

Govt begins efforts to establish Indian pharmacy chains in Africa to counter issue of fake drugs with 'made in India' label by China

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In an effort to effectively counter the complex issue of spurious drugs with 'made in India' label but were produced by Chinese companies to tarnish the image of Indian generic drugs in the African countries, the Indian government has started initiatives to establish a chain of pharmacies in African countries by the reputed Indian pharmacy chains like Apollo Group and Hetero Group.

In the first phase, the pharmacy chains will be established in Nigeria in collaboration with local Nigerian companies. It was the Nigerian government which had recently seized a large consignment of fake anti-malarial drugs with the label of 'made in India' but was later found that the medicines were in fact produced in China and were imported into the African countries by the unscrupulous elements in China with the intention of tarnishing the image of emerging Indian generic drug business in the region. The authorities in Nigeria have maintained that the incident is not isolated, calling for concrete measures to nip the problem in the bud itself.

Once the project becomes successful in Nigeria, it will be extended to other African countries like South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Benin, Guinea, Libya, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, etc. The government has already started initial discussions with some of the reputed pharmacy chain groups in the country in this regard, sources said.

Sources said that Union Ministry of Commerce and department of pharmaceuticals (DoP) have started dialogue with the concerned people in this regard. The Indian government will have detailed discussions with the Nigerian Health Ministry officials who will be in the country in the last week of September to participate in the 'Indo-Africa Pharma Business Meet' at Hyderabad from September 25 to 27 which is part of the 'Brand India Campaign' by the union commerce ministry to counter the multinational companies' (MNCs) propaganda against the Indian generic drugs in the African countries.

By facilitating the establishment of pharmacies in African countries by the reputed Indian pharmacy chains, the Indian government wanted to plug the loopholes through which counterfeit drugs 'made in India' label are entering the African countries.

The role of the Indian government in establishing the pharmacy chains (apart from the facilitation role) like financial assistance, etc will be worked out once the project takes concrete shape, sources said.