Ahmedabad: A panel discussion organized by the Centre for Management of Health Services (CMHS) of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A), with national and international experts stressed the need for a resilient healthcare system to address the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and future epidemics. They emphasized readiness and training of medical practitioners and added that such actions would prevent panic.

‘Containing Corona: Designing and Thinking About India’s Response’, had panellists including Anant Bhan from KMC, Manipal; Dr Aparna Hegde from Cama Hospital Mumbai; Dr Meenu Singh from PGI, Chandigarh; Dr Nafis Faizi from JN Medical College, AMU; Prof Chirantan Chatterjee from IIM-A; Jaya Bhagat, principal director of CAG India; Prof Anant Mishra from the University of Minnesota and Dr David Fedson from the University of Virginia.

Dr Singh said that compared to its predecessor coronaviruses such as SARS and MERS, COVID-19 spreads very quickly. “On the positive side, its mortality is less than theirs, at present about 3% of infected persons have died compared to 10%-20% in earlier strains. While India has not recorded a fatality yet, universal preparedness is the only way to counter it,” she said.

Other panellists also pointed to the Kerala model where primary health centres (PHCs) are equipped to identify the suspected cases and report them to base hospitals, resulting in quicker identification. Prof Chatterjee said that the discussion covered various aspects of the global phenomenon. International panellists spoke on the body’s defence mechanisms against the virus and said that along with finding an antidote to the virus itself, researchers are working to understand the body’s reaction to the infection.