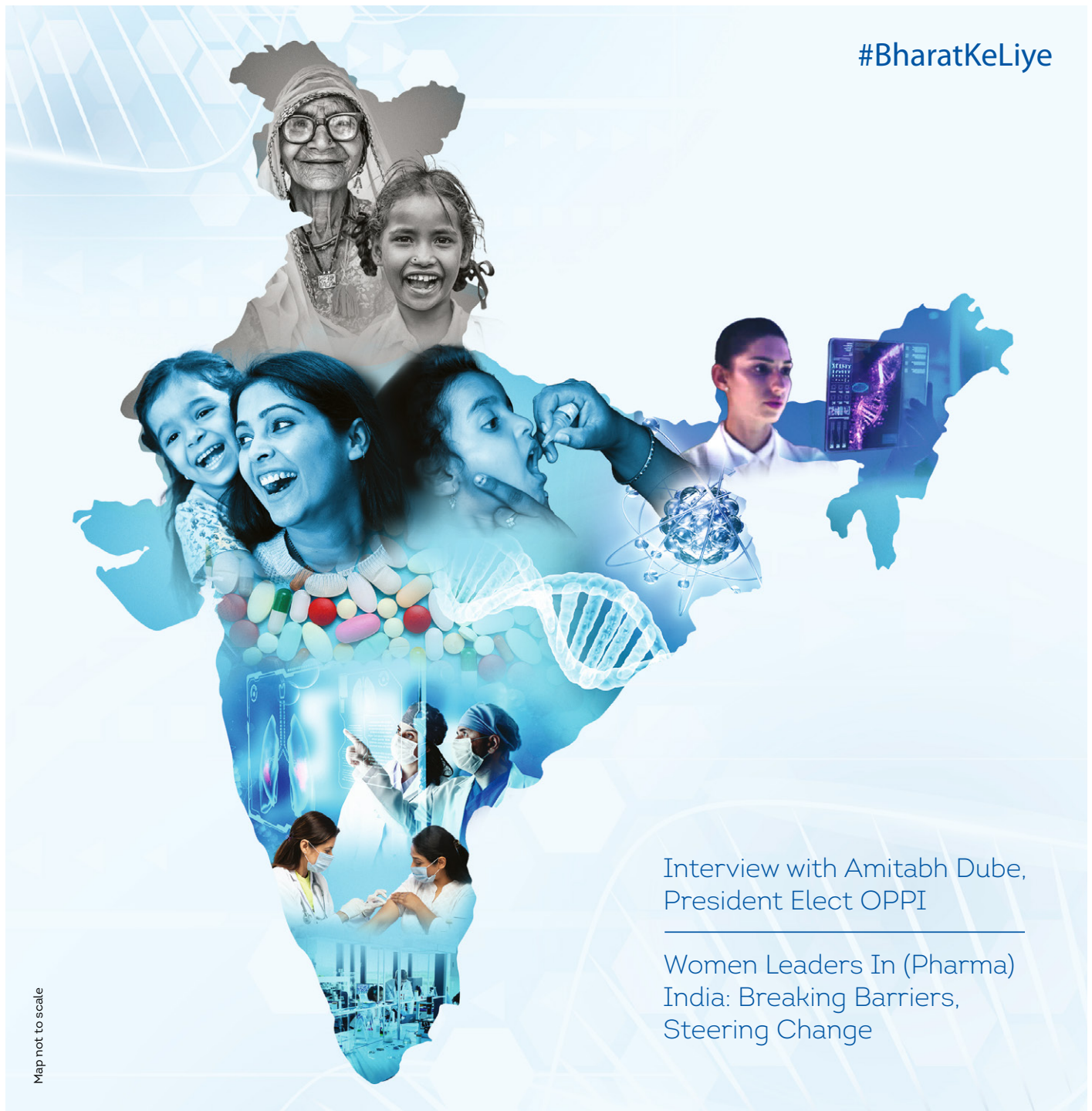


OPPI NEWSLETTER

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#BharatKeLiye



Interview with Amitabh Dube,
President Elect OPPI

Women Leaders In (Pharma)
India: Breaking Barriers,
Steering Change



Anil Matai
Director General, OPPI

Welcome To The Third Edition Of The OPPI Quarterly Newsletter!

The past quarter has seen India's pharmaceutical industry take significant steps towards improving patient access, and advancing regulatory and policy frameworks. With the sector at a pivotal juncture, key stakeholders – including industry leaders, policymakers, and healthcare advocates – are driving conversations on how best to strengthen innovation, improve affordability, and address long-standing healthcare challenges.

This edition of the Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) Quarterly Newsletter features insights from experts and changemakers shaping the future of India's pharma landscape.

Highlights from this edition include:

- **A Q&A with Amitabh Dube**, President Elect OPPI, on regulatory reforms, innovation incentives, and exploring patient access
- **How OPPI members are shaping CSR efforts**, from healthcare outreach to sustainability initiatives
- **Women leaders in pharmaceutical sector in India**, where industry executives share insights on mentorship and inclusivity
- **India's evolving rare disease landscape**, including policy updates and challenges in early diagnosis and treatment access

Improving patient access remains a key priority, with ongoing discussions around regulatory streamlining, universal health coverage expansion, and stronger intellectual property protections. Meanwhile, CSR initiatives continue to support public health and sustainability, and efforts to advance gender diversity in leadership are gaining traction through structured mentorship and workplace policies.

The rare disease ecosystem is also evolving, but funding gaps and access challenges persist, reinforcing the need for early screening programs and stronger public-private collaboration.

As India strengthens its position as a global pharmaceutical powerhouse, collaboration between policymakers, industry leaders, and healthcare stakeholders will be critical to ensuring these advancements translate into meaningful outcomes for patients.

Thank you for your continued engagement in shaping these discussions. I hope you find this edition insightful and inspiring.

Index

Leadership Insights

01

Interview with Amitabh Dube, President Elect OPPI



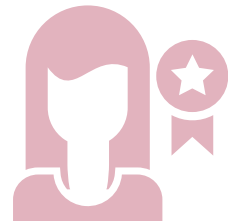
In this third edition, we present an interview with OPPI's President Elect, Amitabh Dube, who shares his vision for the future of India's pharmaceutical industry. He discusses the need for regulatory clarity, stronger innovation incentives, and expanded patient access while emphasizing collaboration between industry and policymakers to bring meaningful change.

Sheroes In Pharma

05

Women Leaders In (Pharma) India: Breaking Barriers, Steering Change

Women leaders from Astellas, Bayer, Merck and Pfizer share their career journeys, leadership challenges, and strategies for fostering gender equity. As the industry advances gender inclusivity, companies are implementing mentorship programs and leadership initiatives to support greater representation at senior levels.



Industry Impact

13

CSR Efforts: OPPI Members Drive Social Impact, Sustainability Across India

Pharmaceutical companies are expanding their CSR efforts beyond business goals, focusing on healthcare access, education, and sustainability. This feature highlights key initiatives supporting underserved communities, from free health screenings and rare disease funding to environmental impact reduction and STEM education programs.



Policy & Patient Access

20

India Rare Disease Scenario: Advances And Complexities



India is making progress in rare disease treatment access, but challenges remain in funding, regulatory support, and early diagnosis. This article explores key policy updates, expert recommendations on newborn screening, and the need for stronger public-private partnerships to close treatment gaps.



