

Pharma Park- quality drug at low cost

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Planning is done to lower down the price burden of medicine by manufacturing itself by Kerala state



In order to ensure quality drugs at affordable cost, a Pharma Park, which can manufacture at least a part of the medicines currently being purchased by the state from private players, is being planned. A medical device park also is in the pipeline.

The medicinal drug market in Kerala constitutes around 10% of the total sales in India whopping Rs 6,000-8,000 crore every year and many pharmaceutical companies, mostly multinationals, take advantage of the situation and charge exorbitant rates.

The Kerala Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited can meet orders to the tune of Rs. 40 crore annually. So, government intervention is needed to bring down the prices of drugs, says the new health policy.

The production capacity of Kerala State Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited (KSDP) can be augmented to manufacture medicines worth around Rs 100 crores.

The Pharma Park should be able to manufacture at least Rs. 1,000 crore worth of drugs within 5-10 years.

The drugs produced here, branded as Kerala Generic, will be made available both in the government hospitals and the open market.

"We are purchasing drugs at 30 to 40% discount and this could be done through negotiation process. Actual price of many of the drugs, especially cancer medicines, are very low," said Dr Paul Sebastian, director, Regional Cancer Centre (RCC), Thiruvananthapuram. "Once more drugs are produced in the public sector, it would help decrease the price considerably," he added.

Patented drugs, mostly those for cancer management are sold at exorbitant prices. To ensure that medicines are affordable and accessible to common man, the state government should make use of the provisions of Indian Patent Act, 1970, states the policy.

There is vast scope for producing high quality ayurveda, siddha and unani drugs in the state. "Government has used the provisions in the Patent Act on earlier occasions as well. Kerala government, a few years ago had given compulsory licence to a few manufacturing companies to produce two or three types of medicines to ensure quality drugs at affordable prices,"

Paul Sebastian said.