentacles.*

In Sisoda village in Barabanki — where a group of residents jumped into the Saryu river to evade vaccination on Sunday — the residents remain firm in their decision of not getting the jab.

Shishupal, a local farmer, said:

“People have died even after getting vaccinated. I know of those who have had to be hospitalised after the jab. Jab marna hi hai to vaccine kyon?”

Shishupal, who has done matriculation, is convinced that the Covid vaccine is ‘harmful’ and spreads this ‘information’ among others.

“I have got this information from several of my friends who work in big cities. I am convinced as the local officials have not answered my queries. My own uncle, who worked in Delhi, died a month after having both vaccine shots. What more proof do I need,” he asked.

Mohd Ahsan, another resident, was also unwilling to take the jab.

“Is there a guarantee that we will not get infected after the vaccine? There are many in adjoining village who rushed to take the vaccine and then got infected. Why is the government pushing for vaccination-they should give it to those who want it,” he stated.

## **“Rumours”**

Besides this, rumours abound in the village that the vaccine causes ‘impotence’ and this is mainly responsible for driving the men away.

On Sunday evening, a group of people in Sisoda village in Barabanki district had jumped into the Saryu river after seeing a team of health officials.

The health team had gone to the village to give Covid vaccination to the local residents.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Ramnagar tehsil, Rajiv Kumar Shukla, said about 200 people of the village ran away from the village because of the fear of vaccine and reached the Saryu shore. When the health team reached the river, these people jumped into the river.

## **“A poisonous injection”**

Shukla said he made the villagers understand the importance and benefits of vaccination, and tried to dispel the myths, following which only 18 people in the village got the jabs.

The villagers said they jumped into the river because some people had told them that this was not a vaccine, but a poisonous injection.

It took a great deal of convincing to get people come out of the river.

Sisoda is a village with a population of 1,500 people located in the Terai, 70 km from the district headquarters of Barabanki.

Nodal Officer Rahul Tripathi said that they were continuing efforts to convince the local people about the benefits of vaccination and also dispel misconceptions.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced reward for Covid-free villages with ‘Mera Gaon-Corona Mukh Gaon’ campaign.

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