



Review Article

A Review On The Janaushadhi Scheme: Transforming Acquisition To Affordable Medicines In India

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ABSTRACT

Elevated health-care expenditures are a concerning factor in a country like India where the economic conditions are on the poor side. Hence to control the high health care expenditures the Government of India launched the Janaushadhi scheme. The Janaushadhi scheme, launched by the Government of India on November 2008, intends to provide generic medicines of bioequivalence with branded medicines at an affordable prices to the general public. This review article surveys the implementation, impact, challenges, and future prospectives of the Janaushadhi scheme in India.

INTRODUCTION

Access to affordable healthcare has always been a challenge for a developing country like India, where 16.4% of the population is below poverty line, which makes it difficult for a large amount of population to even consume 3 meals a day let alone pay for the medicines especially in chronic

conditions like Hypertension, Diabetes Mellitus. The WHO survey performed in the year 2011 documented that 3.2% of Indians live below poverty line and also does not have health insurance which further compounds to the above situation. Also, a significant portion of the population resides in rural areas and lacks access

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to essential medicines. Along with this the Indian market has plethora of formulations comprising of same drugs but with different brand names. According to few reports in total 1 Lakh brand medicines are registered for only 1000 APIs. This is mainly due to a staggering boom in the Pharmaceutical industries as India is ranked 3rd largest in production of same drug formulations with different brand names. The Janaushadhi scheme, initiated in 2008, seeks to bridge this gap by providing cost-effective generic medicines across the country, thus intending to increase the adherence of medicines and ultimately providing better health care to the general public. Bureau of Pharma sector undertakings (BPSU) of India, a special wing of department of pharmaceuticals was given the responsibility to govern the operations of Janaushadhi scheme. It is a not-for-profit organization under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India. By decreasing the cost of scheduled and non-scheduled drugs, applying Value added tax of 4% and a discount in excise duty ranging from 16%-8%, Government of India is trying to further increase the medicine affordability for economically poor Indians.

IMPLEMENTATION

Under the Janaushadhi scheme, the government sets up Janaushadhi Kendras (JAKs) or Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs) to sell generic medicines. These centre's procure quality medicines directly from manufacturers and make them available to the public at significantly lower prices than their branded counterparts.

A) Setting up Janaushadhi Kendras:

The scheme involves the establishment of Janaushadhi Kendras (JAKs) or Janaushadhi stores across the country. These stores are operated by individuals, entrepreneurs, or organizations who are selected as Janaushadhi Kendra owners. As on 31.03.2023 India has 9303 functional Janaushadhi kendras distributed across 35 states or

Union territories. Product basket of Janaushadhi Kendras comprises 1800 drugs and 285 surgical items.

B) Selection of Kendra Owners:

Interested individuals or organizations can apply to become Jan Aushadhi Kendra owners through a prescribed application process. The applications are evaluated by the Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI), which is the implementing agency for the scheme.

C) Store Requirements:

Once selected, the Kendra owner needs to set up the store as per the guidelines provided by BPPI. The store should be located in a prominent place with sufficient space for storing and displaying medicines. It should comply with the necessary infrastructure requirements and maintain cleanliness and hygiene.

D) Identification of Medicines:

The BPPI identifies a list of essential medicines, both prescription and over-the-counter drugs, to be made available under the Janaushadhi scheme. These medicines are selected based on their therapeutic efficacy and usage.

E) Tie-up with Suppliers:

Janaushadhi Kendra owners are required to tie up with authorized suppliers or pharmaceutical companies to procure generic medicines. These medicines are sourced from approved manufacturers or marketing companies who adhere to quality standards. The BPSU distributes generic medicines to PMBJKs and also ensures efficient management of the PMBJK. The CPSU makes sure the quality of medicines supplied in the country is good enough. According to the scheme 699, medicines and aids should be made available which is checked by the National accreditation Board for testing and calibration laboratories

F) Price Regulation:

The government ensures that the generic medicines sold through Janaushadhi Kendras are affordable by capping their prices. The prices are

significantly lower compared to branded medicines available in the market. This makes healthcare more accessible and reduces the financial burden on patients.

G) Quality Assurance:

The BPPI ensures that the generic medicines supplied under the Janaushadhi scheme meet quality standards. They undertake periodic quality checks and audits of the suppliers, manufacturing units, and Janaushadhi stores to maintain quality assurance. The government mandates strict quality control measures to maintain the efficacy, safety, and quality of the generic medicines.

H) Availability and Distribution:

Janaushadhi Kendras stock a wide range of generic medicines, including both prescription and over-the-counter drugs. These medicines are made available to the public at affordable prices. The Kendras also play a crucial role in spreading awareness about generic medicines and their benefits.

I) Government Support:

The government provides support to Janaushadhi Kendra owners by offering financial assistance in the form of incentives and subsidies. The owners receive a fixed percentage of the MRP (Maximum Retail Price) of the medicines as a reimbursement.

