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ABSTRACT

The historical background of pharmacy education in Tripura, India, since 1974 is briefly discussed till the present position. The journey was started with Health Training Institute and then Regional Pharmacy Institute, which was upgraded and renamed as Regional Institute of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology. Tripura is now offering courses D. Pharm. B. Pharm., M. Pharm. and PhD in Pharmacy. Tripura State Pharmacy Tribunal to Tripura State Pharmacy Council, Drug Control Administration and State Drugs Testing Laboratory under Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Tripura were added time to time. Tripura Board of Pharmacy Education is the only examining authority to conduct D. Pharm. examination and Tripura University (a Central University) is the examining authority to conduct B. Pharm., M. Pharm. and Ph. D. Examinations. Apart from these, two more private universities have introduced the pharmacy courses. Research in Pharmacy in this small state is going on, though not comparable with other developed states in India.

Keywords: Pharmacy Education, B.Pharm, M.Pharm, Tripura.

INTRODUCTION

Pharmacy is the science and practice of preparing, dispensing and monitoring medications to ensure safe and effective use. Pharmacy education focuses on developing knowledgeable and skilled professionals who can ensure the safe and effective use of medications.

Pharmacy education in Tripura, India is nowadays enriched by offering various programs leading to pharmacist registration, employment and invention. These include Diploma in Pharmacy (D.Pharm), Bachelor of Pharmacy (B.Pharm), Master's Degree in Pharmacy (M.Pharm), PhD in Pharmacy, which are affiliated by the Pharmacy Council of India (PCI). The state also has a Tripura State Pharmacy Council that handles registration and regulation of pharmacists.

Historical Background¹⁻⁵

In 1974, the first Health Training Institute (HTI) was started with the Pharmacy (Allopath) course at the Palace Compound, Agartala, Tripura, India. At that time, only 22 seats were available and five doctors from State GBP Hospital, Agartala were engaged as faculty under the control of the Health and Family Welfare Department, Government of Tripura. One doctor (namely Dr. Janardhan Das) was given responsibility as the head of the department at that institute.

In the year 1979, RPI (Regional Pharmacy Institute) was established at state GBP Hospital complex (Agartala, Tripura) by continuing Diploma in Pharmacy (Allopath) course with intake capacity of 30 seats. Mr. Mihir Kumar Paul was In-charge of RPI. He was also the first Registrar of the Tripura State Pharmacy Council since 1978.

In 1978, Tripura State Pharmacy Tribunal was formed. The Tripura State Pharmacy Council Rules, 1975, was notified in the year of 1976, which was amended in the year of 1995. Tripura State Pharmacy Council (TSPC) is a Statutory Body constituted by Government of Tripura on 24th August 1993 under the Department of Health & Family Welfare. It is constituted under Chapter III, Section 19 of the Pharmacy Act, 1948 to regulate the profession and practice of Pharmacy in the State of Tripura. The president of TSPC was Director of Health Services, Government of Tripura, till 2014. Thereafter, the first pharmacy man – Dr. Binoy Behari Goswami was the President of TSPC on 2014 only. But he could not continue to complete his tenure, thus Dr. Biplab De became President of TSPC on November 2016 till August 2018.

RPI – the institute of many Pharmacists¹⁻³

In 1979, few Drug Inspectors were engaged as faculty in RPI and one doctor was also engaged for Pharmacology (Dr Kishalay Chowdhury). Later, another doctor (Dr. R.C. Saha) was also engaged to teach Human Anatomy and Physiology. Thereafter, the Regional Pharmacy Institute (RPI) was established with its self-identity in present address that in Abhoynagar, Agartala during 1984 with the financial assistance of NEC (North Eastern Council) to cater / continue Diploma course in Pharmacy (D. Pharm.) throughout the North Eastern states with an intake of 60 (Sixty) students. With effect from 1993-94 academic session the Regional Pharmacy Institute, Agartala was following Education Regulations, 1991, substituting Education Regulations, 1981, framed by the Pharmacy Council of India u/s 10 of the Pharmacy Act, 1948. The first regular faculty dedicated for RPI

(Diploma level institute) was recruited during 1984 and he was Sri Binoy Behari Goswami. Subsequently other regular faculties were recruited later, time to time such as Sri Rabindra Debnath, Sri Sanjoy Goswami, Sri Bidhan Chandra Roy.

RPI to RIPSAT³

Subsequently, the Institute (RPI) was upgraded into a degree-level institute by introducing B.Pharm. course (with an intake capacity of 30) in addition to D. Pharm. Course (with intake capacity of 60) with the renaming of RPI as the Regional Institute of Pharmaceutical Science and Technology (RIPSAT) during Nov 1997. The participating states were Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura. The first group of regular faculties for degree level institute (RIPSAT) were recruited during 2001 and they were Sri Biplab De, Smt. Sabita Paul (Datta) and Sri Rishiraj Chhetree. Later, other faculties were recruited time to time.

