

# 08

*Gujarat's Dantiwada town is a glowing example of how an innovative method of leveraging digital technology provided a big push to the COVID-19 vaccination drive. This proved not only easy to use, but was the fastest way and also free of cost. Infact, the use of social media paved the way for community ownership or "Jan Bhaagidaari" which Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had deeply desired as a means to combat COVID-19.*

*The last story in this series highlights how a simple idea of circulating photos of people getting vaccinated through WhatsApp instilled community trust in the vaccination process.*



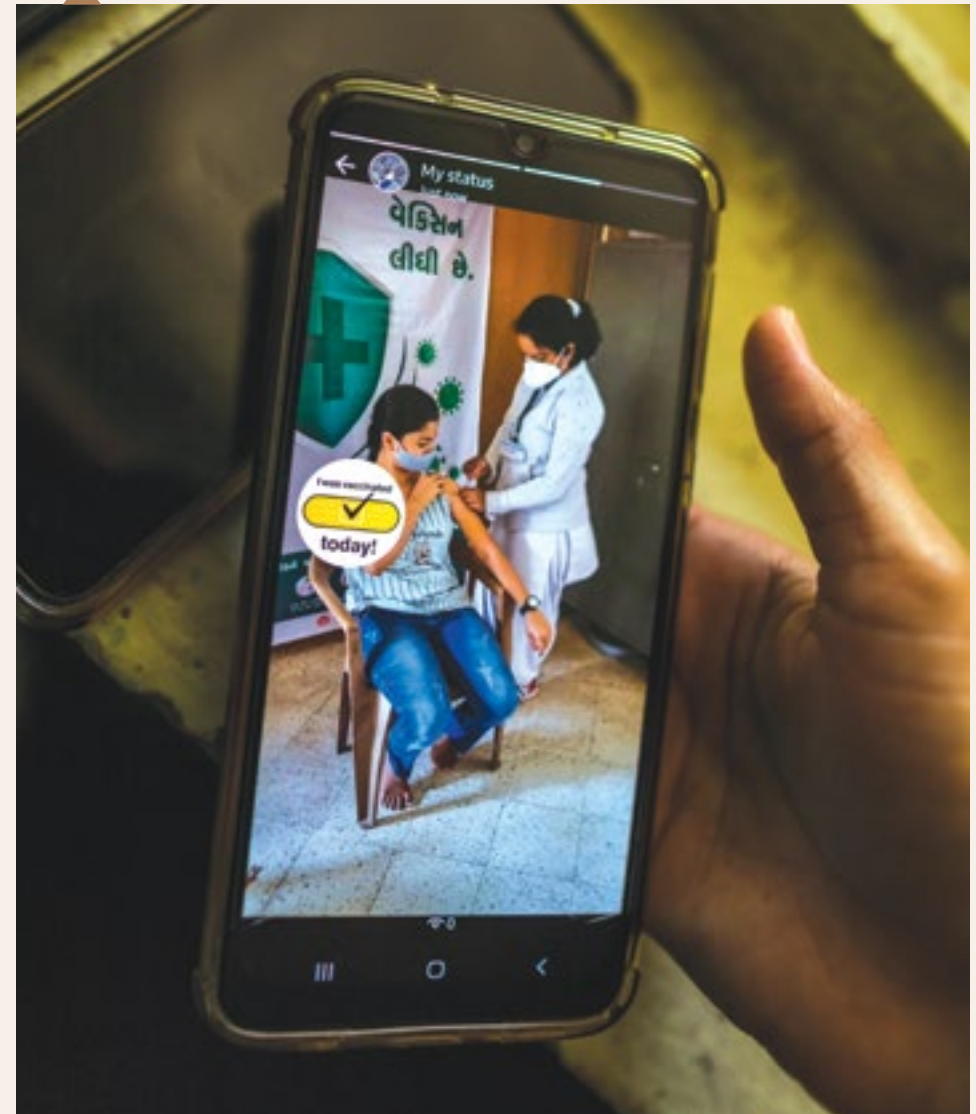
COVID vaccination is going on in full swing in the small town of Dantiwada in the State of Gujarat. The situation however was not the same some time back. Community members were hesitant to take the vaccination due to apprehension of the after-effects of the COVID-19 vaccine. Their transformation was largely due to the efforts of Vellari Kusumben Devjibhai, a Healthcare Worker at the local Community Health Centre, who as is true of her generation, took to digital technology full throttle to spread the message.



“Don’t even start about how scared people were! Nobody was ready to take the vaccine. They were afraid that something might happen to them... I made a list. My target was to vaccinate 100 people. Only six people from that list showed up, that too after a lot of hard work”, says Kusum recalling the initial turnout.