Interview with Amitabh Dube, President Elect OPPI

By Izabela Chmielewska,
Managing Editor, Custom Content at Citeline

Key Highlights:

- Guiding OPPI's strategic vision to enhance India's position as a global pharmaceutical leader
- Advocating for regulatory streamlining to accelerate access to innovative treatments
- Strengthening health insurance models to improve patient affordability and accessibility
- Ensuring ethical industry practices through the adoption of mandatory self-regulation frameworks
- Harnessing AI and digital health technologies to optimize drug development and patient outcomes

In this Q&A, Amitabh Dube, Country President, Managing Director of Novartis India and President Elect of the Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI), shares his vision for advancing patient access, regulatory reform, and ethical practices in India's pharmaceutical industry.

He discusses OPPI's role in fostering innovations, strengthening collaboration with policymakers, and driving self-regulation through the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP).

How can OPPI work alongside the Indian government and other stakeholders to improve access to innovative treatments?

It is imperative that people in India have access to innovative medicines on par with developed nations around the world. OPPI, in partnership with the government and other key stakeholders in the healthcare ecosystem, can work towards these few key facets:

- a. A more predictable and enabling **regulatory environment** that **accelerates** the introduction of innovative, breakthrough therapies while maintaining the highest standards of safety and efficacy. By collaborating with policymakers, OPPI can help establish frameworks that streamline regulatory approvals, aligning them with key global standards. This will accelerate patient access to cutting-edge treatments, including personalized medicine and gene therapies.
- b. **More inclusive universal health coverage programs** which offer the best-in-class treatment to patients in India. This may encompass working with different stakeholders and modifying the list of covered treatments to include potentially game-changing therapies, which will ensure equitable access across urban and rural areas, ultimately improving the quality of life and health outcomes.
- c. **Encouraging private health insurance providers to shape policies similar to practices in developed nations** - for example, having day care treatments covered. This would ensure that patients have access to advanced medical treatments and procedures covered by private health insurance that do not require hospital stays, thereby reducing the financial burden for patients and promoting quicker recovery.
- d. **Protecting Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Regulatory Data Protection (RDP)**. India ranks 40th out of 55 nations in the 2023 International IP Index, and advancing this ranking is critical for a conducive innovation environment.

The pharmaceutical industry is under growing scrutiny regarding ethical practices. How can OPPI support its members in adopting and promoting self-regulatory initiatives like UCPMP?

Transparency, integrity, and patient-centricity are fundamental to building trust within the healthcare ecosystem. Industry self-regulation, including adherence to the UCPMP, is crucial in ensuring ethical business conduct. While many OPPI member companies already follow stringent global compliance frameworks, OPPI can further support the industry by driving awareness, strengthening implementation mechanisms, and fostering a culture of accountability.

One of the many ways OPPI can enable this is by facilitating capacity-building programs that help companies embed ethical marketing and engagement practices at all levels. Regular industry dialogues, knowledge-sharing sessions, and best practice exchanges can reinforce the importance of self-regulation and ensure alignment with evolving global standards.

Moreover, OPPI's continued advocacy for making UCPMP a mandatory code—implemented fairly and uniformly across the industry—will be instrumental in leveling the playing field and strengthening patient trust. As an industry, our collective commitment to ethical practices is vital not just for compliance but for sustaining innovation and ensuring long-term impact in healthcare.

What areas should OPPI work on as pharma industry being patient-centric? What more can be done?

As an industry, we are continually evolving to meet patients' needs, and OPPI plays a crucial role in advancing this agenda. One key area where OPPI can further drive impact is through working closely with policymakers, regulatory bodies, and healthcare stakeholders, accelerating access to innovative therapies.

Additionally, OPPI can further deepen its commitment towards truly enhancing patient health outcomes and improved quality of life by focusing on key areas such as:

- a. **Strengthening India's clinical trial ecosystem, particularly for early-phase trials:** Encouraging regulatory frameworks that facilitate faster approvals for Phase I and Phase II trials will help accelerate drug development and ensure that Indian patients are among the first to benefit from breakthrough treatments. OPPI can work closely with policymakers to establish globally harmonized guidelines that balance patient safety with agility, making India a preferred destination for innovative trials.
- b. **Accelerating real-world evidence (RWE) generation through digital health tools:** This will help measure treatment effectiveness and drive more data-driven policy decisions.
- c. The industry can significantly shift the healthcare system from **volume-driven to value-driven care** by championing outcome-based pricing models where reimbursement is linked to patient health improvements. As a country, only if we accelerate this transition towards a value-based healthcare will we ensure that innovation translates into real-world patient benefit which is the crux of patient centricity.
- d. **Establishing partnerships with academic institutes** like the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), to **develop curriculums** focused on patient engagement, navigation within the Indian healthcare systems and advocacy. These collaborations can help build a workforce skilled in patient-centric approaches and improve overall healthcare delivery.
- e. **Increasing efforts to include patient voices in the design of government programs.** This can be achieved by creating platforms for patient advocacy groups to provide input on healthcare policies and ensuring that patient feedback is systematically integrated into program development. Amplifying patient voices will help

bridge the gap between healthcare services and patient needs, leading to more effective and compassionate care.

Challenges & Opportunities

How do you foresee the role of technology, particularly AI, in transforming healthcare and pharmacovigilance in India, and how can OPPI help its members embrace these advancements?

Technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), is set to improve efficiencies by augmenting human intelligence across the industry, especially healthcare. From potentially enhancing drug discovery and development to AI-driven analytics and real-world data helping optimize treatment pathways, improving early disease detection, enabling evidence-based decision-making for better patient outcomes, and augmenting the patient safety framework; AI and Machine Learning (ML) has unraveled a new dimension of possibilities. As an industry, we must actively embrace these advancements to improve efficiencies and patient outcomes.

In drug discovery and development, AI-driven analytics can accelerate target identification, optimize clinical trial design, and improve patient stratification—ultimately bringing innovative therapies to market faster.

AI can also significantly improve large-scale screening of diseases and enable early diagnosis by analyzing vast amounts of medical data, including imaging, genetic information, and patient histories. This can lead to the identification of disease markers and patterns that might be missed by human analysis alone, allowing for earlier intervention and better management of chronic conditions.

In pharmacovigilance, AI can play a game-changing role in detecting and assessing adverse drug reactions by analyzing real-world data from electronic health records and patient registries allowing for proactive risk mitigation.



However, integrating AI into healthcare requires a robust regulatory framework, infrastructure, and industry-wide adoption. OPPI can support its members by working closely with policymakers and industry stakeholders to develop clear guidelines for AI in clinical research, regulatory filings, and safety monitoring. Additionally, OPPI can help drive capacity-building initiatives, ensuring companies and healthcare professionals are equipped to harness AI-driven insights responsibly and effectively.

Collaboration will also be key. By fostering public-private partnerships, OPPI can facilitate pilot programs that demonstrate AI's impact on patient safety, streamline regulatory approval processes for AI-driven innovations, and encourage data-sharing mechanisms that enhance pharmacovigilance efforts.

