Faroque, also the president of Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Society, "Over 850 companies are producing allopathic, homeopathic, unani and ayurvedic medicines in the country. Is it possible to monitor efficiently so many companies? As far as I know there 242 companies that are manufacturing allopathic medicine in the country, however, the Health Minister briefed the press that of the 164 companies are in production of the existing 222 companies. Let's forget the debate on the number. But is it logical that 164 produces medicines of which 57 companies manufacture paracetamol? Is there sufficient market for 350 Unani companies, when only six companies are producing medicine in Hungary, which is one of the largest pharmaceuticals exporting countries in the world?"

Then why does a pharmaceutical company like Rid Pharma get permission, when the government's policy is to give new permission only for big budget companies? The concerned sources identify some hidden causes. "The more number of pharmaceutical companies create 'opportunity' for the officials at Drugs Administration. The increase of manpower will never improve the scenario unless the whole system is changed", says Professor Faroque.

Professor Faoroque gives an alarming picture of the pharmaceuticals industry in the country, which is causing several problems. According to him, "Only a few pharmaceuticals companies maintain standard quality in the country. The rest of the companies have very low productions, most of these brands have limited market in the capital whereas there are many companies that do not have any production at all. Then how do these companies survive?"

"Importing elements for pharmaceuticals manufacturing, many of the small companies sell these elements in the black market, where there is every possibility for adulteration," continues Professor Faroque, "We have heard about duplication and adulteration by some small companies of some popular brands, which is really alarming. If we know the facts. It's difficult for me to believe that the officials of Drugs Administration and police do not know."

According to Professor ABM Faroque, there is no alternative to a total reform of the existing Drugs Administration. Following many developed countries he advises forming a separate organisation like Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the US. "In many ways public health in Bangladesh is in threat due to adulteration of valuable medicines and daily food. BSTI and Drugs Administration are not in a position to meet the challenge. For the proper monitoring the government should immediately form an autonomous body like FDA including the experts", he suggests.

It's a positive sign that the parliamentary standing committee on health formed a separate four-member parliamentary committee to look into the manufacturing processes of pharmaceutical companies across the country, however, Professor Faroque believes after the proper monitoring of the existing technical facilities of these pharmaceuticals companies and their products, the government should take drastic action against the substandard companies.

For its own interest Bangladesh Association for Pharmaceuticals Industries (BAPI) should pursue the government to quit so many substandard and financially sick companies those are basically manufacturing adulterate and duplicate medicine.

Hundreds of these substandard and financially sick companies usually market their products in the rural areas and give attractive commission to the retailers. "The brands of the financially challenged companies are not usually available in Dhaka. Their target market is rural areas and district towns. Even the pracetamol case also proves that people suffer mostly in the rural areas for the medicine adulteration. They do it just to keep the production cost cheaper to give more commission to the retailers who peruse the consumers to by substandard medicine", Professor Faroque says.

"For its own interest Bangladesh Association for Pharmaceuticals Industries (BAPI) should pursue the government to quit so many substandard and financially sick companies those are basically manufacturing adulterate and duplicate medicine, which is a great threat for public health. Considering the fate of the employees working in these companies, the government should help these companies to switch to other products rather manufacturing medicine. But no company should be allowed to operate without proper technical facilities."

In fact, adulteration and unauthorised duplication of valuable medicine is not an isolated incident in Bangladesh. Many countries in the world have overcome the crisis taking proper steps. Consulting the stakeholders the government should immediately to ensure marketing of only standard pharmaceutical products for the welfare of the public health and take drastic action against the culprits.