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## Pharmaceutical Sector

The wide gap between what ought to be done and what is done persists in many sectors. It is all the more vivid in the area of pharmaceuticals. The entire nexus of work connected with this vital sector look like remaining in the initial stage. It remains so despite the fact that the need for medicare is increasing day by day. Few institutions have embarked on the programmes for ensuring effective medicare and for education and training of specialists and technicians. The need for such programmes is felt more and more with the expansion of production facilities for drugs and medicines and distribution thereof. It is, however, increasingly realized that without putting the duly qualified personnel at various stages of the industry and the management thereof, the scope of expansion of existing arrangements and of improvement in the field of pharmaceuticals will remain terribly limited.

The issues bedevilling the sector were highlighted once again in the third National Pharmaceutical Society Conference held in the city. President Ziaur Rahman in a message emphasized "the need for adequate supply of standard medicines to ensure proper medical treatment for the people". His exhortations were also supplemented by the Vice-President who inaugurated the conference. The latter underlined "the need for formulating a national policy for overall development in the pharmaceutical sector." Obviously, the attention of the participants were drawn towards the production of drugs and medicines including quality control, evaluation and development thereof. They were also urged to take note of the existing systems of storage and distribution. Even the aspect of product elimination, coupled with product development, done by research and development department of the pharmaceutical industry, was highlighted in the inaugural session.

Obviously, the need of the teeming millions has influenced

the thinking of the participants in the conference. As it is, only about twenty per cent of the total population receive health care. The same coverage is relatively very poor, especially in view of the malnutrition and consequent ill health of most of the people. Any programme for increasing medicare—both in terms of coverage and quality of services—is however dependent on the production of quality medicine at cheaper rates. Among other things, for achieving the same, the manpower for the entire programme has to be prepared in the institutions offering educational and training courses in pharmaceutical areas. The forum is, therefore, expected to delve deep into various aspects of the problems and come up with appropriate recommendations for improvement.

The acute shortage of qualified pharmacists has to be tackled by setting up integrated institutions. As it is, industries also need the services of the qualified personnel both for the sake of improving the quality of products and of reducing dependence on expatriates for the same. Efforts of the educational institutions and the entrepreneurs producing drugs and medicines have, therefore, to be linked for getting better results. There is scope of financing training institutions with grants from industries once the latter become conscious of the efficacy of such education and training. It may be pointed out that the present inadequacies of the pharmaceutical sector were, by and large, linked with non-availability of the type of manpower needed for various phases of activities along with non-availability of the capital goods and industrial raw materials. Once the sector has the manpower to run the shops, the other constraints may also be overcome. And all these have to be tackled in the light of the recommendations forthcoming from the conference and with a view to augmenting the overall development of the country.