OPPI member companies have a long history of contributing to India's healthcare ecosystem. How do you see their role evolving in addressing the challenges and opportunities of the future?

OPPI member companies have been at the forefront of bringing cutting-edge innovation, driving access to medicines, and strengthening India's healthcare ecosystem for decades. As we look ahead, our role will continue to evolve in response to emerging health challenges, evolving patient needs, and rapid advancements in science and technology.

An area of impact lies in addressing unmet medical needs, particularly in complex and chronic conditions such as cardiovascular, renal, oncology, rare diseases, and neurodegenerative disorders. Today, we are looking beyond traditional treatment models, and the adoption of newer platforms like radioligand therapies, and gene and cell therapies, amongst others. This shift will require close collaboration with healthcare providers and policymakers to ensure that cutting-edge therapies are not only developed but also made widely accessible.

It is our collective responsibility to address all the gaps that exist through the patient journey to truly benefit patients and caregivers and improve their quality of life.

Another massive opportunity and a game-changer is digital health. AI-powered diagnostics, remote patient monitoring, and digital therapeutics are transforming how healthcare is delivered. The industry can take the lead in co-creating scalable digital health solutions that improve early detection and disease management. Supporting the government to develop regulatory frameworks that support AI-driven drug safety monitoring and real-world evidence generation will be crucial in ensuring that technology is leveraged effectively for patient benefit.

Women Leaders in (Pharma) India: Breaking Barriers, Steering Change

Byline: Anju Ghangurde,
Executive Editor APAC at Citeline



Meenakshi Nevatia

*Country President and
Managing Director, Pfizer India*



Pratima Reddy

*Managing Director, Merck Specialities Private
Limited and Country Speaker Merck India*

Key Highlights:

- Women leaders share glimpses of life and career trajectory
- Executives highlight efforts underway to promote gender equality and advance women's careers
- Companies championing inclusive work environment

Biopharma doesn't have a large number of women CEOs globally and the gender gap at the leadership level leaves much to be desired.

For instance, men occupy 68.5% and 78% of board and CEO positions respectively, according to a 2024 report by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO), in partnership with Korn Ferry, that analyzed the state of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the biotechnology industry.

Refreshingly, though, more women appear to be moving into the corner office in pharma in India, especially at leading multinational companies.



Sampada Gosavi

*Managing Director,
Astellas Pharma India Pvt. Ltd.*



Shweta Rai

*Managing Director, India and Country Division
Head - South Asia, for Bayer Pharmaceuticals*

Four women leaders - **Meenakshi Nevatia**, Country President and Managing Director, Pfizer India; **Pratima Reddy**, Managing Director, Merck Specialities Private Limited and Country Speaker Merck India; **Sampada Gosavi**, Managing Director, Astellas Pharma India Pvt. Ltd.; and **Shweta Rai**, Managing Director - India and Country Division Head - South Asia, for Bayer Pharmaceuticals - shared glimpses of their career journey, efforts by their firms to enable opportunity parity and also specific initiatives to support women move up the corporate ladder.

They also had some words of advice for aspiring women leaders. The broad takeaways include: networking is crucial and could open doors to new opportunities; seek out mentors who can guide and support you; if faced with a challenge, take it head on since “growth often requires friction”; vertical growth isn’t practical all the time and “horizontal exposure, stretch assignments/shadowing opportunities” could help widen your professional horizon and self-belief is paramount – often the “blinkers and constraints” are self-imposed.



Tell us a bit about your journey to the top job including some of the tough decisions you have had to make while staying the course and any milestone that you particularly value?

Meenakshi Nevatia

I started my career with McKinsey & Co. That was the first almost eight years of which a big chunk was in Mumbai, but then I moved to Singapore, the US and South Africa. I think that's been a common theme for my career as well because there were 8 years in McKinsey, then about 15 years at Novartis, which was also across five geographies and then since 2018 October, I've been here in India first with Stryker and then last two years with Pfizer. But the question about the gender aspects, personally, if you start your career in a place like McKinsey, which is so gender agnostic, it becomes much easier for me to feel the way I feel. I have never let the gender aspect come in the way of any belief or any fundamental assumption about what job I can do or cannot do. It hasn't formed the basis of my decision in any way because I have genuinely always believed that any job that one gender can do, the other

gender can do. There weren't many women when I first joined McKinsey, but it doesn't mean that there was a difference in how we were treated and that is something I try to talk to my women colleagues as well - sometimes the difference is more in our own heads. Of course, companies like ours, we're responsible to make sure everybody, whatever be their gender, their choice, feels comfortable and safe. That is our obligation. So, if there are late nights, we need to make sure that there is a way that women can go back home safely. That is the minimum we can do and that's just basic corporate responsibility. But beyond that, the difference is often in the individuals mind - the fundamental assumption in your own head that any job can be done by any gender as long as you have the mindset and the skills.

Often the mindset is what makes the biggest difference. I don't know whether the pharma sector is different. I've seen some great women leaders in FMCG. You could argue banking /financial services is much more male dominated, but so many of our bank leaders have been women. I don't think healthcare is any easier or any harder for the gender difference - that I think is more coincidental. Maybe a pure manufacturing organization could be slightly different. But even there you have got examples of women leaders. So, I would tend to believe it's not industry specific.

Pratima Reddy

Over my 18 plus years of experience, with the last 11 at Merck, my career has been shaped by diverse roles that have tested and strengthened my leadership capabilities. I began my journey at Accenture in Strategy Consulting, followed by a transition into healthcare at Merck. My non-pharma background didn't actually restrict my growth; it enabled me to carve out a unique space within the organization, contributing ideas, bringing in fresh ideas and building on my strategic orientation and project management skills very early on. I moved into the India business after an internal portfolio transfer,

and eventually, I joined the oncology business unit. This shift required me to demonstrate strong leadership skills, and it taught me the importance of adaptability and resilience.

Later, I took on a regional leadership role in Singapore, managing the cardiometabolic franchise across Asia, before returning to India as Managing Director for Merck's healthcare business. For the last two years, I also serve as the country speaker for all of Merck's business units in India, a proud yet humbling experience, encompassing life sciences, electronics, R&D, and IT. Throughout my journey, key decisions have focused on balancing my leadership responsibilities with the commitment to fostering an inclusive and empowering environment for women across the board.

The gender gap in leadership positions is well documented, and while healthcare is one of the more equitable industries for women, challenges remain. A recent McKinsey & Company study, *Women in the Workplace 2022*, highlights the progress made in pharma but also underscores that women still face significant barriers, such as limited access to senior leaders. At Merck, I along with my leadership team ensure to focus on driving initiatives that support gender equality, mentorship, and career development for women in the organization. One of the most rewarding milestones has been not only advancing in my career but also influencing the culture at Merck to foster a more inclusive leadership while driving performance. I continue to believe that making strategic decisions for gender equity is not only the right thing to do but an essential for driving business success and long-term sustainability.

Sampada Gosavi

A career spanning ~25 years, progressing from medical rep to the Managing Director of a global MNC, has been a journey of hard work, perseverance and grit.

Having worked across roles and functions in sales/marketing/market access/strategy/patient engagement among others in Indian & MNCs alike, I garnered valuable experience for the top job and took on assignments across allied commercial functions, to increase my experience.

