



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Online Newspaper Clipping Service
Dtd- Monday,13th, August- 2018

Page No. 04

Chemists to govt: Can medicines be sold at discount like clothes?

Oppose Ads Displayed By Portals, Shops

Sunitha.Rao@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: Chemists in Karnataka have raised pertinent questions before the health ministry and the drugs controller, following advertisements issued by online drug portals in media offering discounts.

The advertisements are being seen in newspapers and heard on FM radio, even as some pharmacies in the city are flaunting boards offering discounts up to 20%.

Though the rulebook does not permit discounts in drug sales, the government is yet to wake up to the same. Contemplating filing a public interest litigation in the matter, the chemists have even written to the government, asking, "Is it permissible to advertise a pharma brand or offer discounts on medicines? Does the Drugs and Cosmetic Act allow promotion of drug brands?"

The Suvarna Karnataka Chemists and Distributors Association has asked the government whether the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 and Rules 1945 permit advertisements offering discounts in sale of medicines through websites.

Prior to this, members of Bruhat Bengaluru Chemists and Druggists Association met the health minister in June and submitted a memorandum to him about the same. "Through ads and offering of huge discounts, certain online portals are inducing the public into buying medicines from them. Can drugs be sold like clothes? This is nothing but an unethical trade practice," said MK



No drugs controller in state for 4 months

The BK Pavitra v/s Union of India case led to undoing of promotions for many officers from the SC/ST community, including some doctors. BT Khanapure, who was the drugs controller of Karnataka, was also demoted. Since then, the state doesn't have an acting drugs controller. "Though the government has deputed another officer as in-charge drugs controller, there are many activities that have been held up," say sources.

Mayanna, president of the association. While the office of the state drugs controller has not yet replied to the chemists' letters, a senior officer in the authority said rebates can be offered on drugs. Chemists have opposed this, saying the department should reply to them in writing stating the same.

"Advertisements appearing in media on the discounts offered on drugs are a clear violation of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. They also carry taglines like 'genuine medicine' and 'quality assured'. Does that mean the rest of the medicines are not genuine and lack quality? The drugs controller's office should crack down on these ads and remove such boards. We have not received any response to our letters yet," said V Hari Krishnan, president, Suvarna Karnataka Chemists and Distributors Association.

'MCI norms ignored in BMCRI promotions'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Can a lecturer directly become a professor? It has happened in Bengaluru Medical College & Research Institute (BMCRI), where 18 lecturers/assistant professors were promoted as professors in 2007-13 without following norms laid down by the Medical Council of India, says an internal audit report.

As per the rulebook, an associate professor can be promoted as professor after a minimum four-year experience. During recent deliberations with the government, the medical education department defended the promotions, saying they were done to retain the lecturers.

AUDIT REPORT

In 2007, BMCRI was given autonomous status and those working in the institution as lecturers and assistant professors were handed direct promotions to the cadre of professor. "The bylaws and cadre recruitment rules of BMCRI did not specify any conditions for absorption of teaching staff, hence the Medical Council of India (MCI) norms were applicable for recruitment and promotion of teaching staff. But in August 2007, a professor's scale was extended to those recruited as lecturer/assistant professors and they were promoted without four years of service as associate professors. The BMCRI said the MCI had approved the extension of pay scale, but when the records were checked, no such

An associate professor can be promoted after a minimum four-year experience. But 18 lecturers/assistant professors were promoted in 2007-13 without following MCI regulations

Promotions based on govt order, not illegal

“The promotions were given based on a government order and were not illegal. We have replied to the objections raised in the audit. At that time, the promotions were given to retain teaching doctors

Sowmya NG | CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, BMCRI

correspondence was available with MCI," said officials who were part of the audit.

Senior BMCRI employees said the necessity arose in 2007 when new private hospitals were springing up and it was tough to get doctors to work at the government-run teaching hospital. "The attrition rate among lecturers was high at that time. Some were also promoted owing to political pressure," they said.

V Manjula, additional chief secretary, medical education, claimed the auditors had accepted the department's explanation. "There is no issue now as our replies have been accepted. It's an internal matter," she said.