

An Analysis of Consumer Awareness Regarding Jan Aushadhi Kendras

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KEYWORDS ABSTRACT

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India has made significant advancements in various health aspects, including an increase in the life expectancy of both men and women, low infant and maternal mortality rates, improved immunization coverage, and the elimination of diseases like polio and smallpox. According to the World Health Organization, around 5.8 million Indians succumb to diseases like diabetes, cancer, stroke, and heart and lung diseases. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) pose a substantial health challenge in India, with one out of every four Indians dying before the age of 70 due to an NCD. The Indian healthcare system is grappling with rising healthcare costs, which disproportionately burden the poor, as well as the emergence of new diseases and non-communicable diseases. Approximately 100 million Indians fall into poverty each year due to high healthcare expenses, with out-of-pocket spending constituting over 50 percent of this burden. To reduce healthcare costs, the government has established Jan Aushadhi Kendras, which offer generic medicines with the same composition as branded ones at affordable prices. A recent study focused on identifying the key factors influencing the purchase of generic drugs from Jan Aushadhi medical stores, public awareness of these stores, and consumer satisfaction. The study found that 40 percent of the public is unaware of Jan Aushadhi, and consumers opt for generic medicines due to their affordability, even though the quality is lower than that of branded drugs. Jan Aushadhi Kendra is known for selling significant quantities of sanitary pads. While most consumers are satisfied with Jan Aushadhi products, some express dissatisfaction due to differences in quality and composition. Government agencies and health departments must enhance the quality of generic medicines and educate healthcare professionals and the general public about them.

1. Introduction

India has earned the nickname "Pharmacy of the World" due to its substantial export of various medicines to countries around the globe. The per capita medical expenditure in India is notably high, leading to elevated levels of morbidity and mortality. To alleviate the financial burden of healthcare for the underprivileged, the government introduced Jan Aushadhi shops offering generic medicines equivalent to branded drugs. The primary objective behind the establishment of Jan Aushadhi Kendra is to ensure accessible and high-quality healthcare for all. The economically disadvantaged segments often struggle to afford the exorbitant costs of branded medicines.

The Jan Aushadhi Scheme was rolled out nationwide in November 2008 to address this issue. The scheme was rebranded as the 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana' (PMJAY) and has been a beneficial initiative for millions of people in India. The government must address generic medicines' availability, quality, transparency, and affordability. Without prompt adjustments, the objective of providing affordable healthcare for all will remain unmet. The latest research explores consumer awareness and satisfaction regarding generic medicines and Jan Aushadhi Kendra. The study encompassed primary data gathered from 20 Jan Aushadhi medical shops and 90 consumers and secondary data obtained from various sources such as newspapers, Jan Aushadhi websites, and articles.

Review of Literature

Ashutosh Sareen et al. (2022) conducted a study to assess the usage of generic medicines among college students, focusing on their awareness and perceptions of Jan Aushadhi pharmacies. The findings revealed a positive correlation between the public's knowledge and attitude towards Jan Aushadhi stores. The study concluded that the affordability of generic medicines available at Jan Aushadhi pharmacies is a compelling factor, especially in contrast to the substantial costs associated with branded medications from conventional pharmacies.

Arun Kumar et al. (2021) explored the public's inclination toward generic medicines in Tamil Nadu. The study uncovered that financial constraints force individuals with limited means to buy medications from Jan Aushadhi outlets. The study recommends that introducing online purchasing options could enhance the promotion of generic drugs.

Srivastava Srinivas and Rahul R Marathe (2021) discovered that generic medications are of lower

quality than expensive brand-name ones. With health expenses recently high, economically disadvantaged people are forced to buy inexpensive, lower-quality generic medications. Those who are financially secure can afford to purchase expensive brand-name drugs.

A study by **Roshna Koshi (2020)** was conducted on the contentment derived from the availability of generic medications at Jan Aushadhi stores. The assessment highlighted that affluent individuals favour expensive branded drugs, while middle-class individuals predominantly buy generic medicines. These medications are cost-effective, and consumers are content with the quality of the product.

Prasanna R Deshpande and Mohd Kazim Sheriff (2018) Studied the operations and effectiveness of Jan aushadhi shops in India. They noted that generic medications encompass a broad spectrum of infectious illnesses, are more cost-effective, and maintain high quality, making them accessible to economically disadvantaged groups.