A key element for all, is to put your hand up and take up stretch assignments/roles that are not outside your core area of expertise, I've done it multiple times and have benefited greatly.

Managing work-life was not easy in an era when work-from-home was non-existent pre-COVID, but I have practised in leading with empathy in the toughest of situations. I truly believe that you don't have to choose profession over personal growth, you can have both and excel in it. The key is to build a great support system around you, mine comprises my family and work colleagues, who have been enablers through my journey.

There were too few women in leadership roles as I grew in my career, so most of my lessons were self-learned. I firmly believe that the glass ceiling exists, but only in our minds, which we need to shatter ourselves! As a woman leader juggling multiple priorities on various fronts, you can't have it all, but you can make it all work!

Shweta Rai

As I reflect on my journey of over two decades in the healthcare sector, hard work, resilience and determination are words that come to my mind. Many a times, women must surpass conscious or unconscious biases and prove themselves again and again to be considered capable of delivering across roles, and it was no different for me. Passion towards my work and continued focus to excel in every assignment kept me going, along with the support of my family and guidance of mentors.

Milestones that I particularly value are the roles and assignments I experimented with. They sharpened me and built my appetite for risk. This gave me the confidence to never cling to a comfortable position or assignment for too long. This really stretched my limits and forced me to go beyond boundaries to learn, adapt and perform. However, some of the tough decisions I have had to make were shifting jobs or skipping many assignments to strike a balance between my work, children and family priorities. But I have always cherished this balance. I believe that a fuller happier wholesome life, enables you to relish your accomplishments more – you have someone to share your joy with.



Research suggests that diverse and inclusive firms typically deliver higher profitability and innovation. How is your company enabling opportunity parity (including equitable pay practices) across gender to reflect that?

Meenakshi Nevatia

Equity is our more holistic definition, whether it is diversity, inclusion, it is all about equity. Equity across geographies, races, genders, etcetera. On pay parity, we do constantly look at it. That's a big priority for us. We make sure that if there are differences in pay, it's a function of experience or what you're bringing to the role in terms of skills and not a function of gender. Gender wise pay parity, I think we're doing very well and we keep an eye on it on every pay cycle and even mid-year where we often do those analysis and are tracking to make sure that corrections if required are made. In terms of roles and positions, promotions, how do we grow people, if I look around in my leadership team right now, my HR head is a lady, of the four category business leaders, one is a woman. The fastest growing business is our vaccines business and that's led by a woman. Our clinical trials operations head is a woman. I won't say we've got adequate women representation on the leadership team because strictly speaking, it should be 50:50 and we're not near that at this point. But I do think very consciously and deliberately, what we are trying to do is for all roles, at least make sure that the slate does have, wherever possible, a woman candidate but then the choice is made purely on merit.

That's generally been the philosophy we've taken even for the people we've promoted into regional roles. Currently, we have five of our people in regional roles, of which three are women, two are men. For us in India, we are not well represented on the gender front when it comes to women in sales. So, we have picked that as an area to focus on at the head-office level. At the overall level, we are pretty decent in terms of percentages, head office level for sure whether I look at marketing, medical, HR, finance, it's very well represented. Sales, though, we have a very small percentage of women and that is an area where are quite focused on in

terms of recruiting from the right pool. If we just recruit from the pharma pool, we'll never change because the whole industry is at that level.

We must look outside. So, we're increasingly looking at other sectors but more importantly also making sure that our policies and sales are making it kind of a place where women can work comfortably and feel safe.

We have a very fair maternity leave policy, but we were also among the first ones to launch a paternity policy. I guess the ultimate intent of the paternity leave policy was gender equality in an indirect way - the more we allowed our men to take paternity leave, it would enable their women to then go back to work. Having said that, we have very few takers of the paternity leave policy. I would love if more people took it, but those are the small steps we are making to try to balance it out.

Pratima Reddy

At Merck, we are dedicated to ensuring opportunity parity across gender, with a focus on creating an inclusive and supportive workplace with clear KPIs to ensure impact. Some key initiatives that reflect our commitment include hybrid work models & flexible schedules that are designed to support work-life balance, enabling employees to manage both their personal and professional commitments effectively, equal parenting sessions, which promote shared responsibilities at home, encouraging equal participation in caregiving roles and targeted leadership programs that are aimed at ensuring equal representation at senior levels by identifying and nurturing diverse talent within the organization. Merck is also committed to equal opportunity employment, workforce diversity as well as equality and inclusion. These values are central to all our initiatives and activities, guiding us to continually improve and foster a more equitable workplace for all.

Sampada Gosavi

At Astellas, we are committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace where every employee has equal opportunities to thrive. Our approach to opportunity parity, including equitable pay practices across gender, is guided by our core values and reinforced through structured policies and initiatives.

Our talent acquisition processes are designed to be unbiased, providing equal access to career advancement opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender. Additionally, we invest in leadership development programs, mentorship initiatives, and employee resource groups to empower diverse talent and create an inclusive culture. By embedding these principles into our business strategy, we continue to drive innovation, enhance employee engagement, and reinforce our position as an employer of choice.

Shweta Rai

Having women in the workplace fosters an inclusive environment and promotes greater collaboration and can help improve profitability, productivity and attrition. Bayer's pharmaceuticals business in India performed extremely well last year - we achieved 3X growth versus the market. Our inclusive hiring practices have helped us reach a diverse pool of candidates and that has helped us attract more women over the years. We have also seen an increase in the number of women doing well at the workplace and it reflects in our promotions. This has become even more prominent over the last two years. Most interesting to see is an upward trend in women taking on leadership roles. This is refreshing as the number of women generally keep declining as we look at senior roles and leadership positions. As for our pay practices, we regularly review and adjust them to ensure that all employees are compensated fairly, basis goals achieved and the ability of the individual.



What are some of the key initiatives your company is progressing to accelerate the career trajectory for women colleagues across domains, including non-traditional ones?

Meenakshi Nevatia

When it comes to career growth and trajectory, we do want to make sure there's equal opportunity for men and women. For promotions, it's purely on merit. I don't think we have ever taken gender into account, and I honestly feel that's the right thing to do. I've had that same thing in my own career journey, and I've seen that when you do it completely agnostic of gender, it's much better because then every woman who does get the position is totally deserving of it. So, I do strongly believe that for career progression, it should purely be a function of the individual, completely gender agnostic. Having said that, when we have people moving into roles, we have a program where we coach our senior leaders. We always want to make sure there are enough women leaders in that program so that we're giving them the right coaching, whether it's confidence building, storytelling, networking, whatever is the right coaching need that they have. So, in coaching programs, training

programs, development programs, we do make an extra effort to make sure women are represented, but when it comes to promotions and career trajectories, we are completely gender agnostic and very deliberately so. Doing it any other way would be a disservice. I am quite particular about that, it's important that every woman who gets the position is getting it purely because of merit and it has nothing to do with gender.

Pratima Reddy

Merck is committed to supporting and accelerating the career trajectory of our women colleagues across various domains, including traditionally challenging roles such as sales, and throughout their life stages. Some of our key initiatives include the "VOICE Leadership Program" that is aimed at empowering women across different career stages, particularly in roles like sales, where they may face additional challenges. Focus areas include confidence-building, overcoming imposter syndrome, negotiation skills, executive presence, and leadership development.

