

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : The papers of the Hon. Minister's report—I have checked up with other Members also—are all coming to pieces. It should not be like the DGOF in Calcutta. Some proper binding should be done. This is probably some indication of the times to come.

Essential Drugs List

*552. **SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :** Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the medicines of different brand names in Indian markets are often permutations and combinations of about 400 bulk drugs;

(b) whether these are often used for artificials pushing up of drug prices ;

(c) if so, whether Government are considering a proposal for insisting on generic names of the drugs as used in W.H.O. publications ; and

(d) whether Government propose to prepare an Essential Drug List ?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND INDUSTRY AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL) : (a) to (d) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

Statement

(a) Formulations based on about 500 bulk drugs are marketed in our country in various dosage forms, strengths and combinations.

(b) The prices of most medicines are statutorily controlled under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1979. Implementation of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order ensures that prices are fair both to the consumers and to the industry.

(c) According to the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, single ingredient preparations are already required to be

labelled under the generic names along with the brand names, if any.

(d) National Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Development Council had drawn up a list of 95 priority drugs. Medicines required by the large majority of the people for the most common diseases known including those required by the National Health Programmes are included in this list. Government is seized of the matter regarding further processing of the review of the Drug Policy including the question of priority drug list.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : The Hon. Minister has really circumscribed my question in his answer. My question was whether the medicines of different brand names in Indian markets are often permutations and combinations of about 400 bulk drugs, with very little variations, really intended to push up prices, and these are being practised by the drug companies. Now, the answer is this. He has said that there are 500 bulk drugs. Very good. About pushing up the prices, his answer is this. He says 'The prices of most medicines are statutorily controlled under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order 1979. Please mark the next sentence. 'Implementation of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order ensures that prices are fair both to the consumers and to the industry. 'I would like to know whether you consider prices to be fair to the consumer. Industry is another thing. Is the prices fair to the consumer ? Is the House agreeing to that ? I am coming to the question. Let me take one example. Paracetamol is a bulk drug. Crocin by DUPHAR-INTERFRAN LTD. is just a little variation of Paracetamol.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : What is that animal you are referring to ?

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Everybody knows about crocin.

MR. SPEAKER : I have never taken crocin and I do not know what it is.

AN HON. MEMBER : You take Ayurvedic medicines.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Now, the point is that there is a very little variation of the bulk drug in the formulation process, that is between paracetamol and crocin and this pushes up the price by 25% or so.

MR. SPEAKER : You have now becomes a full-fledged doctor.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : I am a para-medical staff and a P.R.O. in this organisation. Now, Sir, here he has mentioned about the prices under the Drug Control Order. The point is that 40,000 formulations are there. Out of those, about 500 drugs with a little variation, are manufactured. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister that with this little variation, whether it is not a fact that the prices are very much high for these medicines. If it is higher, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether that really ensures the consumer to get them at fair prices.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : I would like to explain the position like this. It is true that there are about 500 bulk drugs. Out of these bulk drugs, the formulation are for more than 20,000. But all drugs are not controlled. 75% of the drugs are price controlled because the policy of the Government is to see that only essential drugs and life-saving drugs should come under this price Control Order. For all these drugs, for fixation of the prices, for revision of the prices, it is not left to the whims and fancies of the manufacturers. They have to approach the Ministry and also the Bureau of Industrial Costs and prices and they have to give all the data that are required, and on their recommendation, the Ministry takes the decision. Without our approval, so far as the price control drugs are concerned, no manufacturer can increase the price or *suo motu* unilaterally can do whatever he wants with regard to the drugs that he is manufacturing, because there is a

Price Control Order. If the Hon. Member is suggesting about the medicines which are not price controlled, then I have nothing to say because they are not controlled by the Price Control Order. So far as the price controlled drugs are concerned, every time in order to increase the price or for reviewing the prices, in certain drugs the prices are increased and in certain drugs prices are decreased also. If you compare the wholesale price index of other commodities with the wholesale price index of the drugs, you will see that the price index of drugs is much lower than the price index of other items. So, it is not correct to say that drug prices are increasing enormously.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : I am sure that is not the correct reply to my question. We can discuss that point later. Now, my second part of the question is : whether the Government proposes to prepare a list showing the essential drugs. As you know, the World Health Organisation has suggested to all the countries that they bring out a list showing the essential drugs. Even the small countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka—whatever may be the situation there now—were asked to prepare a list. Now, in answer to this question, the Hon. Minister says that the National Drugs and Pharmaceutical Development Council had drawn up a list of 95 priority drugs. I would like to know why this new nomenclature of priority drugs instead of very essential life-saving drug is included in the list. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister whether the Essential Drugs List will be drawn up immediately and I would also like to know why it has not been drawn up till now, despite the long-pending recommendation of the Hathi Committee.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : Sir, I would like to explain to the Hon. Member that so far as priority drugs are concerned, all essential drugs and life-saving drugs do come under the priority drugs. I do not know why the Hon. Member is objecting to the use of

the word 'priority'. The other day I made it very clear to the House that the whole Drug Policy is under review. My predecessor, the then Minister appointed a Development Council and the Development Council in turn appointed Working Groups. They submitted their reports. The report was studied by a Steering Committee and it ultimately went to the National Drugs and Pharmaceutical Development Council. They have also made a report and the Government have to take a final decision. The Government hopes to take a decision very soon.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, drugs can save a life or exting in a life also. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether he is aware of the fact that brand names are not written on the life-saving drugs which are being sold in the market in the force of tablets? Vitamin C and Anacin are stored at one place. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether production of such drugs is allowed under the Drugs Control Act, in which brand names of the medicines are not written?

MR. SPEAKER : When the name is not written on a medicine, how can one identify a particular medicine?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : It is necessary that the name should be written on every medicine. Generic names or brand names are written on the medicines and sometimes both generic names as well as brand names are written on the drugs. If the Hon. Member informs me about any such medicine, we can find out about it. Many spurious drugs are also being sold in the market.

MR. SPEAKER : Are you referring to the inscription of names on the tablets? Name is written on the packets of medicines.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA SAHI : I am talking about inscription of names on the tablet itself.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : How can name be written on tablets, because sometimes the tablets may be very small and it becomes very difficult to inscribe the name of medicine on the tablets, but it is necessary that the generic name or brand name should be written on each medicine. If spurious drugs are sold in the market, it is the duty of the Drug Controller to check their sale. The Drug controller under the Ministry of Health checks them.

[*English*]

SHRI D. N. REDDY : Will the Hon. Ministry consider preparing a list of Essential Drugs immediately? There are many non-essential drugs in the market. Is the Hon. Minister aware that these are causing more harm than good, and the public are exploited by the pharmaceutical companies? Will he consider this and take immediate steps?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL : I have made it very clear that we are concerned only with essential drugs and life-saving drugs. If any drug manufacturer is manufacturing, under his licence, non-essential drugs, I do not know how we can prevent him from manufacturing those non-essential drugs. We are concerned only with essential and life-saving drugs.

[*Translation*]

Play in Publications of Law Journals

*553. SHRI NARESH CHANDRA CHATURVEDI : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the publication of law journals by the Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan under the Rajbhasha Vidhayi Vibhag lags behind the schedule by two years.

(b) the annual expenditure being incurred on the publication of these law journals ; and