The Janaushadhi scheme aims to make quality healthcare accessible to all sections of society, especially the economically weaker sections. By promoting the use of generic medicines, the scheme contributes to reducing healthcare expenses and increasing healthcare affordability in India.

IMPACT

The Janaushadhi scheme has had a profound impact on healthcare accessibility in India. Launched in 2008, the scheme has had a profound impact on healthcare accessibility and affordability in the country. Over the years, it has helped millions of people access essential medications at affordable prices, improved

healthcare infrastructure, generated employment opportunities, and reduced the financial burden on patients. In this section, we will delve into the impact of the Janaushadhi scheme in India, highlighting its significance in the healthcare sector

- One of the primary impacts of the Janaushadhi scheme is the availability of affordable medicines. Through the scheme, low-cost generic drugs are made available to the public, ensuring that they have access to essential medications at a fraction of the cost of branded drugs. This has significantly reduced the financial burden on individuals and families, especially those from economically weaker sections of society. It is now available to many people who could not afford the necessary medications, resulting in improved health and overall well-being.
- Furthermore, the Janaushadhi scheme has expanded access to medicines, particularly in rural and remote areas. Janaushadhi stores (PMBJK), have been set up across the country to provide generic medicines. These stores serve as accessible points of contact for people living in areas with limited healthcare facilities. By establishing Janaushadhi stores in such locations, the scheme has bridged the gap between urban and rural healthcare access, ensuring that people in remote areas can avail themselves of affordable medicines
- The Janaushadhi scheme has also played a pivotal role in reducing healthcare costs. Generic medicines available through the scheme are significantly cheaper than their branded counterparts, enabling patients to save a considerable amount of money. This cost-saving aspect is particularly beneficial for individuals with chronic illnesses who require long-term medication. By opting for generic medicines through the Janaushadhi scheme, patients can



afford the treatment they need without straining their finances

- In addition to cost savings, the Janaushadhi scheme prioritizes quality assurance. The generic medicines available in Janaushadhi stores undergo rigorous quality control measures. The medicines are sourced from certified manufacturers and subjected to testing to ensure they meet the required quality standards. This quality assurance instills confidence among patients regarding the efficacy and safety of the medicines they purchase. Patients can trust that the generic medicines they obtain through the Janaushadhi scheme are of good quality, equivalent to their branded counterparts
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- The impact of the janaushadhi scheme extends beyond medicine affordability. The scheme has contributed to the development of healthcare infrastructure in India. Janaushadhi stores often serve as healthcare centers, offering services such as health check-ups and diagnostic tests. By providing these additional services, the scheme has expanded the reach of healthcare facilities, particularly in underserved areas. It has brought healthcare services closer to people's homes, reducing the need for them to travel long distances to access basic healthcare.

- Furthermore, the Janaushadhi scheme has created employment opportunities in the healthcare sector. The establishment of Janaushadhi stores has generated jobs for pharmacists, healthcare professionals, and administrative employees. These stores require trained personnel to manage operations and provide healthcare services to the community. The scheme has not only improved access to medicines but also contributed to employment generation, particularly at the local level.
- By making medicines more affordable, the Janaushadhi scheme has contributed to a significant reduction in out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare. Many people in India rely on out-of-pocket payments to finance their healthcare needs

CHALLENGES:

The Janaushadhi scheme, launched in 2008, has faced numerous challenges in its quest to provide affordable generic medicines to the Indian population. This following section provides an overview of the Janaushadhi scheme's objectives and highlights the significance of addressing the challenges it faces.

- 1. Awareness and Demand Generation:** One of the significant challenges faced by the Janaushadhi scheme is the lack of awareness among the general public and healthcare professionals. Many people are unaware of the availability and benefits of affordable generic medicines through Janaushadhi stores. Generating awareness and promoting the demand for generic medicines require effective communication strategies and extensive outreach programs.
- 2. Supply Chain Management:** Efficient supply chain management is crucial for the smooth functioning of the Janaushadhi scheme. However, there have been challenges in ensuring an uninterrupted supply of generic



medicines to Janaushadhi stores. Issues such as stock availability, logistics, transportation, and coordination among various stakeholders in the supply chain can impact the accessibility of medicines.

3. Quality Control and Assurance:

Maintaining strict quality control measures is essential to ensure the efficacy and safety of generic medicines. The Janaushadhi scheme faces challenges in consistently sourcing generic medicines from reliable manufacturers who adhere to quality standards. Ensuring that all medicines available through Janaushadhi stores meet the required quality benchmarks is crucial for building trust among patients and healthcare professionals

4. Pricing Mechanisms and Affordability:

Determining appropriate pricing for generic medicines is a complex challenge. While the objective of the Janaushadhi scheme is to provide affordable medicines, finding the right balance between affordability and sustainability can be challenging. Pricing mechanisms need to consider factors such as production costs, market competition, pricing regulations, and ensuring reasonable profit margins for manufacturers and retailers.