We also go beyond statutory requirements to provide childcare support, helping female employees balance their work and family responsibilities. There are also comprehensive fertility benefits to support women through different life stages, empowering them to make choices that best suit their personal and professional lives. Additionally, the leadership at Merck provides mentorship and inspiration opportunities for women through engaging discussions and speaker sessions on a regular basis. These initiatives are designed to ensure that women at Merck have the resources, support, and opportunities needed to thrive and advance their careers.

Sampada Gosavi

At Astellas, we are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment that empowers women to excel across all domains, including traditionally male-dominated fields like sales. Our

key initiatives to accelerate the career trajectory of women colleagues across different life stages include targeted hiring and career development, wherein we actively promote gender diversity in recruitment, ensuring fair representation of women in sales and leadership roles. Recognizing the evolving needs of women throughout different life stages, we also offer flexible work arrangements. We conduct regular pay equity analyses and career progression reviews to ensure fair compensation and advancement opportunities, eliminating systemic barriers to growth. We are not just supporting women in sales via these initiatives but also shaping a workplace where diverse talent can thrive at every stage of their professional journey.

Shweta Rai

At Bayer our policies are crafted to be inclusive and take into account that everyone has multiple roles outside of the workplace and diverse challenges to face. Our aim is to partner with all our employees and make Bayer a great place to work.

Sales in any industry can be challenging but also extremely rewarding if one is passionate about it. As for women, it brings about certain nuances which mean companies like ours, need to be conscientious of how they navigate field and sales roles. At Bayer's pharma division, 11% of our field force across India consists of women. To begin with, we have a strong culture of safety and security at Bayer. For example, we have cab facilities for rare instances like late working hours and a GPS tied safety app installed on employee phones that enable them to connect to a security operations centre when they are travelling. This team can offer the necessary assistance including connecting employees to the nearest police station or hospital. We also have programs that help women become independent like self-defence programs. Hygiene too is a critical safety factor, and we offer allowances for women to have

access to clean private business restrooms and facilities.

Multiple policies at Bayer take into account the wider role that women play in life, outside of work. For example, we offer flexi working of four days a month for field colleagues so that women can manage child and/ or elderly care. Short term assignments are also a great way to contribute to the workforce, while juggling personal commitments.

Our policies also consider the challenges that women deal with at various life stages. We have a system in place that enables switching to desk jobs where possible to ensure smooth sailing during the maternity cycle. Our maternity leave duration is for six months, and we also have child adoption leaves. We have work from home options tied to regular digital connections with market and field stakeholders during maternity. Our program titled 'Shristi' enables colleagues to avail maternity related guidance and information. We have also just begun a global initiative called 'Bayer Menopause Cafe', a safe space created for all employees to have discussions on the topic, its impact on their performance at work, and how it may affect their relationships with their colleagues. In general, we have an Employee Assistance Program which helps to support all colleagues with various ongoing and routine concerns. Our Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) committee also includes experienced external counsellors, who reinforce an even more fair and balanced approach to cases.

While these are some of the facilities we offer to help ease the working environment for women, we have a long way to go. We at Bayer are committed to progressing an inclusive culture, and dialogue with all our employees regularly helps us evolve into better workplaces. This is why an open-door policy serves us well. As a testament to our efforts paying off, Bayer is among the top 100 best companies for women in India for the last 5 years, according to the Avtar Seramont study.



CSR Efforts: OPPI Members Drive Social Impact, Sustainability Across India

Byline: Anju Ghangurde,
Executive Editor APAC at Citeline

Key Highlights:

- OPPI members are actively engaged in CSR in India
- Efforts bringing social change, promote sustainability
- Projects focus on education, healthcare, environmental concerns, and community welfare, among others, benefiting millions

The year gone by saw OPPI members drive a range of impactful Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects rooted in integrating social and sustainability initiatives in their business operations, touching the lives of millions of people across India.

The efforts, captured in the OPPI's year-end dossier covering member companies, include fostering education and wellbeing, child welfare, early health screening in underserved communities and projects that address challenges in rural India and tackle environmental concerns via reforestation, among other initiatives.

Anil Matai, Director General, OPPI, said that what stands out is the continued commitment of members to community and their determination to offer them sustainable solutions.

Some of the key initiatives of member companies are as follows:

AbbVie

AbbVie has collaborations with Sight Savers to improve eye health of the rural population including the truckers, poor and the underserved in the project geography through primary eye health services. The collaboration with Christel House is to essentially empower children from under-resourced communities. Mobility India is a pioneer in the Disability, Rehabilitation, and Development sector. The aim of AbbVie's collaboration with Mobility India is to improve the lives of people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups and its collaboration with the Akshay Patra Foundation, which implements mid-day meal programmes for children studying in government and government-aided schools, is to ensure that no child in India is deprived of education due to hunger, demonstrating the value they put on child welfare, societal growth, well-being and the cultivation of human capital. The company has also collaborated with the Tata Memorial Centre, donating thoracic vascular instrument sets for lung and oesophageal cancer patients at the group's hospital in Mumbai, benefiting about 300 patients per year.

AstraZeneca

In addition to the company's Ambition Zero Carbon strategy, AstraZeneca has made notable strides in Meghalaya, supporting biodiversity and soil conservation, as well as climate and catchment health co-benefits under AZ Forest, its global reforestation and biodiversity initiative. Partnered with SankalpTaru Foundation, the company has 5,000 geo-tagged trees using Miyawaki and conventional plantation methods at the Open-Air Jail in Devanahalli, Bangalore, Karnataka. While AZ's Ganga Godavari Screening Programme continues to identify early cancer incidences in women of underserved communities, the company's Young Health Programme, focused on educating youngsters on health choices, has reached over 95,000 youth through 43 community activities.

AstraZeneca also has partnerships with the governments of Karnataka and Goa states to detect the lung cancer early by deploying Artificial Intelligence (AI) based Lung Cancer screening technology developed by Qure.ai that will screen a patient for 29 lung diseases in one chest X-ray.

Bayer

Bayer has a number of initiatives underway in India centred around family planning, in line with its broader commitment to provide access to modern contraception for 100 million women in low and middle-income countries by 2030. It includes a collaboration with the Family Planning Association of India and a tie-up with the United Nations Family Planning Association. Bayer's Preserve the Uterus (PTU) nationwide initiative in alliance with the Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India and Integrated Health and Wellbeing Council has made strong progress and 2024 saw a tie-up with the Government of Andhra Pradesh, to set up the country's first set of PTU Centres of Excellence. The company is also working with the National Cancer Institute of India - All India Institute of Medical Sciences, to develop a sustainable model for delivering quality cancer care for the underserved rural population in and around Jhajjar (in Haryana), while a partnership with Karkinos Healthcare is helping scale up cancer screening in target communities in Mumbai and Puducherry.

