IBERIAN MUN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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*The question of ethical implications in regard to genetic modifications*

Development of the genome editing techniques has brought attention to ethical considerations that prevent or benefit genetic modification. Major ethical dilemma is present in the science world due to the human conduct (what is right and wrong). Genetic Modification is a process of changing the structure of the genes of an organism. It results in features being added, removed, or changed in an organism, such as different tasting and looking food. It can also add attributes to food that were not present before. When it comes to a human being, genetic modifications can cause a different appearance, or remove a genetic disease.

There are several subtopics that arise from the discussion of genetic modifications. The first is class divisions. Genetic modifications may be available only to a wealthier community, which will lead to further class separation of availability in healthcare. The GMO foods may be available to a limited population. The following subtopic regards consent. Consent cannot be obtained by an organism of which genetic modifications may be performed on, seeing as the organism is not capable of giving such. (e.g. a fetus). A large issue that arises from the event of genetic modification is safety. Safety is a major concern in such matter due to the errors that may occur during the genetic modifications. Some cells cannot be combines or distorted, hence, causing failure, or an error in the system, which may lead to harmful effects when the GMO food is consumed (such as allergies that would normally not be present and diseases). International Summit of Human Gene Editing has concluded that the risk cannot be justified by the potential benefit.

When looking at the rationale behind genetic modifications, there are two values that are commonly found, extrinsic and intrinsic. The intrinsic concerns include questions such as if there are going to be any fundamental issues with an organism, if the genetic interventions are going to compromise the “normalcy” (socially acceptable norms), and if the transgenics are more likely to suffer due to their unnatural structure. For extrinsic concerns, it mainly contains the health concerns (safety concerns) on a global scale, the long-term environmental impact on a global scale, and the question if there should be any boundaries set as to how far can the scientists explore the abilities of genetic modifications.

The benefits of genetic modifications include both, life-importance aspects, as well as basic needs. The food that is genetically modified contains more nutrients, requires less use of pesticides, increases the supply, and grows faster. With such, the basic needs are satisfied, and in case of a requirement for an excessive amount of nutrients, GMO foods can provide such. Human being can be genetically modified to remove a tendency to a disease, or a disease itself, which is a life-saving aspect.