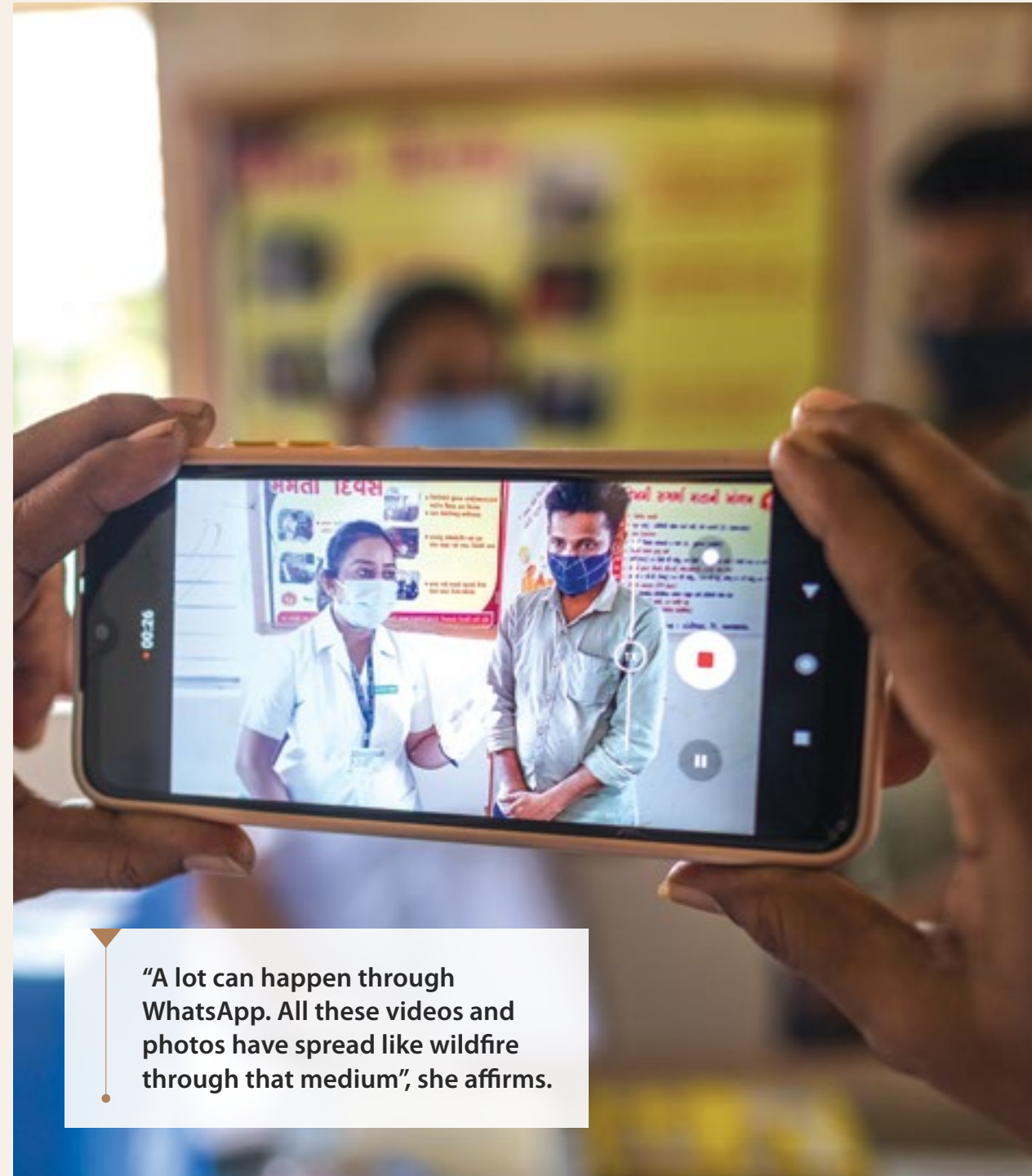


“Then I got an idea. I clicked photos of those six people on my mobile and put those photos as my WhatsApp status for others to see them. I sent these videos to my colleagues. They helped circulate the videos”, she adds.





**"I went door-to-door to explain things, but nobody was ready to understand. But on seeing photos of a person taking a vaccine for real, made people feel reassured", says Kusum.**



**"A lot can happen through WhatsApp. All these videos and photos have spread like wildfire through that medium", she affirms.**





“When I saw videos and photos of other people confidently taking the COVID vaccine, I no longer felt scared and went ahead in getting myself and my family members vaccinated”, says Sukhiben Nagjibhai Rabri, a beneficiary from Dantiwada, Gujarat.

