

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.5007
TO BE ANSWERED ON 31ST MARCH, 2023**

ACCESSIBILITY OF QUALITY MEDICINES

5007: SHRI VINCENT H. PALA:

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

- (a) whether the price of various drug portfolios has increased despite active regulation of the price of drugs and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the medicine accessibility in rural India has not been scaled up even after a large spending on schemes such as Ayushman Bharat and if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that branded drugs under the AMRIT pharmacies are not available and if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the pharmacist-to-patient ratio across rural India stands at one pharmacist for 4000 people and if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken by the Government to improve medical assistance in pharmacies that are understaffed;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to take measures to address issues such as lack of storage facilities and poor infrastructure for the movement of medicines from source to end-consumer affecting medicine accessibility; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(DR. BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)**

(a) to (d): As per the information provided by Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) under DoP fixes the ceiling price of medicines specified in the first schedule of Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013 (DPCO, 2013). All manufacturers of medicines have to sell their products within the ceiling price (plus applicable Goods and Service Tax) fixed by the NPPA. The annual increase allowed in the case of Scheduled formulations is upto the level of annual revision in Wholesale price index (WPI). NPPA also fixes retail price of a new drug under DPCO, 2013 for existing manufacturers of scheduled formulations. The notified retail prices are applicable only to the applicant manufacturing/ marketing companies. For other non-scheduled formulations, a manufacturer is at liberty to fix the maximum retail price of a non-scheduled formulation launched by it. In case of non-scheduled formulation, no manufacturers can increase MRP by

more than 10% of MRP during preceding 12 months. Instances of overcharging are dealt with by NPPA under the relevant provisions of DPCO, 2013. In addition, Para 19 of DPCO, 2013 provides for fixation of ceiling price or retail price of any drug in public interest for such period, as deemed fit, in case of extra-ordinary circumstances.

To supplement States' efforts, National Health Mission (NHM), has launched the Free Drugs Service Initiative to provide free medicines to healthcare seekers at all levels of the public health system. NHM provides budgetary support to the States/UTs through Program Implementation Plans (PIPs).

Under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PMJAY), Empanelled Health Care Providers (EHCP) are paid as per specified package rates. A package consists of all the costs associated with the treatment, including pre and post hospitalisation expenses. These are bundled packages which include all aspects of treatment including pre-admission diagnostics and post discharge medicines for 15 days. The treatment packages include super speciality care like oncology, neurosurgery, cardio-thoracic and cardiovascular surgery. Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has facilitated the availability of free medicines to eligible beneficiaries availing healthcare services under the scheme.

AMRIT Pharmacies are acting as a single point of supply for medical requirements of the hospitals including Branded/Branded Generic/Generic drugs, surgical items, consumables and implants especially for tertiary care hospitals. AMRIT Pharmacy keeps stock of 01 (one) Branded Stock Keeping unit (SKU) and one or two Branded Generic/Generic SKUs for a composition and strength as per the prescription pattern of the Hospital and of the General public of that locality.

Since 2014, the number of institutes approved by The Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) for Diploma in Pharmacy (D.Pharm) has increased from 710 to 3333 and for Degree in Pharmacy (B.Pharm), it has increased from 930 to 2411.

(e) & (f): The Government of India takes measures for ensuring that the quality, safety and efficacy of medicines are not compromised from source to end-consumer. With this in view, the Government has taken a series of measures including strengthening of legal provisions, workshops and training programmes for manufacturers and regulatory officials and measures such as risk based inspections.

These aspects include procurement, storage, distribution, transportation, documentation and record-keeping practices. However, sales, stock and distribution of drugs in the country are regulated under the provisions of Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 by the State Licensing Authorities (SLAs) appointed by the respective States/UTs Governments. The SLAs are legally empowered to take stringent action in case of any non-compliance.
