



Dear Members,

Whichever may be the forum and the topic of discussion regarding medicines in our country these days revolves around quality, availability, affordability and accessibility. All measures are centered around providing quality medicines at affordable prices to people of India. In my column in the past, I did raise the importance of providing quality pharmaceutical care available to patients along with quality medicines. The fact remains however that this aspect is mostly ignored by all stakeholders discussing increasing accessibility of quality medicines to patients at affordable prices. The spotlight is always on making essential drugs available and affordable. Oftentimes the discussion also brings in the issue of quality, but mostly it is assumed that it is possible to provide quality essential medicines at lower prices. I am also inclined to think that it is not impossible for our pharmaceutical sector to generate quality medicines at affordable prices, meeting all sorts of quality norms as having been proven time and

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again especially while exporting essential life-saving drugs to several countries. The point that I would like to emphasize here is that increasing accessibility of quality medicines to public at affordable prices would also tend to increase medication-associated problems such as medication errors, irrational use of medicines leading to AMR and other adverse events, unless the enhanced accessibility is under the proper supervision of a technically competent and trained individual.

Therefore, it is absolutely essential to ensure that medicines are dispensed to patients under proper advice provided by qualified persons, the Pharmacists. Hence, all initiatives by the government of India and its plethora of policy makers must focus on ensuring that pharmacists are there in each and every pharmacy and for that matter, wherever medicines are handled. Now and then, reports appear in the media stating that the government is planning to have essential medicines made available through ration shops or petrol pumps and so on, and such attempts would certainly be counter-productive, unless the Government is meaning to give permissions to only registered pharmacists to

set up pharmacy stores in petrol pumps and other widely distributed outlets to realize the objective of making essential drugs accessible to public at large.

In this context, I would like to refer to our Hon. Pradhan Mantriji's Jan Aushadhi scheme, under which incentives have been announced to those who come forward to set up the Jan Aushadhi pharmacy stores. All registered pharmacists aspiring to be entrepreneurs must come forward to take up the incentives announced by the Hon. Pradhan Mantriji, to set up these pharmacies and run them efficiently to demonstrate that pharmacists can add value to patients. The Pharmacy Council of India too is encouraging each pharmacy college to set up a Jan Aushadhi pharmacy in its premises so that these medicines can be made available under the watchful eyes of pharmacy faculty and students. By actively participating in these initiatives, we pharmacists would be able to create opportunities to demonstrate to all stakeholders what pharmacists are capable of doing. If we do not grab this initiative, someone else would seize this to set up these stores and make the government and all other stakeholders think that anyone including all traders can run these stores for the success of the scheme. If that happens, then we ourselves have ruined our chances and made the policymakers permanently ignore us from including on any healthcare related initiatives in future. We must not let this happen by any means!!

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Our Mission

The Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA) is the national professional body of pharmacists engaged in various facets of the profession of Pharmacy. The IPA is committed to promote the highest professional and ethical standards of pharmacy, focus the image of pharmacists as competent healthcare professionals, sensitize the community, government and other on vital professional issues and support pharmaceuticals education and sciences in all aspects.

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