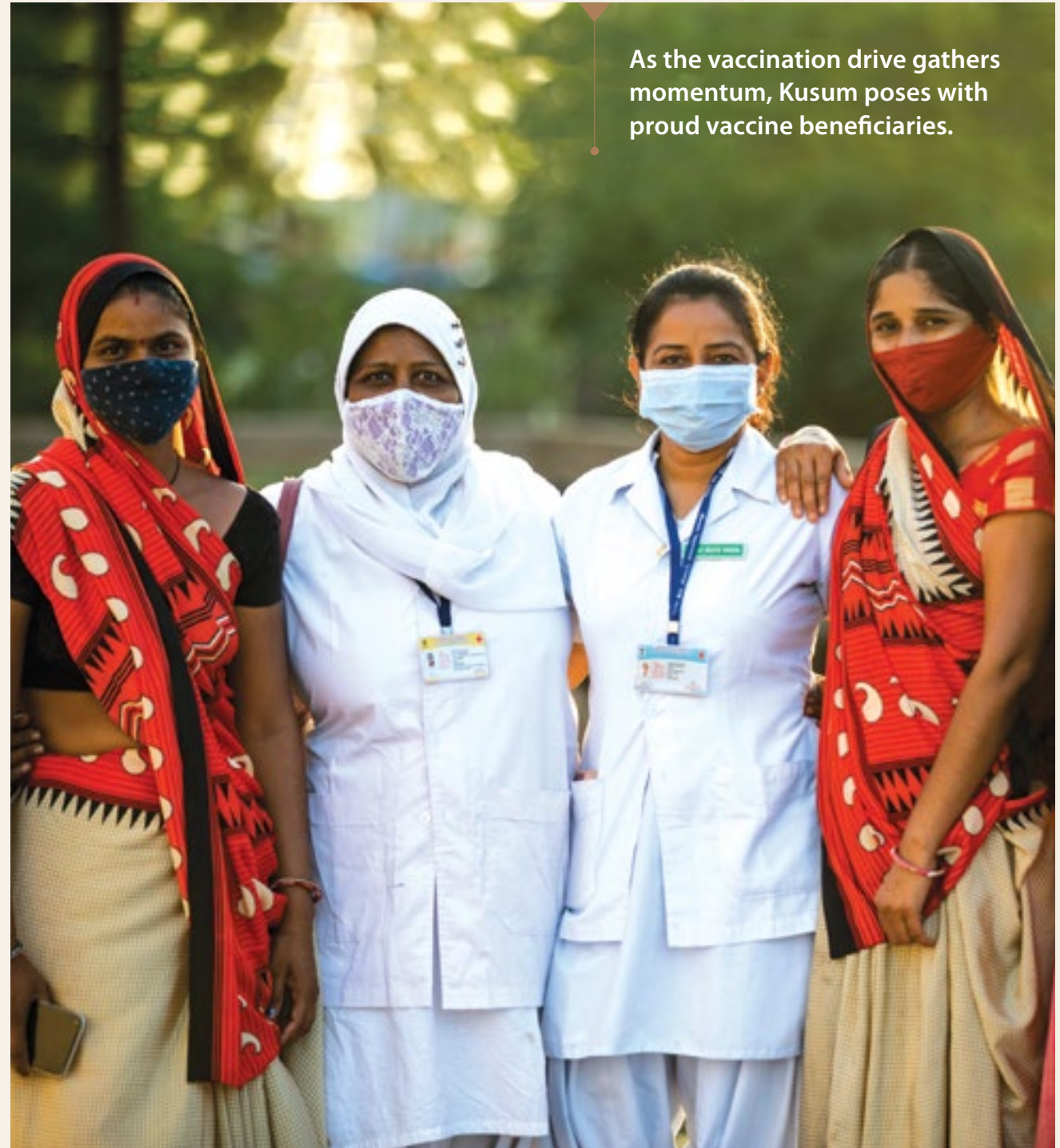




“Seeing photos of family and friends getting vaccinated worked like magic. Suddenly, there was a buzz across homes, walkways and marketplaces. People were eager to learn more about the pandemic and the vaccination”, recalls Kusum.



“People started turning up for vaccination in large numbers. What’s amazing was the transformation from hesitancy to eagerness for the vaccines. They would even caution each other about the minor after-effects post-vaccination”, she recalls.



As the vaccination drive gathers momentum, Kusum poses with proud vaccine beneficiaries.



“Now people call me up asking when can they come for their second dose”, says Kusum brimming with a sense of fulfilment. “My father is very proud of me. Every time I leave for work, he asks me to be careful”, she adds.

