

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Difference in selling price of medicines

*346. SHRI K.N. BALAGOPAL: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the huge difference in selling price of various medicines of different companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government to avoid this huge price variation;

(c) whether Government has any programme to control the huge price difference between different brands; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to protect the patients from exorbitant prices of life saving medicines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) and (b) There are 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95). The prices of these 74 bulk drugs and the formulations containing any of these drugs are fixed by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) as per provisions of the DPCO, 95. No one can sell any scheduled drug/formulation at a price higher than the price fixed by NPPA. Therefore, there cannot be any price variation in cases of scheduled drugs/medicines.

However, in respect of drugs/medicines not covered under the DPCO, 95 *i.e.* non-scheduled drugs, manufacturers fix the prices by themselves without seeking the approval of Government/NPPA. Such prices are normally fixed depending on various factors like the cost of bulk drugs used in the formulation, cost of excipients, cost of R&D, cost of utilities/packing material, trade margins, quality assurance cost, landed cost of imports etc. Since there is no control on the launch price of non-scheduled medicines it leads to price variation in the prices of similar medicines sold under different brands. However, NPPA regularly examines the movement in prices of non-scheduled medicines. The monthly reports of the IMS-Health and the information furnished by individual manufacturers are utilized for the purpose of monitoring prices of non-scheduled medicines. Wherever a price increase beyond 10% per annum is noticed, the manufacturer is asked to bring down the price voluntarily failing which, subject to prescribed conditions action is initiated under paragraph 10(b) of the DPCO, 1995 for fixing the price of the formulation in public interest. This is an ongoing process.

Apart from purchase of samples by the officers of NPPA from different parts of the country, complaints by individuals/NGOs and report from the State Drug Controllers are utilized to ensure compliances of the prices fixed/notified by the NPPA/Government. Price lists submitted by

individual companies in Form V are scrutinized for the purpose. In case a company is found selling any scheduled formulation at a price higher than price notified/approved by the NPPA, action is taken against such companies as per the provision of DPCO, 1995 for recovery of the overcharged amount.

(c) and (d) The prices of all scheduled medicines covered under price control are fixed/revised by the NPPA as per the provisions of DPCO, 95 from time to time. For non-scheduled medicines, the system to monitor their prices is already in existence. Based on monitoring of prices of non-scheduled formulation, NPPA has fixed prices in case of 30 formulation packs under Para 10(b) and companies have reduced price voluntarily in case of 65 formulation packs. Thus in all, prices of 95 packs of non-scheduled medicines have got reduced as a result of the intervention of NPPA.

The Department of Pharmaceuticals has launched 'Jan Aushadhi Campaign' with the objective of making available medicines at affordable prices for all. Under this campaign less priced quality unbranded generic medicines are made available through 104 Jan Aushadhi Stores which are presently operational in the States/UTs of Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Chandigarh and Delhi.

Steps taken by UGC for prevention of ragging

*347. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that the steps taken by the UGC for preventing ragging in the institutions of higher education have proved to be ineffective;

(b) if so, whether Government is serious enough to take stringent action against the culprits; and

(c) if so, the measures proposed to prevent and eradicate the menace?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (c) University Grants Commission (UGC) has taken various measures to curb the menace of ragging in the higher educational institutions. These measures *inter-alia* include:—

(i) UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of ragging in higher educational institutions, 2009 notified on 17.06.2009. In case of non-compliance of the Regulations, UGC can take actions such as withdrawal of declaration of fitness to receive grants from the UGC, withholding any grant allocated, declaring the institution ineligible for consideration of any assistance under any of the general or special assistance programmes of the UGC, take any such action as the UGC may deem fit, etc.