Boehringer Ingelheim

Boehringer Ingelheim is advancing efforts to reduce stroke-related disability by strengthening pre-hospitals emergency care systems and improved pre-notification in hospitals for better stroke care outcomes. It has tied up with RED.Health Ambulance, which essentially covers private and corporate hospitals in 16 states in India with its partnered ambulance and EMRI Green Health Services, a GVK enterprise for 108 National Ambulance

that covers government hospitals in 14 states to improve stroke care in India. During World Patient Safety Week, Boehringer Ingelheim partnered with PvPI and the Ministry of Health to launch a pharmacovigilance comic book, promoting safe medicine practices nationwide. The aim is to make patient safety advocacy accessible across India. It has also backed the development of India's first tele-neurorehabilitation app for dementia care via a grant to Manastik Technologies incubated at SIIC, IIT Kanpur

Bristol Myers Squibb

Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS) is helping shape and engage young minds in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education and careers, under an alliance with Janyaa Foundation that works with rural and underprivileged communities in the state of Telangana. The company underscored how experiential learning programs can help kids imbibe a strong STEM foundation which they can apply to their daily lives. Through these programs, BMS has reached over 22,000 students, 200-plus teachers and 55 schools in the 2024-25 academic year. The US multinational has enabled, via various training initiatives, tools such as "Janyaa Lab-in-a-box", a kit consisting of more than 340 experiments developed in partnership with Stanford alumni, government teachers, and science/mathematics experts to help children understand science and math concepts through experiential learning. Over 80 teachers have also been trained through teacher learning materials and pedagogy, among other efforts under the initiative.

Eli Lilly

Lilly's Step Up Program initiated in 2014 with the goal of creating an ideal school for underprivileged children continues to make a significant impact. The school supports 220 children from underprivileged backgrounds using a range of programs such as KADAM – the Step Up Project (6 – 14 years),

wherein project staff identifies drop-out and out-of-school children from the community, enrolls them into Kadam centres, which brings them to their age-appropriate learning level using the Kadam methodology, after which they are mainstreamed into government schools; The 'Pre-School of the Future' (PoF) program aims to provide education and care to children aged 3-6 years. Samarth Program and Programs for Digital Literacy and Mid-Day Meals are some of the other prongs of these efforts. The Step Up Centre enhances the educational status of children in migrant communities in Jharsa, Gurugram. Around 880 children have been educated at the Step Up Centre, 408 have been mainstreamed into regular schools via the Kadam program, 371 have received digital literacy training, and 101 PoF children have been mainstreamed so far.

GSK

GSK's CSR efforts over the years have been geared to address specified national objectives aligned with select UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of its notable achievements has been the reduction of carbon emissions at its Nashik site, which reduced emissions by 310 tons of CO₂ equivalent by switching to a renewable biomass boiler and installing a 1 MW solar plant. The Nashik plant has also saved significant water by recycling treated water and using rainwater harvesting systems which reduced the site's freshwater consumption by 4,199 kilolitres. Its Women + Water Collaboration in India launched in October 2023 brings together companies from different sectors in India to leverage women's leadership for improving access to clean water and sanitation, ultimately supporting the health of local communities. GSK is also working towards eliminating lymphatic filariasis, which can cause permanent disability, and has distributed nearly 3.96 billion albendazole tablets so far as part of these efforts. In addition, GSK contributes to digital learning initiatives and focuses on child nutrition under the National Urban Health Mission aimed at uplifting underserved communities.

J&J

J&J's CSR activities for 2024-25 are aligned with its Global Health Equity priorities, alongside addressing regional priorities with key areas of focus being tuberculosis (TB), mental health, vision, and global surgery, with an emphasis on the training of health workers, including Aanganwadi and Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers. These efforts include three projects, one focused on training health workers in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, while the other two target raising awareness and providing treatment for both communicable and non-communicable diseases, including TB, in Aurangabad and NCR/Gurgaon. Mental health awareness projects in the schools of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and relief support efforts in Assam have been successfully initiated. Additional projects focused on active TB case testing and awareness in the slums of Delhi and Hyderabad, as well as nutrition support for TB patients across eight states have also been initiated.

The company is also shaping global surgery, with its project in West Bengal providing cleft lip and palate surgeries. J&J also supported relief packages for flood-affected people in Gujarat, Kerala, and Tripura.

Merck

Merck has focused resources on three strategically core areas – education, health and the environment. For instance, Merck's Arogya program, which includes health screenings, diagnostic services, and community education to improve health outcomes, has made a significant impact on local communities. The company's Patalganga Healthcare project aims to improve the community's overall health status alongside an element of health education-based awareness for community members, with special attention to the women, children, and elderly. Last year Merck India also firmed up a strategic partnership with the Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre under its Umeed program,

which aims to empower patients, foster awareness, and be a knowledge partner to healthcare professionals, helping catalyze positive changes in the community. The collaboration expects to enhance access to cancer care for patients affected by head & neck, and colorectal cancer. The company is also supporting sustainability efforts, via initiatives like reusable shipping material, innovative slim packs, state of the art warehouse facilities etc that contribute to reducing its ecological footprint.

MSD

MSD continues to build access to health and education in India. The company has partnered with the SMILE Foundation to enhance access to primary healthcare across districts in India via the deployment of 'Mobile Medical Units'. Implemented at 15 locations across 5 states including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, and Karnataka, these mobile units provide primary care services for common diseases, conduct screening activities and provide referral linkage to higher facilities. A key prong of the program is the focus on the health status of pregnant and lactating mothers to ensure safe motherhood. More than 5,000 OPD sessions have been conducted benefiting nearly 1.8 lakh people over the years.

MSD also partners with The Apprentice Project, to empower under-served students with essential skills using artificial intelligence. The alliance has impacted over 10,000 students aged 11 – 17 from underprivileged communities. Students have recorded over 2,00,000 cumulative self-learning hours and created 20,000+ projects on topics in line with the UN SDGs.

Novartis

Novartis has influenced over 200,000 lives through their community-first approach and strategic partnerships. The company's Watershed Development Project in Telangana adopts a holistic

approach to enhance water security, sustainable agriculture, economic development, and community well-being. The project has helped increase water storage capacity by 260,014 m³ and plant over 10,000 trees, leading to a 10% increase in incomes and improved health outcomes. The project is being expanded to 10 villages in Maharashtra that face severe drought and flooding affecting agriculture and access to clean water. Phase two of the initiative entailed the construction of two check dams and rejuvenated a pond, enhancing water harvesting for 68 farmers. It continues to champion sustainable livelihoods for people affected by leprosy under a project being executed by The Leprosy Mission Trust of India. This project provides certified vocational skill-building, soft skills training, on-the-job experiences and has Self Help Groups, aimed at empowering affected individuals with opportunities for rehabilitation and livelihood advancements. Nearly 300 individuals have since benefited, with a cascading positive effect on their families.

Novo Nordisk

Novo Nordisk continued to drive efforts to improve the lives of those with serious chronic diseases. The Danish group's philanthropic arm Novo Nordisk Education Foundation (NNEF) sealed a partnership with Embassy REIT called NovoHealth@EmbassyManyata on World Obesity Day last year. The project garnered over 2,700 registrations and encouraged the engagement of 40-plus firms housed within Embassy Manyata, resulting in a collective distance over 20,000 kilometres covered in nine months. The social endeavour, aimed at fostering community health, was endorsed by the Government of Karnataka.