Expansion of RIPSAT³

The Pharmacy Council of India has approved the intake capacity of the B.Pharm course from 30 to 60 seats in the year 2020. The M. Pharm. in Pharmaceutics with intake capacity six seats was introduced in RIPSAT in the year 2021. The list of Principal / Principal I/C of RPI and RIPSAT as obtained from incumbency board of the institute are as below: -

Table 1: Incumbency board of the institute

Sl. no	Name of the Principals	Post Held	Since
1.	Dr, S.K. Basu	Principal I/C	1979
2.	Dr. K.D Choudhury	Principal	-
3.	Dr. B.B. Goswami	Principal I/C	1994
4.	Dr, Biplab De	Principal I/C	2015
5.	Dr. K.K. Kunda (Principal, Agartala Govt Medical College)	Principal I/C	2016 (for a very few days)
6.	Dr. B.B. Goswami	Principal I/C	2016
7.	Dr, Biplab De	Principal I/C	2017
8.	Dr. Suvakanta Dash	-	2017
9.	Prof, (Dr.) Rishi Raj Chhetree	Principal I/C	2023

Tripura Board of Pharmacy Education (TBPE)²

TBPE is the examining authority for D. Pharm. course in Tripura. TBPE was established during November, 1980 and located in the premises of RIPSAT. The composition of the TBPE was changed time to time as desired by the Government of Tripura. At present, TBPE is conducting examinations for two years durative courses - D. Pharm. (Allopath), D. Pharm. (Ayurved), D. Pharm. (Homoeopathy).

Tripura University and Pharmacy⁶

Tripura University was originally established as the Post-Graduate Wing of Calcutta University in 1976. It became a State University in 1987 and was later recognized as a Central University in 2007. The Department of Pharmacy was established in 2011, offering postgraduate education and research training in pharmaceutical sciences. The department offers Master of Pharmacy (M. Pharm.) in Pharmaceutical Chemistry only with 15 intake capacity and Ph.D. programs in various disciplines of pharmaceutical sciences. Tripura University is the affiliating university of all pharmacy programmes conducted in different colleges in Tripura, India.

Pharmacy in Private Colleges⁷⁻¹¹

There are some private colleges also established in Tripura imparting D. Pharm., B. Pharm., M. Pharm. courses, such as Bharat Pharmaceutical Technology – 2019, Milestone Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences – 2022, Bir Bikram College of Pharmacy – 2023, Pharmacy department in Dhamma Dipa International Buddhist University – 2024, Pharmacy department in Aryavart International University – 2025.

Organisation

There are many organisations working in Tripura since long back as a branch of national organisations, such as- APTI (Association of Pharmaceutical Teachers of India), IPA (Indian Pharmacist Association), FIPO (Federation of Indian Pharmacist Organizations), IPA (Indian Pharmaceutical Association) etc.

Pharmaceutical Research in Tripura^{2,6,12}

In beginning the research activities in pharmacy were started in RPI during 1988 by Dr. Binoy Behari Goswami and Dr. Rabindra Debnath in relation to their Ph.D. research works under Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. Later the teachers appointed in RIPSAT time to time were involved with research activities for their PhD research works and project / dissertation works of the students of B. Pharm. final year / semester. RIPSAT has been contributing to pharmaceutical research in the region through its faculty and students. Tripura University offers Ph.D. program in Pharmaceutical Sciences providing opportunities for advanced research. The introduction of master degree programme and PhD has been playing a great role in pharmaceutical research in Tripura. Dr. Biplab De (author of this paper) is probably the first recognised research supervisor to guide the PhD students in Pharmacy in Tripura. He started his guidance being the supervisor since 2009 in pharmacy and in other subject area also in the Jwahalral Nehru Technical University, Hyderabad, Jwahalral Nehru Technical University, Anantapur; Assam University, Silchar, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, Tripura University. There are many article already published by the pharmaceutical researchers of Tripura in different national / international journals in the field of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Pharmaceutics, Pharmacology, Phytopharmaceuticals, Nano Pharmaceuticals, Modern Analytical Techniques, Structure-based Drug Design Research, Hospital Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical education etc. Institutions in Tripura may collaborate with other national & international organizations to advance pharmaceutical research.

Tripura state is now enriched with the full fledged drug administration and State Drugs Testing Laboratory under Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Tripura. Drug Control Administration in Tripura was started on 1973 and Sri Mihir Kumar Paul was the first Deputy Drug Controller from pharmacy background during 1981. The State Drugs Testing Laboratory, Tripura, India, had started its journey during 1981.

Students of Pharmacy background studied in Tripura are working in various parts of India and even in abroad, as the job opportunities for pharmacy students are limited in Tripura. There is no large scale pharmaceutical industry / manufacturing unit in Tripura. Nowadays, Tripura is well connected with other parts of India by rail, air and road. It is expected that, Tripura will compete with other states of India in near future.

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