LETTERS

Vital Role of Interest in Improvement of Pharmacy Education in India and Worldwide

To the Editor. The future of any country can be easily forecasted simply by looking at the graduates entering as the workforce. A genuine indigenous and sustainable development of the Indian pharmacy graduate cannot be ensured unless pharmacy institutions produce technically skilled and sound manpower for tomorrow's future. In the time after the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, called the post-GATT era, the Indian pharmacy graduate must be capable to reach the pinnacle of triumph and the sound knowledge of their profession can help them to compete globally. Teachers and faculty members have a vital role in shaping tomorrow's pharmacy graduate. Therefore, teachers, the teaching process, and all the concerned activities of the institution must be improved to cultivate professionalism in future graduates. Because we entered into the new era with a greater emphasis on professional education and standards, so it has become a vital role of the institute to yield graduates who can meet the demands of the new millennium in a time of globalization.

Today, India's educational institutions are no longer considered for building tomorrow's graduates but for business ventures and profit making. A lot of emphasis is placed on the relationship between industry and academia, but still the graduates coming out of the institutions do not meet the expectations of the pharmaceutical industry. Educational institutions play a crucial role in developing tomorrow's graduates who are competent, proficient professionals.¹⁻⁶ Modernization of education is essential but not at the expense of losing its basic purpose.

Harmonization of pharmaceutical education has to be a global agenda that will encompass the developments that have taken place in basic, medical, and pharmaceutical sciences in serving the needs and expectations of society.⁷ In this changing scenario, the relevance of traditionally offered product- and industry-centered pharmacy education (undergraduate) must be reviewed. An effective pharmacy education policy should be drafted governing pharmacy education all over the country. The broad outline of the said pharmacy education policy must highlight:

- The formation of a new statutory body or strengthening of the existing statutory body to govern pharmacy education at diploma, degree, postgraduate, and research levels.

- The emergence of pharmacy education as a profession by itself without the dominance of medical or technical education.
- Review of the Pharmacy Act on a national perspective on ground facilities rather than hypothetical claims of projections.
- Evolving on a national basis, the broad norms for recruitment of teaching manpower and guidelines benefiting scales of pay for them.
- An all India Entrance Examination Board for conducting an aptitude test for admission to pharmacy courses.

In the new millennium, due to technological innovation and improved communication, drastic changes are taking place. The field of pharmacy cannot avoid these changes. Harmonization of the pharmacy profession should be made a global agenda, which will not only impart the strong basics but also encompass the various aspects needed to develop competency and excellence in the pharmacy profession. Terms such as *internationalization* and *globalization of education* are being circulated. Thus, it becomes the tripartite task of (1) government bodies, (2) industries, and (3) professionals to foster the needs of today's education as vital interest in the pharmacy sector.

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