

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1066
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29TH JULY, 2025**

INTRODUCTION OF BARCODES TO COMBAT COUNTERFEIT DRUGS

1066: SHRI JAGGESH:

Will the **Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government is all set to introduce barcodes to combat counterfeit drugs;
- (b) whether the barcode covers the entire supply chain—from manufacturer to retailer—to prevent tampering or diversion;
- (c) whether there will be a centralized database or app for consumers to verify medicine authenticity;
- (d) whether Government proposes a regular public awareness campaign to educate people on how to check barcodes before buying drugs; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof, and other steps by Government to curb counterfeit and spurious drugs?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY
WELFARE
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)**

(a) to (c): Yes Sir, The Government has implemented barcodes or Quick Response (QR) codes to combat the menace of spurious drugs.

As per the sub-rule (5) of Rule 96 of Drugs Rules, 1945, every active pharmaceutical ingredient (bulk drug) manufactured or imported in India shall bear Quick Response code on its label at each level packaging.

Further, as per the sub-rule (6) of Rule 96 of Drugs Rules, 1945, it is mandatory for all the manufacturers of drug formulation products specified in Schedule H2 to affix Bar code or QR code or Quick Response Code on its primary packaging label or, in case of inadequate space in primary package label, on the secondary package label that store data or information legible with software application to facilitate authentication.

These barcode can be scanned by all the stakeholders throughout the entire supply chain.

(d) & (e): The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation has made the said requirements regarding QR Codes available to the general public by publishing the notification in this regard on its website (<https://cdsco.gov.in/opencms/opencms/en/Notifications/Gazette-Notifications>) and has also advised industry stakeholders for public awareness campaigns in this regard.

Further, the guidance for identification and verification of spurious drugs have also been provided on the website of CDSCO describing the process flow for verifying the authenticity of the drugs by reading the bar code or quick response code.

CDSCO and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have taken several other steps to ensure manufacture/import, distribution and sale quality medicines in the country:

- (i). In order to assess the regulatory compliance of drug manufacturing premises in the country, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), in collaboration with state regulators, initiated risk-based inspections of drug manufacturing and testing firms in December 2022. As of now, 905 units have been inspected, resulting in 694 actions being taken. These actions include Stop Production Orders (SPO), Stop Testing Orders (STO), license suspensions/cancellations, warning letters, and showcause notices, depending on the severity of non-compliance. This initiative has provided valuable insights into the ground reality of manufacturing practices and has led to relevant corrective actions, resulting in noticeable improvements in the regulatory framework.
- (ii). In February, 2024 CDSCO published regulatory guidelines for the sampling of drugs, cosmetics, and medical devices by drugs inspectors of Central and State Drug Authorities in the Country. The guidelines provides a structured approach to ensure the quality and efficacy of products available in the market through uniform drug sampling methodology for drugs inspectors under state and central drug regulatory authorities in India. It covers various aspects of sampling, including sampling plans, selection, locations, number and quantity of samples, timelines, and role of testing laboratories. It stresses the importance of a structured sampling plan, risk-based sample selection, and covering diverse locations, including rural areas.
- (iii). Central Government has amended the Drugs Rules 1945 vide G.S.R. 922 (E) dated 28.12.2023 to revise the schedule M to the said rules related to Good Manufacturing Practices and requirements of premises, plant and equipment for pharmaceutical products. Revised Schedule M has become effective for the drug manufacturers with turnover > Rs. 250 crores from 29.06.2024. However, for manufacturers having turnover of less than Rs. 250 Cr, conditional extension up to 31.12.2025 is currently operational for those who submitted their upgradation plan for the extended compliance period.
- (iv). An online portal, SUGAM labs is in place since September 2023 for integrating the drug testing labs of the CDSCO. It automates the entire workflow for testing of Medical Products (Drugs, Vaccine, Cosmetics & Medical devices) to meet the quality specification and tracing the testing status in the laboratories.
- (v). The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 was amended under Drugs & Cosmetics (Amendment) Act 2008 to provide stringent penalties for manufacture of spurious and adulterated drugs. Certain offences have also been made cognizable and non-bailable.

- (vi). States/ UTs have set up special Courts for trial of offences under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act for speedy disposal.
- (vii). The number of sanctioned posts in Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) has been significantly increased in last 10 years.
- (viii). To ensure efficacy of drugs, the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 have been amended providing that applicant shall submit the result of bioequivalence study along with the application for grant of manufacturing license of oral dosage form of some drugs.
- (ix). The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 have been amended making it mandatory that before the grant of manufacturing license, the manufacturing establishment is to be inspected jointly by the Drugs Inspectors of Central Government and State Government.
- (x). The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 have been amended, making it mandatory that the applicants shall submit evidence of stability, safety of excipients etc. to the State Licensing Authority before grant of manufacturing license by the Authority.
- (xi). Central regulator coordinates activities of State Drug Control Organisations and provides expert advice through the Drugs Consultative Committee (DCC) meetings held with State Drugs Controllers for uniformity in administration of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.
- (xii). Central government is providing regular residential, regional training and workshops to officials of CDSCO and State Drug Regulatory Authorities on Good Manufacturing Practices. In the Financial Year 2023-24 CDSCO has trained 22854 persons while in Financial Year 2024-25, 20551 persons have been trained.
