

PCI soon to bring out industry-oriented curriculum for B Pharm in line with new national education policy: Dr P Yeole

The vice-president of the Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) and chairman of the State Level Quality Assurance Cell (SLQAC) of the Maharashtra government, Prof. Dr. Pramod Yeole has opined that an industry-oriented and skill based curriculum is necessary to create a bright future for the pharmacy graduates (B Pharm) in the country and this will be materialized by the PCI very soon in line with the new national education policy.

He was delivering the inaugural speech at the three-day Pharma Youth Festival and Odisha Medical Expo organized by Dadhichi College of Pharmacy in Bhubaneswar in Odisha.

Dr. Yeole, the pharmacy academic expert who held vice-chancellor post of five universities including one government university in Maharashtra previously, said plenty of changes and modifications are being made in the pharmacy education in order to suit the new generation graduates for the industry's requirements. Currently, the pharmacy education in the country is not guaranteeing the required skills of the industries. Mere bookish knowledge does not make a graduate pharmacist fit for operating a tablet machine in a factory. He said the need of the hour is to change the present curriculum and make it skill-based to suit the industries.

Referring to the prime minister's statement during the Covid-19 period, Dr. Yeole said pharmaceutical industries are supporting the Indian economy and they are not only an asset to the country, but an asset to the world as well. India could supply drugs and pharmaceuticals to 190 countries during the Covid period and such an achievement could not be made by any other country in the world. Even today, 10 percent of the global medicinal requirements are met by India. The pharma industry's growth rate in India is at 15 per cent while in the global level it is only 4 per cent. Our country supplies generics to around 200 countries in the world and 45 per cent of the generic medicines marketed in the USA and 25 percent in the UK are from India. This shows the strength of the Indian pharmaceutical industries supported by pharmacy professionals.

According to him, while other countries are giving more recognition to pharmacy professionals, in India they are still in the status of 75 years ago. "We are not authorized to diagnose a patient or to take an injection on him. In developed countries pharmacists are getting better opportunities and recognition. So, in the professional side and also in the career opportunities in the industry sector more changes are needed, for which the present curriculum has to be modified. Even today, in specializations we are learning outdated syllabus only. For a comprehensive change in education, the PCI has designed one curriculum on the basis of the new national education policy which will be available in all regional languages shortly", he said in his speech.

Pointing to the necessity of establishing a pharmaceutical industry in Odisha, he wanted the college authorities and the budding pharmacist community to encourage the government to invite entrepreneurs from other states to set up industrial units in the state. He wanted the APTI Odisha leaders to undertake follow-up activities on their memorandum given to the government with respect to bringing up a pharma park in Odisha. According to him, without creating an industry-academia interface, the pharmacy education cannot bring its desired result.

As regards the quality of pharmacy education in the country, Dr. Yeole, who was previously the president of the APTI, said the pharmacy council of India alone cannot work for strengthening the quality, but high-level thinking and proper planning is necessary for that. The UGC, the PCI and the universities altogether should create a strong foundation for increasing the quality of education and to make it industry-oriented. If the students of pharmacies should have confidence in achieving a job after their graduation, the institutions should collaborate with the industry in each state. Even in Gujarat or Maharashtra or Telangana there is a gap between the industry and the pharmacy institutions. The need of the hour is to fill this gap and create an industry-academia relation for the benefits of both the sides, he opined.

Dr Rajat Kumar Kar, principal of the Dadhichi College of Pharmacy said he will forward the feedback of the youth festival and the panel discussions to the government.

Dr. Manoj Kumar Das, chairman of the Dadhichi education group and Dr. Sudarsan Biswal, ADC of Bhubaneswar and other dignitaries representing various institutions attended the inaugural session. Pharmacy students and teachers from 50 institutions in Odisha participated in the three-day programme.

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