In their article, **Vijay Thawani et al. (2017)** discovered that inadequate public knowledge, the distribution of complimentary medications by government hospitals, and doctors not prescribing generic drugs are the key factors contributing to the underperformance of Jan Aushadhi medical stores in India.

2. Results and discussion

Analysis and Discussion

The study was conducted based on data collected from 20 Jan Aushadhi medical stores and 90 customers of generic medicines.

Table: 1.1 Jan Aushadhi Kendras in India

Year	Number of Jan Aushadhi Kendra
2017-18	3306
2018-19	5140
2019-2020	6306
2020-21	7557
2021-22	8610
2022-23	10454
2023-24 (30/06/2024)	12616

Source: Government of India

The number of Jan Aushadhi Kendra has increased over the years. As of June 2024, 12616 Janaushadhi Kendras are functioning, and 2047 drugs and 300 surgical items are supplied nationwide. Jan Aushadhi medical stores supply sanitary napkins cheaply.

Awareness of Jan Aushadhi stores

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals in association with Central Pharma Public Sector Undertakings to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through dedicated outlets called 'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendra. The public must be aware of such an initiative that provides every medicine at a meagre cost.

Table 1.2 Awareness of Jan Aushadhi

Response	No. of respondents	Percentage
Aware	90	60
Not Aware	60	40
Total	150	100

Source: Survey Data

The above table shows that 60% of people are aware of the existence of Jan Aushadhi, while 40% of individuals are not aware of the government-run medical stores with low prices. The low demand for generic medicines is due to the public's unawareness of the Jan Aushadhi stores.

Average consumer per day

Consumers keep the medical shops successful by generating demand for generic medicines and other services. Consumers' preference for generic drugs from the Jan Aushadhi shops contributes to the establishment and capability of providing vital health care services. Every purchase of generic medicines shows customers' belief in the pharmacy for the accessibility and affordability of the product.

Table 1.3. affordability of the product.

No. of consumers	No. of medical stores	Percentage
Upto 50	10	50
50-100	8	40
Above 100	2	10
Total	20	100

Source: Survey Data

The above table shows the average number of consumers per day in the medical shop. Fifty percent of medical shops have below 50 customers per day. Forty percent of shops have an average consumer between 50 and 100. Ten percent reported that there are above 100 customers depending on Jan Aushadhi shops daily.

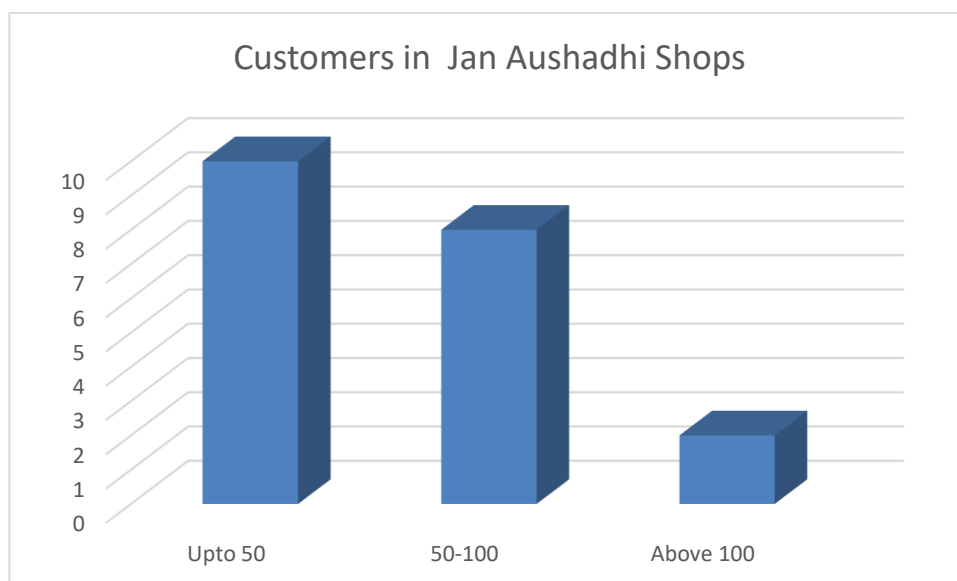


Figure: 1 Aushadhi shops daily.

