

## **The Persistence of Hesitancy in Accepting COVID-19 Vaccine: A Study on the Inhabitants of Rural Manipur, India**

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### **Abstract**

While it has been more than a year since India first began its COVID-19 vaccination campaign, hesitancy toward the vaccine continues to pose a significant challenge in achieving herd immunity. This paper examines the factors for the persisting existence of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among the rural inhabitants of Manipur and how the discipline of medical anthropology can assist in mitigating this challenge. Since it was a qualitative study, 100 non-vaccinated individuals of 18 years and above were telephonically interviewed. The result shows complacency, rumours, conspiracy theories, misinformation, fake news, inaccessibility or unavailability, the time factor, distrust toward government and health care workers, and anti-vaccine propaganda, which were thought to have been debunked, continue to fuel the persistence of vaccine hesitancy. Furthermore, the efforts of the government and its agencies to discredit inaccurate information about the vaccine have been largely unsuccessful. As a result, people are less informed about the correct details of the vaccine. Medical anthropology, with its rich methodological and theoretical approach and comprehension levels, can be a valuable tool in addressing the issue of vaccine hesitancy.

*Key Words:* COVID-19; Vaccination; Vaccine Hesitancy; Rural Inhabitants; Medical Anthropology; Anthropology of Medicine.