

Steps to boost pharma exports

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The government has taken several measures, including setting up of an inter-departmental committee, to look into export-related issues and awareness programmes in emerging markets like Africa, to boost pharmaceutical exports.

Pharmaceutical sector has huge potential in terms of increasing exports. The commerce ministry is taking a number of measures to boost overseas shipments, a ministry official said.

The official said an inter-ministerial committee to resolve export-related issues has been set up. Besides, the ministry has prepared a "guidance document on pharma procurement" to help authorities in Africa, Latin America and South Asia in their purchasing

programmes.

Awareness programmes about Indian pharma industry have also been started in these markets and workshops are being organised with the USFDA for Indian drug regulators and the industry.

Of late, the Indian pharma industry has been facing the heat from the US Food and Drug Administration for non-compliance of regulatory framework. In the recent past, many domestic generic drug makers, including Sun Pharma and Wockhardt, have faced actions.

The commerce ministry is depending on the sector to boost the country's exports, which are in the negative zone since December last year.

India's pharma exports grew by about three per cent to \$15.34 billion in

financial year 2014-15.

According to a foreign trade policy statement, the pharmaceutical sector is beset with several challenges. Most of these challenges arise out of the enviable reputation of India as a reliable supplier of generic medicines.

"Awareness programmes and workshops with drug regulators will help us in dealing with these challenges," the official added.

The challenges include campaigns to malign generic products as being in violation of India's IPR commitments; alleged lack of compliance with quality standards; India's over dependence on some sources for its active pharmaceutical ingredients; and India's pricing policies forcing Indian exporters to price their products with extremely low margins.

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