NNEF also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Rabindranath Tagore Medical College in Udaipur and established India's first Sickle Cell Wellness Hub for holistic sickle cell disease care. The public-private partnership aligns with the Government of India's

commitment to eradicate sickle cell disease from India by 2047, as part of its National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission 2023.

Pfizer

Pfizer, in alliance with the Government of Goa, Goa Medical College and Hospital, Directorate of Health Services and Americares India Foundation, launched Project Parivartan, an initiative that aims to combat antimicrobial resistance and strengthen infection prevention and control in the state's public healthcare facilities. These efforts are aligned with India's National Action Plan on AMR and WHO's global health priorities.

The company also progressed its Project Aastha Rare Disease initiative implemented by DFY which works to provide aid to rare disease patients during their diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation phase. The project is aimed at establishing a support system that facilitates the best available care to these patients. Pfizer has set up helpdesks at four centers of excellence and these helpdesks aim to serve the patients.

Roche

Roche is driving CSR initiatives in areas like sustainable waste management and community health and providing holistic care for children battling cancer. Roche Pharma India's Project SWACHH in Haridwar, Uttarakhand aims to transform waste management by partnering with Bulk Waste Generators, focusing on segregation, composting, and public education for sustainable solutions. The project also empowers local self-help groups to sell compost, generating revenue, promoting entrepreneurship and community welfare.

Roche has also partnered with St. Jude India Child Care Centres in Mumbai and Guwahati to provide holistic care for children undergoing cancer treatment, along with support for their families. The

partnership aims to offer a “home away from home” environment, where children with cancer and their families can find a safe, hygienic, nurturing space to ensure that they can focus on recovery and well-being. The partnership has impacted the lives of nearly 400 children and their families.

Sanofi

Sanofi's CSR policy thrust is on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and like some peers includes fully equipped medical mobile vans deployed across 500 villages and urban slums in Maharashtra that offer free screening, diagnosis, treatment and disease awareness to around 4,30,000 people for NCDs and referral services. The company's Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) Program in partnership with RSSDI is helping over 1400 underprivileged children living with T1D to manage their condition better. The company's KiDS (Kids & Diabetes in Schools) program also imparts education and engagement amongst 2,00,000 children, teachers and parents across over 500 schools to help control the overall long-term disease burden in Goa and Uttar Pradesh. Sanofi's India Charitable Access Program (InCAP) is the first & longest-running program of its kind for people with lysosomal storage disorders, and has benefitted patients in over 100 countries, and over 150 new patients are approved annually.

Servier

Servier India has partnered with CanKids KidsCan, to support 540 children at CanKids Hospital Support Units across India to ensure that they receive top-tier cancer treatment, emotional support, and enhanced healthcare capacity. Over 150 employees volunteered to actively engage in a range of activities from skill-building workshops to Origami, spreading joy and providing comfort to these kids and their families during difficult times. Such engagement, the company maintained, is a testament to

Servier's belief that employees can be catalysts for change and reinforces their commitment to making a difference in the community.

To ensure equitable access to treatment, Servier has introduced nationwide patient assistance programs designed to make cancer therapies more affordable and accessible across India. These programs focus on the “self-funding” category, where patients often face financial barriers to treatment, reinforcing Servier's commitment to providing meaningful and accessible treatments.

ACG

ACG has a number of projects in the areas of environment, education, health, livelihood and sports. Some of the key initiatives include projects in Shirwal, Maharashtra, to mitigate risks of climate change via crop diversification and sustainable water management, using renewable energy in agriculture, improving soil health, enhancing fodder availability and supporting carbon sequestration, and promoting livelihood opportunities for women. The project impacted 285 households.

ACG also initiated a project in Shirwal to improve rainfed and degraded land through integrated watershed management, strengthen community-based institutions for livelihood and watershed sustainability, and enhance watershed project effectiveness through cross-learning and incentives in six villages. 279 lakh litres of water are now conserved through conserved structures, providing an increase in the ground water table and generating year-round availability of drinking water.

Among other efforts, ACG Cares Foundation also sponsored a Nutrition Enrichment Program for 2,814 cancer-afflicted children through an implementing NGO partner. The program was continued till the child became cancer-free.

Parexel

Parexel partnered with United Way, Bengaluru, which comes with a 133-year legacy of community service and operates across 47 countries. Through the Women’s Livelihood Program (Hyderabad) Parexel provided retail training to 105 students from underprivileged backgrounds, from different districts of Telengana. Placements as store executives were provided to 35 students by the end of the program. Disha, another Women Livelihood Program (Chhoti Si Asha) entailed training 35 women in crochet and embroidery, with their graduation and first mock-orders initiated. The global CRO and United Way, among other efforts, also created multiple online campaigns to boost sales and livelihood opportunities for these women, as well as others, by providing employment to over 100 women in 2023-24. Parexel also sponsored 50 cleft reconstructive surgeries (via Smile Train India), with more than half those being infants and the rest in the 3-18 year age group and all the beneficiaries coming from underprivileged backgrounds. Donation of an apheresis machine to the Regional Cancer Centre, Trivandrum were among the other highlights.

Pharmapoint Group

Pharmapoint’s CSR activities are aimed at addressing societal, environmental, and ethical challenges. They included ensuring access to life-saving medications, “anytime-anywhere” seamless distribution of time- and temperature-sensitive life-saving drugs, maintaining stringent storage conditions to reach underserved and economically disadvantaged regions across the country as well as collaborating with principal companies and patient assistance programs to enhance access to essential medications. A range of other efforts include health education campaigns and collaborative workshops with healthcare institutions and community organizations, and initiatives in the area of waste management and energy efficiency including renewable energy adoption.

Pharmapoint believes in sustainable packaging, employing recyclable and biodegradable materials to minimize waste generation and optimized logistics, reducing carbon emissions by optimizing supply chains and employing electric vehicles for deliveries.



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India Rare Disease Scenario: Advances and Complexities

Byline: Anju Ghangurde,
Executive Editor APAC at Citeline

Key Highlights:

- India is implementing policy & regulatory measures to improve access to rare disease therapies
- Experts advocate for mandatory newborn screening, other initiatives to bolster efforts
- Funding gaps, slow traction in crowdfunding among challenges
- PLI scheme seen delivering results

India is advancing a range of policy, regulatory and fiscal measures as part of efforts to support timely access to rare diseases therapies in the country.

While these initiatives are noteworthy there's still much ground to be covered across various dimensions including funding and the need for streamlined evaluation and administration of therapies. An ongoing court case has also added certain complexities, for now, to treatment access for patients.

India's National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD) of 2021 and recent regulatory updates providing for a waiver of local clinical trials for orphan drugs, among other categories, approved in the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, and the EU are seen as important advances to broaden timely access to treatments.

Experts maintain that effective implementation of these policies and regulatory programs on a national scale "is still a work in progress" but when scaled could have a significant impact on patients in India and other low and middle-income countries catered to by India as the pharmacy of the world.

Dr Harsha Rajasimha, Executive Chair, Indo US Organization for Rare Diseases (IndoUSrare) outlined a number of policy and regulatory adjustments that could further bolster efforts in the segment including instituting a mandatory national newborn screening (NBS) program and universal screening panel to identify all patients with an initial set of rare diseases, with consideration for expansion.

