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Government is to take Janaushadhi scheme to every Block: Ananthkumar

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Addressing the media on the achievements under The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) New Delhi recently the Minister said that following the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi's vision of making providing Affordable, Quality Medicines for All, the Government has made Health Security for all citizens its priority and this aim can only be achieved through the Janaushadhi pariyojana. Through this scheme, the Government is planning to take affordable medicines to each block of the country in near future.

Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary Affairs, Ananthkumar said, "Today India is the World's Pharmacy and our Pharma sector is growing at a pace of 20-21%. India is exporting quality generic medicines to 215 countries. PMBJP scheme is creating a silent revolution in achieving health security by providing affordable, quality medicines for all."

Kumar informed that as on date, 1320 PMBJP Kendras (PMBJKs) are functioning in the country in the 30 States/UTs, covering 426 districts, as compared to only 80 opened between 2008 and 2014. The turnover in the beginning of the scheme was around Rs. 3 cror, which would increase to around Rs. 60 crore by end of this year, he informed.

Further, the Minister said that MoUs for opening PMBJKs have been signed by Union Government with 19 State Governments and other Organisations/NGOs. A total of 32,225 applications have been received out of which in-principle approval has been given to 30,300 applications, which is a proof of the huge opportunity that this scheme provides for unemployed youth to get self-employed, Kumar added.

Talking about the actual reduction in medicine prices, Kumar said that in these PMBJKs, the Government procured generic medicines are sold which are 50 - 90% less as compared to the branded medicines in open market, for e.g. the price of Amlodipine 5 mg 10 Tablets is Rs. 3.25 as compared to market average price of Rs. 20.00 for branded version. Further, the product basket of PMBJP contains more than 600 medicines and 154 surgicals and consumables in all therapeutic categories viz. Anti-infectives, Anti-diabetics, Cardiovasculars, Anti-cancers, Gastro-intestinal medicines, etc.

Most importantly, allaying the concerns about quality, the Minister said that each batch of drug supplied to PMBJKs is tested for impeccable quality assurance at NABL (National Accreditation Board Laboratories) accredited laboratories and is compliant with WHO GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) benchmarks. Out of total 10,000 pharmaceuticals companies in India, 1400 are WHO GMP compliant and drugs under the PMBJP are procured only from these 1400 companies, Kumar said.

Answering to a question on prescription of generic medicines by doctors, the Minister informed that due to sustained efforts of the Ministry, the Medical Council of India (MCI) has recently issued a directive to all medical colleges, hospitals, doctors across the country and made it mandatory to prominently mention Generic Names of drugs along with Brand Names in their prescriptions, in pursuance of which strict disciplinary action may be taken against the violators. All medical practitioners have been directed by the Government to strictly comply with its directions.

Further, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has also issued advisory to all State Drug Controllers that all branded drugs, imported or domestically manufactured, should mandatorily contain generic names mentioned in bold letters while packaging, Kumar added.

It was also informed that in order to encourage doctors to prescribe generic medicines, the MCI had amended the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002 on 08th October 2016 advising the use of generic name of drugs in doctor's prescription.

Informing about the Government's efforts towards future expansion of PMBJKs in the country, Kumar said that the Ministry of Railways has come on board to open Janaushadhi kendras in over 1000 railway stations across the country in collaboration with Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.