

22nd February 2023

To

Dr. V. G. Somani

Drugs Controller General of India
Central Drugs Standard Control Organization
Government of India

Subject: Unlock growth for the sector and benefit consumers from online sale

Dear Sir,

At the outset, we would like to introduce Forum for Internet Retailers, Sellers and Traders, (FIRST India) an arm of India SME Forum (ISF), one of the leading not for profit initiative for MSMEs in India, with 97000+ direct paid members and 9 lacs+ MSME subscribers.

FIRST INDIA was formed after the inclusion of retailers & traders as part of MSME definition, and it is working to create a conducive policy ecosystem which will enable offline traders and sellers adopt digital way of doing business.

Many of our members immensely benefited by the explicit orders during pandemic times which allowed medicines to be sold online through e-commerce. This opened a bigger stream of business for offline pharmacists as they could cater to larger set of audience who had valid prescription. Our pharmacist members figured that, during lockdown, family and friends of elderly people made maximum utilization of the opportunity of ordering medicines online, provided by the government during the pandemic.

We would like to take this opportunity to state that FIRST INDIA is cognizant of the fact that quality control is paramount to the pharmacy sector. It is also imperative that consumers are delivered quality medicines timely by licensed pharmacists and so is the usage of e-commerce as a delivery/courier agency that facilitates the fulfilment chain. The key to the effectiveness of this chain is that all drugs and medicines are sourced from the same manufacturers and transported according to strict standards under the license issued to the pharmacists who are sellers on e-commerce sites.

In the past few years, it has been proved that online sellers have access to a larger market, strong supply chain, better price discovery, data management enabling tracking of orders placed and being able to run businesses more efficiently. These benefits have been acknowledged by the Government itself as evidenced by the various schemes aimed at enabling MSMEs to digitize and sell online.

Dr. Aruna Sharma

Retired IAS
Secretary General



During pandemic times, our pharmacists jumped to the aid of the government and consumers by adopting e-commerce and digital mechanisms of doing business. It has been observed among our pharmacists that they have benefitted from advanced technologies that established players like Dunzo, Tata1mg, Flipkart, Netmeds, Amazon, etc.

Keeping in view of this development and transformational behavior of both the pharmacists as well as consumers, there is a critical need & urgency to deploy a well-established e-pharmacy guideline, that could create the right mechanism that benefits both the licensed pharmacists and consumer fraternity at large. Especially, during this time when the sector is facing economic slowdown.

We would be extremely grateful if you consider our representation and if your kind self so desire we would be happy to suggest draft guidelines for your perusal that would enable adoption of digital means and remove impediments for online sale.

In interest of India emerging as world leader in pharmacy, we urge you to examine the concerns and support the members with a facilitating policy.

Sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aruna Sharma".

Dr. Aruna Sharma (Retd. IAS)
Secretary General,
FIRST

cc to

Sh. Mansukh L. Mandaviya
Minister of Health and Family Welfare of India
Government of India

Sh. Narayan Rane
Minister of MSMEs
Government of India

Sh. Anurag Jain
Secretary, DPIIT
Government of India

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