

# Pharmacy shops without licensed pharmacists

SNIGDHA POONAM

Some of the pharmacy shops in the city don't have licensed pharmacists, which is in violation of the Pharmacy Act of 1948. Most of these shops owners employ people who have no knowledge of drugs let alone having diplomas in pharmacy.

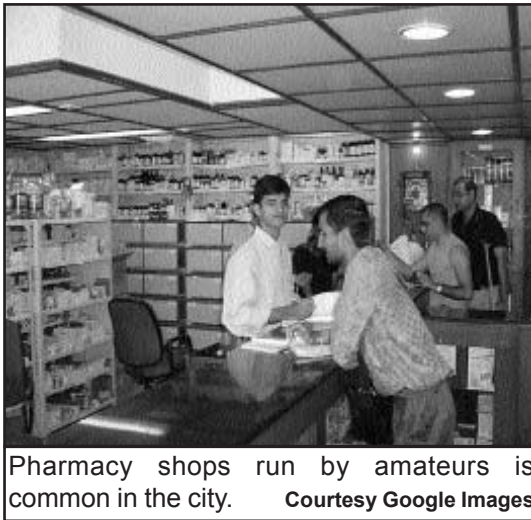
In Maruthi Medical Store in Kengeri, the owner was not there having given the responsibility of running the shop to an attendant. Asha, the employee said, "I do not have a license, but the owner of this shop, Siddagangaiah has a license. He is not there as he has gone to attend a marriage." She added that she has studied only up to Intermediate and has no experience in this field.

The main objective of the Pharmacy Act is to prohibit the dispensing of medicine without the supervision of a 'registered

pharmacist'. Section.36 (iii) (e) of the Act says that if a registered pharmacist has not used due diligence in enforcing compliance with the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act in his place of business and by persons employed by him, it is an offence. They are supposed to educate the consumers about the particulars of the medicine including their side effects.

Mahadevaya, the person in charge of Mathru Medicals in Kengeri did not think it is important to have a license to run a pharmacy shop. He said, "Half the shops in Bangalore do not have licensed pharmacists. It takes years of experience to understand the need of customers and suggest effective medicines. These registered pharmacists do

not know anything about the medicines like which combinations to take. It is not taught in their course. If you ask them for a



Pharmacy shops run by amateurs is common in the city. Courtesy Google Images

chemical reaction of a drug, they cannot tell you. It can only be learnt with practice."

He argued that the pharmacists have other constraints like of money and time. "We open the shop at 9 am and can not sit till 9 pm. So we have to employ someone, the licensed pharmacists will cost us Rs 4000-5000. If we spend so much, where is our profit?"

He added that in case of an expected raid by Drug Control Authority, they owners make sure that they are present at the shop.

R Venkatesh Reddy, Assistant Drug Controller said that this practice is rampant in the city. "Though we endorse the diploma certificate before giving permission to open a pharmacy and only registered pharmacists are supposed to run

these shops, the pharmacists often have other people running their shops especially when they go out of station.

We have booked 500 cases in the past and 98 per cent of offenders are convicted. The punishment is often one year in the prison. But imprisonment is compulsory in this offence."

The Bangalore Chemist and Druggist Association has made a representation to the Drug Controller that the pharmacy shop owners who have the experience of three or more years should be made eligible to sell drugs legally but it is still under consideration.

Shrikant, a customer at the pharmacy said that he finds it surprising that the authorities are so lenient to the pharmacies at the expense of jeopardizing consumers' health and life in case of a mistake.

## Gollahalli farmers ignorant of government's health insurance scheme

Yeshwavini Health Insurance Scheme of government not properly publicised in the village; Officials say the scheme only for cooperative farmers

AKANSHA PRADEEP

The farmers in Gollahalli village still seem to be oblivious to the Yeshasvini health insurance scheme for rural farmers by the Karnataka government, introduced in 2003, which has proved very successful so far and have benefited many farmers.

The then chief minister of Karnataka Mr S M Krishna inaugurated the scheme on 14 November 2002 with effect from 1 June 2003. The scheme was implemented by the Family Health Plan Limited while the policy and financial decisions of the scheme lie with the Yeshasvini trust. Under this scheme the insured farmers can avail free medical treatment in a network of hospitals. According to a report in Hindu "The scheme has a corpus of Rs. 19.85 crore, and there were 19.54 lakh farmers and their family members insured as on April 1, 2007."

Farmers in Gollahalli like Ganesh, Mallaya and Ravanna do not know anything about the scheme. They said that are never

informed about any scheme since no one from the government comes to talk to them about any new scheme.

Malinappa a farmer who grows Ragi and rice said that he did not know anything about any such scheme. He in fact said " we have nothing to do with the government since the do not help us in any way."

Yamuna who is a science graduate and a resident of the village said that she never heard about any such scheme and therefore does not know about it.

Mr Gopal Krishna, Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Society, Bangalore city district said that the scheme is a self-funded scheme so it is not associated with any non-governmental organization. It only operates by the premium collected by farmers and that is the only means of revenue for the scheme. He said that the scheme is 'rooted through cooperative societies'. There is no kind of education given to the farmers in the form of publicity of the scheme.