While there could be implementation challenges given India is a large and complex country those should not prevent the country from taking that bold first step, he stated.

“Without the speedy identification of patients with rare diseases nationally, the impact of all other efforts will remain on the lower side,” Rajasimha told Citeline.

Earlier the Indo US Bridging RARE Summit 2024, which brought together patient advocates, researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders, saw experts from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) underlined, among a range of aspects, the need for comprehensive national patient registries to understand the prevalence, incidence, and foster epidemiological research to shape policy frameworks.

India’s NPRD 2021 recognizes NBS as “the best example” of secondary prevention in which babies are screened within few days of birth before symptoms of the disease manifest and treatment is initiated which prevents morbidity and mortality. While universal screening of all pregnancies and newborns in the country for all rare disorders isn’t currently feasible, the policy suggests a screening and diagnostic strategy wherein those pregnant women in whom there is a history of a child born with a rare disease and that rare disease diagnosis has been confirmed, would be offered prenatal screening tests through amniocentesis and/or chorionic villi sampling.

Rajasimha also believes that India should perhaps adopt and implement an Orphan Drug Act similar to the 1983 Act of the US. “The current NPRD focuses on prevention, diagnosis, treatment management, and covering the cost of treatments for rare diseases. This only addresses less than 10% of the rare diseases that have a known treatment (most of which are not tested on Indian patients during clinical trials),” he explained.

Court Directive, Crowdfunding

Developments in the rare disease segment also come against the backdrop of an important court case.

Last year the Delhi High Court had issued far-reaching directions to the government apparatus and other stakeholders, including pharma, as part of efforts to ease the struggle of rare diseases patients and their families.

The order dated 4th October 2024, which covered 105 petitions pertaining to the treatment of children suffering from rare diseases, touched upon funding, policy, regulatory and pricing aspects and reflected the “arduous journey” of various stakeholders in the rare disease segment.

Among a string of important recommendations, the Indian government was directed to expand the existing number of centres of excellence (CoEs), considering patient density as well as collaborate with the CoEs and companies to provide free genetic screening for all rare disease patients at risk of requiring therapies. Screening, it said, is to be conducted for all enrolled patients at CoEs, as that is the first step towards developing a comprehensive prevention and control strategy for rare diseases.

The court also directed the Indian government to establish the National Fund for Rare Diseases (NFRD) for which a sum of INR 9.74 bn, as per the recommendation of the National Rare Disease Committee (NRDC), and pending approval of the

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), were required to be allocated for the financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26.

The court also expects crowd funding and corporate social responsibility contributions to add funds for tackling rare diseases. The government's crowdfunding portal for rare disease treatment, launched in August 2021, though, has seen slow traction, at least so far. It has raised INR 368,785 (accessed as of 10 March 2025) with 2,967 patients registered on the portal, 50 of whom are in urgent need of funds.

The High Court judgement, however, has since been challenged by the Government before the Supreme Court. The apex court in an order dated 9 December 2024 noted that the petition had been filed before it instead of approaching a Division Bench of the High Court. While there is a stay on the 4 October order, the Supreme Court asked the government to "comply with the terms and conditions" of the notification/ Office Memorandum File No.: W-11037/40/2022-Grants (RD) dated 19.05.2022 issued by the Rare Diseases Cell, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare".

The Office Memorandum essentially provided financial support of up to INR 50 lakhs to patients suffering from any category of rare diseases. This support was to be provided for treatment at CoEs listed under the NPRD 2021 outside the umbrella scheme of Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi.

"There will be stay of operation of the impugned judgment, subject to the petitioner, Union of India,

complying with the aforesaid notification and also issuing directions for payment on a case-to-case basis, whenever it is required," the court order said. The case is tentatively listed for hearing towards the end of March.

Policy, Regulatory Support

The gaps notwithstanding, the government has taken a number of steps both on the policy and regulatory front over the recent past to facilitate rare disease treatment access.

India's Union Budget 2025-26 had earlier provided for basic customs duty (BCD) exemption to 36 more lifesaving medicines for cancer and certain rare diseases. The budget also specified drugs and medicines under Patient Assistance Programmes run by pharmaceutical companies that are fully exempt from BCD, provided the therapies are supplied free of cost to patients.

India has also approved eight orphan drugs including Nitisinone, Eliglustat, Trientine Hydrochloride and Cannabidiol for manufacturing under its Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Pharmaceuticals. The scheme entails a financial outlay of INR 15,000 crore and runs up to FY 2027-28. Orphan drugs, falls under Category 1 of the scheme that covers bio-pharmaceuticals, complex generics, gene therapy drugs, complex excipients, among others. Media reports have indicated that Indian manufacturers have successfully developed affordable formulations for some of these products.



Key Interactions

OPPI had the privilege of meeting **Shri P. Krishnamurthy ji**, Chairman of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), Government of India, on January 16, 2025. Our discussion offered valuable insights into the current pharmaceutical landscape and OPPI's vision for विकसित भारत@2047. We truly appreciate the opportunity to align on shared priorities and explore collaborative ways to advance healthcare in India. Shri P. Krishnamurthy ji's perspectives and broader insights were invaluable in fostering a more predictable pricing environment with reduced uncertainty.



The Department of Pharmaceuticals, Government of India, organized an industry forum to promote the PRIP Scheme to drive affordable healthcare innovation on March 13, 2025. Anil Matai, Director General, OPPI, attended the forum as a speaker wherein he emphasized that India's pharma industry is at an inflection point—moving beyond its Generics & Volume leadership to a future driven by innovation-led value growth. He highlighted that true breakthroughs happen at the intersection of science, academia, industry, and policy, and initiatives like PRIP have the potential to transform the industry landscape.



OPPI along with EY as a Knowledge partner hosted an in-person Workshop on Implementation and Readiness of UCPMP 2024 on March 18, 2025, in Pfizer Mumbai and Delhi offices. The session covered potential areas wherein members were seeking clarification on the implementation and the data collation, among other topics. It was quite insightful, engaging session and had a good participation from OPPI member companies, especially colleagues from Ethics and Finance teams.



UCPMP Workshop, Mumbai Office



UCPMP Workshop, Delhi Office

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Your dedication and hard work have been the driving force behind this success.

To our readers, thank you for joining us on this venture. We hope you found this edition insightful and look forward to bringing you more updates and valuable content in our next issue.

Best Regards,

Asawari Sathaye

Director Communications and Patient Advocacy, OPPI

About OPPI

The Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) established in 1965, represents the research-based global pharmaceutical companies in India. OPPI has been an integral part of the healthcare journey of the country. We remain committed to supporting the nation's healthcare objectives, putting patients at the core of all decision making and collaborating with all stakeholders to find sustainable solutions to realize the collective vision of Health for All.

Our member companies have been serving the country's healthcare ecosystem since pre-independence and continue to remain committed to patient safety and providing quality care in the future as well. As an association, our advocacy decisions, patient commitment and work are always keeping the country first and we embody the spirit of working for 'Bharat Ke Liye'; driven with innovation to find solutions for unmet medical needs, collaboration with government stakeholders, and co-creation with partners coming together to address the nation's healthcare challenges. We are committed to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi-ji's clarion call of 'Jai Vigyan and Jai Anusandhan'.

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