



## **Press Release**

The matter of medicine access and the health and medicine related issues of the common people have been persistently pursued by our organisation, FMRAI. Reduction of medicine prices, removal of all kind of predatory taxes like GST that is levied on the medicines, genuine and effective price control on medicines based on cost of production (instead of market-dictated price control), protection of indigenous production capability of medicines by both the private and public sector Indian companies, revival of the public sector for re-capacitating them in production of essential medicines are the long standing demands. FMRAI is demanding all these for the purpose of ensuring affordability, accessibility and for ensuring self-reliance in the production of medicines. After the new central government assumed the office, FMRAI decided to pursue the medicine related issues and demands of the people with the new government.

In this connection, a delegation consisting of R. Ramesh Sundar, President, FMRAI, Santanu Chatterjee, General Secretary, FMRAI, Amitava Guha, National Working Committee member of CITU under the leadership of Elamaran Kareem, Rajya Sabha MP, CPI (M), met the Honourable Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Shri D. V. Sadananda Gowda at Sastri Bhavan, New Delhi on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2019. The delegation handed over two memoranda to the Minister containing demands of revival of public sector Pharma companies, bringing down medicine prices by instituting genuine price control on medicines, abolition of GST on medicines, constituting statutory code with punitive provision on uniform code of ethical marketing practices and stop online selling of medicines. The Minister gave a patient hearing to the demands and interacted on all the issues. Responding to FMRAI's demands the Honourable Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Shri D. V. Sadananda Gowda assured that profit generating PSU like Karnataka Antibiotics and Pharmaceuticals Limited will not be divested.

The new government declared that all the public sector pharma companies will be sold off presumably with the view of mobilizing resources. FMRAI is opposed to this move of the government. The public sector pharma companies are very much essential for the genuine health needs of the people. The private sector pharma companies manufactures the medicines not on the basis of disease pattern prevalent in a country like India but on the basis of the profitability which may or may not cater to the actual health need of the enormous number of common citizens of the country. On the other hand, the public sector drug companies produce medicines and vaccines that comply with the disease pattern and the medical need of the common people. Besides this, the public sector medicine companies produce and sell medicines which are of good quality and are affordable. FMRAI is opposed to dismantling of the public sector drug companies and demands of the government for revival of all the pharma PSUs instead of disinvesting them. This is essential both for self-reliance and the public health need of the country.

FMRAI demanded that the Government should also ensure robust price control on all medicines including the patented medicines. The method of price control should be based on cost of production keeping reasonable mark up for profitability. Under the present 'market-based price control' method medicines prices have not reduced to any significant extent, rather the prices are rising every now and then, making most of the medicines unaffordable for the people who are ailing and distressed. FMRAI also demanded that the people who are suffering from diseases should not be taxed just to top up the government exchequer and therefore, no GST should be levied on medicines.

FMRAI further demanded that the uniform code of ethical marketing practices should be made statutory with strict punishment clauses to stop all sorts of corruption including pay for prescription which will also translate to price reduction of medicines and medical devices.