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COVID-19: A Challenge to Science, Technology and Human Rights

Ruchi Rani Singh

Introduction

In 2015, Bill Gates expressed his concern about the microbes and said "If anything kills over 10 million people in the next few decades, it's most likely to be a highly infectious virus rather than a war. Not missiles, but microbes. Now, part of the reason for this is that we've invested a huge amount in nuclear deterrents. But we've actually invested very little in a system to stop an epidemic. We're not ready for the next epidemic."¹ This concern of Bill Gate about microbes did not let the world to wait very long. It was the last week of December 2019 when the outbreak of the Coronavirus was first reported in the city of Wuhan, Hubei province, China. This virus, after the reporting of its first cases, is on the verge to become a real a challenge to humanity because it is spreading at an accelerated speed. Observing the contagious nature of the virus it was 11th March 2020 when World Health Organization finally announced the COVID-19 as a Pandemic.² WHO also expressed its concern about using the term pandemic. It said, "Pandemic is not a word to use lightly or carelessly. It is a word that, if misused, can cause unreasonable fear, or unjustified acceptance that the fight is over, leading to unnecessary suffering and death."³ It is the first time that a coronavirus had led to a pandemic.⁴

On 11th February 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) expressed its opinion on the novel coronavirus and come to the following observation, "This outbreak is testing us in many ways.

It's a test of political solidarity – whether the world can come together to fight a common enemy that does not respect borders or ideologies.

It's a test of financial solidarity – whether the world will invest now in fighting this outbreak, or pay more later to deal with its consequences.

And it's a test of scientific solidarity- will the world come together to find shared answers to shared problems."⁵

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