

## Sansad TV Perspective: Omicron - New Covid Concern

In the series Sansad TV Perspective, we bring you an analysis of the discussion featured on the insightful programme 'Perspective' on Sansad TV, on various important topics affecting India and also the world. This analysis will help you immensely for the [IAS exam](#), especially the mains exam, where a well-rounded understanding of topics is a prerequisite for writing answers that fetch good marks.

In this article, we feature the discussion on the topic: Omicron: New Covid Concern

### [Perspective - Omicron: New Covid Concern](#)

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**Participants:**

1. Dr. V. Ravi, Virologist
2. Dr. Raman R. Gangakhedkar, Dr. C.G. Pandit National Chair, ICMR
3. Dr. Sanjay Rai, Professor, Department of Community Medicine, AIIMS

**Context:**

The year 2020 brought the onset of the pandemic that shook the entire world with a detrimental blow to millions of lives due to the deadly coronavirus which is designated as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)-CoV- 2 strain of viruses responsible for respiratory infections.

**An Overview of the Scenario:**

- With the active intervention by governments, industries, doctors, researchers and other frontline warriors it was possible to flatten the curve of emerging cases of patients with COVID-19 infections and the fatality rate.
- However, another episode of predicament emerged with the rise and spread of a new variant of coronavirus known as Omicron.
- This created a massive furore across the globe as it might recur the adverse events of the first two waves of COVID-19.
- The [WHO](#) has already designated it as a variant of concern. As a result, many countries imposed travel bans on passengers travelling from South African nations as it was the place where the variant was identified for the first time.
- This raises serious concerns on how the implications of the new variant are managed and will there be sufficient vaccine equity to mitigate the challenges.

Read more on [coronavirus variants](#) in the link.

**Important Highlights of the Discussion:**

- The discussion emphasized the fact that nobody is safe in the world until everybody is safe across the world.

- The experts believe that the new variant is still at a stage that is data insufficient which makes it difficult to gauge the future challenges and the intensity of those challenges accompanied by the fact that the viruses mutate in an irregular manner.
- It is estimated that the transmissibility is higher in the omicron variant and the infection rate might elevate.
- The biggest challenge raises a question on the effectiveness of the vaccines against the new variant.
- Besides, there is a concern surrounding vaccine equity, especially in low-income countries. This divides the human population into being vaccinated and unvaccinated.
- It has been alleged that the low vaccination rate in low-income countries like South Africa has contributed to the further spread of the pandemic in the form of the new variant.
- In this regard, the Government of India started a campaign “Har Ghar Dastak” to spread awareness about vaccination and its significance.

<https://youtu.be/UXXWm-fLwck>

#### Ways to tackle the variant:

- It has been recommended that there is a necessity for a second-generation vaccine that triggers an efficient immune response against the Omicron variant and the future variants of the coronavirus.
- The vaccination drive must be expanded to every section of the population as it is the inherent property of viruses to mutate and it will continue to do so. Such a scenario can be tackled by immunizing the population uniformly.
- It is also recommended that the booster doses must be promoted in a regulated manner along with adequate data to curb the rise of the Omicron variant. Before the introduction of any booster dose, it must be ensured that every individual has been covered with double doses of the existing vaccines as it is pointed out by a distinguished virologist that individuals with double dose coverage have better immunity than those with a single dose.
- The most important way suggested by experts is to address the implications of vaccine inequity in order to ensure the safety of every individual.
- Diplomatic programmes like ‘Vaccine Maitri’ that enabled the distribution of vaccines to the countries in need can be an exemplary model to be replicated across the globe and tackle the spread of the new variant.

**Read more summaries of [Perspective](#) in the link.**