Source: Survey Data

The age group that consumes most from medical stores

Expenditures for medical care differ with age. The differences apply to the type and amount of medical care required and the payment source. The locality's disease pattern and medical condition reflect the customers' age group.

Table 1.4. locality's disease pattern and medical condition

Age group	No. of Customers	Percentage
Up to 25	14	15
25- 55	50	56
Above 55	26	29

Total	90	100
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Source: Survey Data

The above table shows that adults and elderly citizens widely use medical shops. About 56% of customers in medical shops are between 25 and 55. This reflects the unhealthy condition of a locality and shows that there is a high dependence on medicines even before reaching old age. Changes in lifestyle and other reasons can cause early drug consumption.

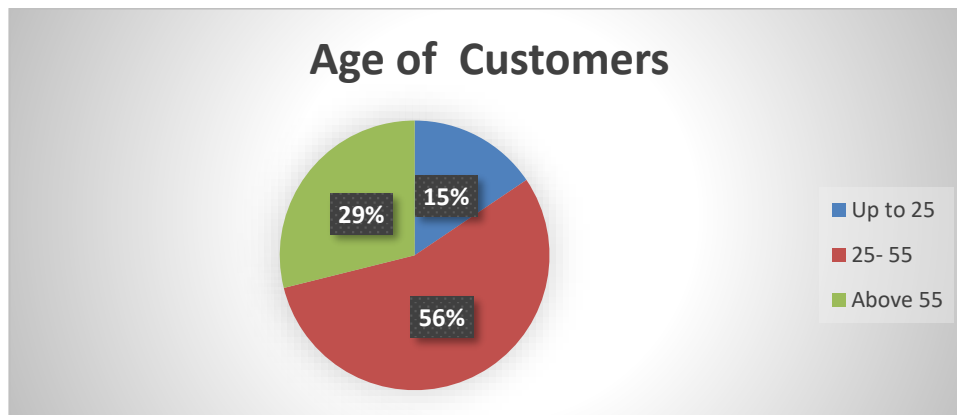


Figure: 2 lifestyle and other reasons

Source: Survey Data

The economic status of Jan aushadhi Consumers

A person's economic condition is indicated by their position in the poverty line—above the Poverty Line or Below the Poverty Line.

Table 1.5 Line or Below the Poverty Line

Poverty line	No. of consumers	Percentage
APL	28	31
BPL	62	69
Total	90	100

Source: Survey Data

From the above, it is clear that 69 percent of the consumers in Jan Aushadhi shops are poor, and 31 percent are APL. We can say that people who depend upon Jan Aushadhi medical shops, which provide medicines at low cost, are people with low incomes and poor financial capabilities.

Demand for Medicines in Jan Aushadhi Kendras

Medicines that are widely demanded indicate the health conditions of the society. Nowadays, lifestyle-related diseases are prevalent irrespective of age. The government and the health department undertake several measures to reduce unhealthy conditions and establish a healthy lifestyle. Kerala is known for being health-conscious, but the demand for medicines shows a negative side to our state's health.

Table 1.6 demand for medicines shows a negative

Demand for Medicines	No. of Consumers	Percentage
Medicines for Lifestyle diseases (Blood Pressure, Diabetic, Cholesterol)	55	60
Cardiac medicines	9	10
Pain Killers	6	7
Cancer	4	4
Neuro	14	16

Psychiatrist	2	3
Total	90	100

Source: *Survey Data*

The medicines most commonly purchased from Jan Aushadhi medical shops are for lifestyle diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure, and cholesterol. Paracetamol and amoxicillin are widely demanded painkillers. Ten percent of medical stores sell medicines related to cardiac issues and conditions.

