

HEALTH & WELLNESS

# PHARMA INDUSTRY: PROVIDING IMPETUS TO COUNTRY'S PUBLIC HEALTH



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By **Dr Gajendra Singh**



India is grappling with the second wave of Covid-19 and its  
unprecedented sharp spike in cases in the last two months

created a huge demand-supply gap of critical requirements including a few Covid-19 drugs. Since then, Indian pharma companies have taken steps to ramp up the production of Covid-19 drugs such as Remdesivir to manage the demand for essential medicines in Covid-19.

In this context, the progress of the Indian pharma industry has an influence on Indian healthcare. Over the last two decades, the pharma industry has significantly contributed towards improving public health outcomes, both in India and across the globe. During the onset of the pandemic, the industry quickly mobilised its resources to tackle the supply chain disruptions. As a result, no drug shortages were reported from India. However, this win was soon overpowered by the second wave of coronavirus in the country. The lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic have shown the significance of the pharmaceutical industry and hinted at the possibility of its growth. However, certain limitations require long-pending due diligence.

Over a period, the pharma industry is oscillating between stringent regulations and meeting diverse patient needs. Nonetheless, the pandemic opened doors to the possibility of collaboration and cooperation. We witnessed the government and pharma industry taking a united stand to fight the current pandemic. It's time to cushion the health system from the aftermath of the second surge and protect the most vulnerable population by strengthening local pharmaceutical manufacturing and building resilient supply chains.

## THINKING BEYOND THE PRESENT CRISIS

We must act prudently to safeguard and strengthen the existing healthcare system. The pharma industry has played

country. However, the responsibilities will increase with the rising patient pool and disease burden.

With the increasing load of Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the current scenario, the focus should be on reducing healthcare inequalities. A recent report stated that NCDs are responsible for at least 65% of deaths in India. The financial burden of chronic diseases is soaring, and India needs to continuously strive to improve the accessibility and affordability of quality medicines. Despite an increase in the cost of raw material, there is less or no increase in formulation costs given that the drug pricing is governed by NPPA rules.

The pharma industry is working round the clock to meet the growing requirements. The pharma companies have shown a lot of agility in maintaining the supply chain and have been meeting the escalating requirement of Covid products like vitamins, antibiotics, painkillers, and blood thinners. Along with ramping up the production, companies are also working towards dovetailing production and supply chain.

#### PLI SCHEME: FIRST STEP TOWARDS NEW POSSIBILITIES

The new PLI (Production Linked Incentives) scheme is expected to have a positive impact to drive India's efforts towards self-sufficiency. It will also help the industry to improve on APIs and intermediates. Effective implementation of the scheme is crucial, and it will take some years to achieve the objective of the scheme in terms of accelerating domestic manufacturing.

#### ROLE OF PHARMA SECTOR IN PROVIDING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY MEDICINE

globally. This calls for immediate attention towards healthcare reforms to promote universal access to affordable care. This is an opportunity for the Indian pharma industry to contribute towards equitable and sustainable healthcare. The industry has been continuously working to provide an uninterrupted supply of medicines. Fostering public-private partnerships can also play a crucial role.

The pharma industry can play a critical role in addressing the gaps in Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP). Units in both sectors can synergise for better channelisation of their efforts in R&D, capacity building, experience, and expertise to ensure availability, affordability, and quality of medicines procured through the PMBJP.

#### FOCUS ON PREVENTIVE HEALTH

India has a complex healthcare system with various socio-economic factors at play. Hence, focussing on preventive health and self-care can help us achieve certain short-term goals. The high expertise of the pharma industry can enable people to prevent and manage diseases better by providing information that rolls beyond products and services on relevant platforms. For instance, initiating a comprehensive disease management program including useful resources, information on medical experts, and more can be a wise decision.

Covid-19 has brought the Indian healthcare system under the scanner of the general population. A well-rounded approach from all stakeholders will help in decoding the obstacles and improve the accessibility of medicines at affordable prices for the patients in need. To take a high leap, it is imperative to align the entire ecosystem including

towards a shared goal – better public health outcome.

The writer is a public health expert.

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Published 1 day ago on June 22, 2021  
By **Dr Aparna Santhanam**



Are you the type who wakes up every morning, worried and wanting to do so much for your skin? Do you have guilt pangs gnawing away at you every time you look in the mirror? For most of us, life begins and ends with planning our skincare routine, adding and eliminating products in our cart till the sun stops shining.

Fret not, your skincare regime doesn't have to be an impassable labyrinth, it can be simplified to make it more manageable and consistent. Here's a step by step guide to making your life easy.

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Good health is one of the greatest resources for creativity and peace of mind. In today's day and age, health is not a static state; it is dynamic ever-changing. The unprecedented pandemic we are dealing with today has brought about newer challenges for health which we are continually fighting. Good health results from a perfect diet, suitable physical activity and a mind, which is calm. One of the biggest challenges today is the dropping oxygen levels for those who suffer from Covid. As a Covid survivor, I can say that my oxygen levels did not drop

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# COMBATING COVID WITH SYSTEMS THINKING

Instead of blaming governments, it is time for all stakeholders to adopt systems thinking in managing the possible third wave of the coronavirus pandemic.



Published 1 day ago on June 22, 2021

By **Prem Sharma**



The first wave of Covid-19 last year had caught India unprepared and the lockdown provided an extended period in which they could try to ramp up the health infrastructure in the country. With the deadly second wave of Covid-19 hitting the country unexpectedly, it exposed the inadequate preparedness and the absence of the systems thinking approach to combat a highly infectious disease that took a heavy toll on lives.



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Published 1 week ago on June 15, 2021

By **Shivali Bhammer**



She sat in a room by herself, the door had been locked for days, months perhaps but she was unaware. Her Ektaar sat in her lap, her eyes half-closed with a soft smile laced upon her face. Her name was MeeraBai — the Princess who found enlightenment through music.

Music has always been a way to communicate with the higher power and evokes feelings of emotion and healing with one

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Published 1 week ago on June 15, 2021

By **Samira Gupta**



There is no perfect way to cope with grief and loss but there are healthy ways to release these emotions from your mind and body. When we experience any form of loss, grief is the first emotion that sinks into our heart. Grief can be overwhelming as it encourages other emotions such as anger, disbelief, guilt, shock, pain, or sadness to take control.

health goes for a loss but also our physical health. Some may

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# HOW TO TAKE CARE OF COVID-POSITIVE CHILDREN

Doctors simplify the clinical guidelines around Covid management in children by the Union Health Ministry and tell us how certain therapies help in the treatment of kids with severe corona illness.



Published 1 week ago on June 15, 2021

By **Kritika Dua**



manage Covid-19 in children. This comes amid speculations

that children can be a possible target of the third wave of Covid. The Ministry, in the guidelines, has said that Remdesivir is not recommended for children, and steroids should be used to treat only moderately severe and critically ill Covid positive children. In the recommendations, the government has stressed the use of a six-minute walk test on children above 12 and oxygen therapy as well as the Corticosteroids therapy in cases

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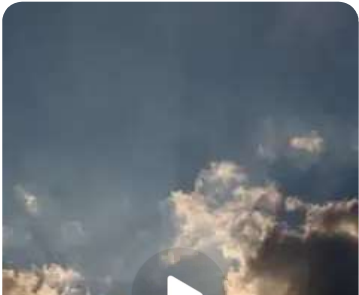


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