

Omicron is a product of inequality, disparities and a “US versus Them” notion propagated by Developed Nations.

The second wave of Covid-19 is something that has left a void in all of us. The images of never-ending fire on pyres to lines in hospitals and pharmacies to cries of anguish all along still tormenting us. So, when the new [Omicron variant of Covid-19](#) came as an unlikely surprise. I didn't want to go again through the trauma and sting of losing people so close.

There is little known for sure about [Omicron](#) as it originated from Botswana and South Africa, around a week ago with about 50 mutations. As scientists around the world scramble to gather information on essential matrices about its contamination speed and severity. One thing we all know is that in the pandemic theatrics of, “Us versus Them,” Omicron is not the last nail, as it's high time to understand that when a pandemic happens, “we all tend to suffer”.

Masks, distancing, ventilation, testing, and contact tracing have and continue to contain the virus but there is no containing the fact that Omicron is a product of inequality and disparities propagated by developed nations against development. This has been very much reflective when US President, Biden, one hand [denotes](#) that, “We're throwing everything we can at this virus, tracking it from every angle, and that's what we have to keep doing,” and on the other hand continues to ignore and not back the South African (Source of Omicron) and Indian (saw one of the worst second waves of covid-19) request of temporary IP wavier in WTO. This has further been reflected in the EU and UK's recent reactions.

## **Why a Temporary IP Wavier?**

The situation of vaccine accessibility stays a huge concern for developing nations, even when they tend to be a significant hub for pathological data used in vaccine manufacturing, as noted in the case of South Africa, where being part [of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine trials](#), the country had paid double the price per dose compared with European nations.

Thus, such issues create distribution disparity and lead to zones full of unvaccinated populations, contaminated and bringer of new mutations like Omicron (which emerged from an HIV patient contracted with covid ), which in this case originated from South Africa itself and now threatens the nations(UK, EU, US) which on the first place did not support, India and South Africa's idea of IP wavier from October 2020 in WTO.

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Image source: The Indian Express

The issue of IP waiver thus goes beyond the assertion of a [“thinly veiled attempt”](#) to boost the Indian drug industry by the Biden administration.

It is to be understood that there is a need to share technology to boost vaccine accessibility as discrimination between vaccinated and unvaccinated people is the new breeding ground of covid-19 variations and Omicron is just the beginning. And Developed nations can't show an, “Us versus Them” attitude as the domino effect of new variations continue to affect all.

### **Booster Dose and Merck's Covid-19 Pill Not an Answer**

As most of the world still stays deprived of their second dose as there has been a narrative about a booster dose brewing in the EU and US as Omicron hits the same and this further connotes to the issue pointed out by a lot of experts when the vaccines first hit the markets. Which was about a vicious cycle of vaccinations due to changing nature of the virus.

Where no expert can predict when will this virus stop mutating and with scarce research on the side effects of multiple dosages of vaccination, the Booster dose stays a contentious

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issue. Nevertheless, even when vaccination is propagated it stays limited to a set of nations and only fuelled [vaccine nationalism](#).

Further, with a large number of cases lag in obtaining the vaccine and other medicines, the disease continues to disrupt global supply chains and, as a result, economies around the world. The new Merck’s miraculous Covid-19 pill comes as a false ray of hope.

With lessons learned from the vaccine episode where the supply of vaccines in developed nations like the US exceeded demand and led to [stockpiles of the same](#). Still even with the power to change the course of the fight against Covid-19 it hardly did anything. It is unlikely that these new sets of pills would ever reach the developing nations where new variants are born.

Lastly, nations that romanticized to return to normalcy are slamming their borders shut. It is to be noted that in reality all nations were never equal as some hoarded vaccines at the expense of poorer regions, and are now paying a price for their selfishness.

They failed to be collaborative and go borderless when it was needed, but if now they fail to learn, there will be more Omicron’s adding to the trauma and pain all over the world.

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