Shivlinga, the bill collector for the Gollahalli panchayat said the he did not know anything about this scheme.

Mr S R Naik, CEO, Yeshasvini Co operative Farmers Health Care Trust said that the scheme is only for cooperative farmers and not for other farmers thus the farmers in Gollahalli have not been covered under it.

He also said that no training is given to the farmers in the village and they expect the farmers to come to the cooperative banks and inquire about the scheme.

Bharati, manager of the Family Health Plan Limited said that she was really busy and refused to comment.

The officials say that the scheme is being run through cooperative societies in and around the rural areas but marginalized farmers in Gollahalli do not even know about any such schemes so they cant avail the benefits of co operative farming or societies.

The officials added that they don't get any help from the government.

## No compensation for arrack vendors

GAYATHRI VAIDYANATHAN

About rupees two thousand per month in a rank-and-file job to live in one of the most expensive cities in India-this is the offer the government has made to arrack vendors after taking away their livelihoods in July.

Arrack was banned in Karnataka on July 1 following pressure from women's empowerment groups claiming that arrack was ruining many families. The ban was accompanied by a Karnataka High Court order on June 29 by Justice K.L. Manjunath, asking the government to rehabilitate the vendors within two months.

The government has responded by rehabilitating the vendors under the Suvarna Kayaka Yojane scheme, a training-on-job program for small-scale industries (SSIs) created by the Department of Industries. It pays about rupees two thousand per month to the trainee, and its requires that the applicant be between 18 and 35 years of age, and literate, having studied up to class seven.

Mr. N.L. Sharma, Assistant Director, Department of Industries, said, "so far no arrack vendor has come to us for employment in Bangalore. I do not think they will come." Considering that most

arrack vendors have crossed well beyond the 35-year age limit and are settled with families, the scheme does not really apply to them, he said."Rupees two thousand does not suffice for a man to live in Bangalore," he said "The government made a policy...it is good for people who are starting life, but not for people who are already settled with families."

The government hasn't let the vendors know about the existence of this scheme. Arrack vendor Mr. Krishnappa is unaware of any compensation; in fact, he thinks that the case is still pending in the High Court. He has converted his arrack selling business to an illegal-liquor shop. His business has been hurt significantly by the ban; earlier he would earn commissions from arrack manufacturers for selling a particular quantity of arrack. Selling Indian Made (loose) Liquor (IML) does not come close to compensating for his loss, he said.

Superintendent of Excise, Mr. Lakshmi Narayana said vaguely that there is more than just the Suvarna Kayaka scheme to rehabilitate vendors.

About 2.20 lakh arrack vendors in Karnataka have been affected by the arrack ban.

## Climatic disasters spell India's fall in UNDP's Human Development Index

SNIGDHA POONAM

While India inches one year closer in the pursuit of achieving millennium development goals by 2015, our miseries don't appear to come to an end any time soon. There is a setback by the name of UNDP's Human Development Report, which shows India to have plummeted to rank 128- a fall of two places despite a marginal gain in Human Development Index (HDI) value.

The HDI is the measure of life expectancy, literacy, education, standard of living and well being for countries worldwide. India's value this year, based on 2005 data, is 0.619. Last year India ranked 126 out of 177 countries with a

value of 0.611, which was based on 2004 data.

This inconsistency in the rank despite scoring better on HDI was attributed to the lamentable fact that other countries have outshined us in development.

But this isn't all there is to the dampener that has presented itself on us without anticipation; the rationale goes beyond the evident difference in performance.

Clichéd as it may sound, the fault lies within us. If we read through the statistics closely and analyze development as an intriguing interplay of assorted variables, a remarkable interdependence between climatic and developmental parameters is hard

to miss. And that's where we went wrong. Our lofty notions of superiority founded on one-dimensional standard like high GDP per capita took a beating because we couldn't reconcile the economic growth with environmental stability.

The report, called 'Fighting Climatic Change: Human solidarity in a divided world', underscores the implications of a climatic cataclysm on the world's 2.6 billion who survive on less than two dollars a day. In India, some 320 million people live below the poverty line and three quarters of the poor in rural areas where they largely live off agriculture, a function of rainfall, which is

getting more unpredictable by the day because of global warming.

Indian women, during a flood in 1970s were 19 per cent less likely to have attended primary school. Periods of low consumption and rising food prices, following such events record more number of deaths in girls than boys. These are just a few examples.

The report says that climatic disasters between 2000 and 2004 affected 262 million people, 98 per cent of them in the developing world. The effect manifests itself in the eventualities like the poor being forced to sell their land. And the most immediate survival mechanism is compromising basic needs like health, food and

education. Going by extent of damage that the climatic disasters like floods, droughts, have wrecked on the developmental aspects like health, education, women welfare and sanitation in the country, the Millennium Development Goals may actually begin to get reversed if the climate continues to play havoc marginalised population.

Its time we sat up and took notice considering we have less than a decade left to clean up our act. It's not going to be fixed overnight but we can start by making a few changes in our lifestyle that wouldn't upset our lives drastically but contribute significantly in leaving a small footprint