5. Regulatory Framework and Policy Support:

A supportive regulatory framework is essential for the successful implementation of the Janaushadhi scheme. However, navigating through the regulatory processes, such as obtaining approvals for generic medicines and licensing Janaushadhi stores, can be time-consuming and bureaucratic. Streamlining regulations, simplifying approval procedures, and providing policy support can facilitate the growth and expansion of the Janaushadhi scheme

6. Sustainability and Expansion:

Ensuring the long-term sustainability and scalability of the Janaushadhi scheme is crucial. Financial

sustainability, private sector participation, and the expansion of Janaushadhi stores in underserved areas pose significant challenges. Integrating the scheme with existing healthcare systems, creating partnerships with stakeholders, and exploring innovative funding models are necessary to overcome these challenges.

7. Perception and Acceptance:

Generic medicines sometimes face skepticism and resistance due to misconceptions about their quality and efficacy compared to branded drugs. Building trust and changing the perception of generic medicines among patients and healthcare professionals is a challenge for the Janaushadhi scheme. Education and awareness campaigns highlighting the equivalence of generic medicines and their cost-saving benefits can help address this challenge. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from the government, healthcare providers, pharmaceutical industry, regulatory bodies, and public awareness campaigns. By identifying and mitigating these challenges, the Janaushadhi scheme can overcome barriers and continue to fulfil its objective of providing affordable and quality medicines to the Indian population.

FUTURE PROSPECTIVES

The Janaushadhi scheme, also known as the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), has promising future prospects that can contribute to the healthcare landscape in India. Some of the key future prospects of the Janaushadhi scheme include:

1. Enhanced Healthcare Accessibility:

The Janaushadhi scheme has the potential to further improve healthcare accessibility across the country. By expanding the network of Janaushadhi stores (PMBJKs) to underserved areas, particularly in rural and



remote regions, more people will have easy access to affordable generic medicines. This will reduce geographical disparities in healthcare access and ensure that essential medicines are available to a wider population.

2. Affordable Medicines for All: The core objective of the Janaushadhi scheme is to provide affordable generic medicines to the masses. With the ongoing efforts to streamline pricing mechanisms and ensure reasonable profit margins for manufacturers and retailers, the scheme can continue to make a significant impact on reducing the financial burden on patients. Affordable medicines will improve medication adherence, enable better disease management, and enhance overall public health.

3. Boosting Generic Medicine Acceptance: The Janaushadhi scheme has the potential to change the perception and acceptance of generic medicines in India. Through awareness campaigns and educational initiatives, the scheme can help dispel misconceptions about the quality and efficacy of generic medicines. As more people recognize the equivalence of generic medicines and their cost-saving benefits, the demand for generic medicines is likely to increase, contributing to the growth of the scheme.

4. Job Creation and Economic Growth: The Janaushadhi scheme has the potential to generate more employment opportunities in the healthcare sector. The establishment of Janaushadhi stores creates jobs at the store level, including pharmacists, store managers, and support staff. Additionally, the scheme can stimulate the growth of the pharmaceutical industry, leading to employment generation in manufacturing, distribution, and other related sectors. This can contribute to economic growth and development

5. Strengthening Healthcare Infrastructure:

The Janaushadhi scheme has the potential to play a significant role in strengthening the healthcare infrastructure of the country. Janaushadhi stores can serve as accessible points of contact for healthcare services beyond just providing medicines. By expanding the scope of services to include health check-ups, diagnostic tests, and consultation services, Janaushadhi stores can contribute to the overall improvement of healthcare infrastructure, particularly in underserved areas.

6. Collaboration and Public-Private

Partnerships: The future prospects of the Janaushadhi scheme can be further enhanced through collaboration and public-private partnerships. Engaging with private pharmacies, healthcare organizations, and industry stakeholders can help expand the reach of the scheme and leverage their expertise and resources. Collaboration with healthcare professionals, such as doctors and pharmacists, can promote the acceptance and usage of generic medicines, further reinforcing the impact of the scheme.

7. Integration with Government Initiatives:

Integrating the Janaushadhi scheme with existing government healthcare initiatives and insurance schemes can enhance its scope and impact. By aligning the scheme with public health programs, such as Ayushman Bharat and National Health Mission, and ensuring the inclusion of generic medicines in essential drug lists, the Janaushadhi scheme can become an integral part of the larger healthcare ecosystem, benefiting a larger population.

In conclusion, the Janaushadhi scheme has promising future prospects to enhance healthcare accessibility, affordability, and quality in India. Through continued efforts to expand the network, increase awareness, strengthen partnerships, and



integrate with existing healthcare systems, the scheme can significantly contribute to improving public health and ensuring affordable access to medicines for

CONCLUSION

The Jan Aushadhi scheme has emerged as a game-changer in India's healthcare landscape, providing affordable access to quality generic medicines to millions of people. Despite the challenges, the initiative has significantly contributed to reducing healthcare costs and improving medication availability. By addressing the existing obstacles and embracing technological advancements, the Jan Aushadhi scheme has the potential to play an even more transformative role in the future, ensuring affordable healthcare for all future prospects.

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