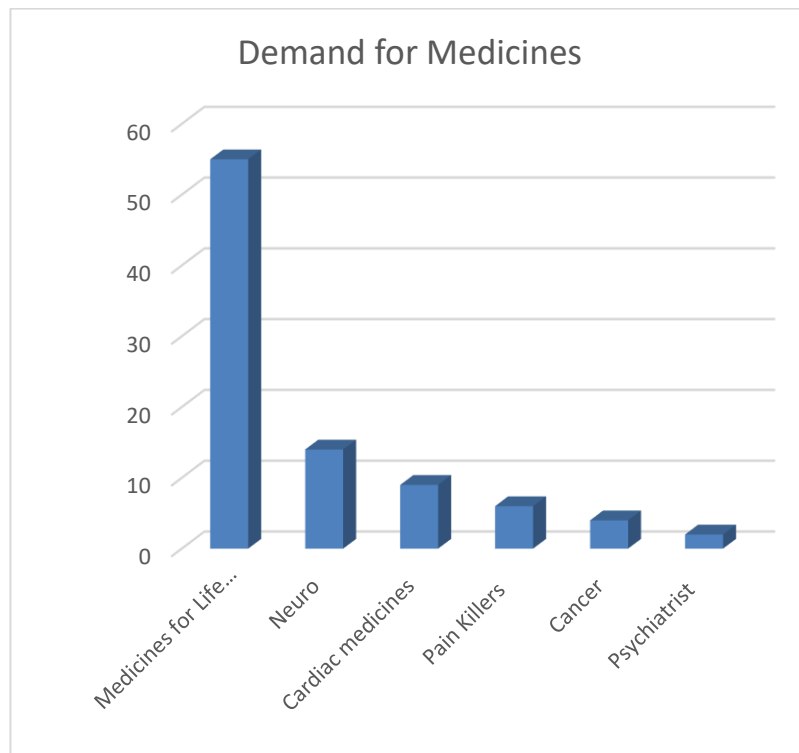


Figure: 3 medical stores sell medicines

Source: *Survey Data*

Table 1.7. medical stores sell medicines

Type of medicines	No. of consumers	Percentage
Allopathy	73	81
Homeopathy	6	7
Other	11	12
Total	90	100

Source: *Survey Data*

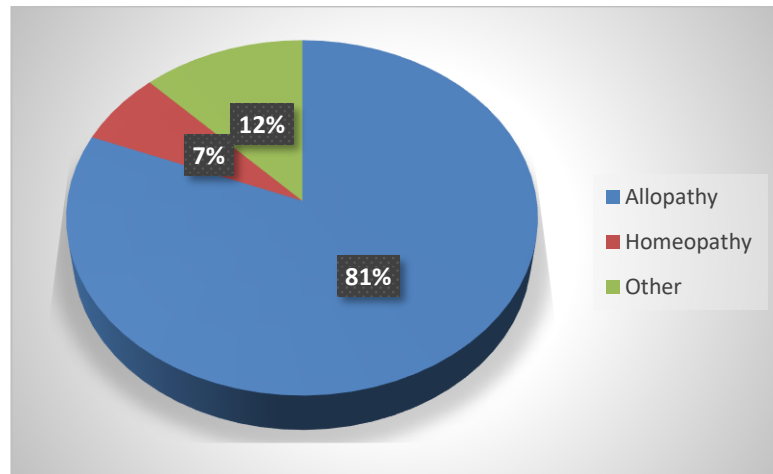


Figure: 4 public depend upon allopathy medicines

Source: Survey Data

The table shows that 81% of the public depend upon allopathy medicines. 12% depend upon other medications, including Unani, yoga, home remedies, etc. Jan Aushadhi provides cheaper medicines.

Price of Generic Medicines

Table 1.8 public depend upon allopathy medicines

Response	No of consumers	Percentage
Cheaper	81	90
Expensive	9	10
Total	90	100

Source: Survey Data

The above table shows that 90% of people agree that Jan Aushadhi medicines are cheaper than branded medicines. Meanwhile, 10% of consumers argued that the quality and content of these medicines are not the same, which led to incurable conditions and a loss of money.

Consumers' Satisfaction towards Generic Medicine

An important factor determining the demand for generic medicine is the low price and quality compared with branded medicines. Customers' demand for generic drugs reflects their trust in them.

Table 1.9 Customers' demand for generic drugs reflects

Response	No of responses	Percentage
Fully satisfied	72	80
Not Satisfied	10	11
Partially Satisfied	8	9
Total	90	100

Source: Survey Data

The table shows that 80 percent of consumers are satisfied with the medicines provided by the Jan Aushadhi stores, and 11 percent are not happy with the Jan Aushadhi products. The price and quality of the medicine are used to determine the level of satisfaction. Most consumers are delighted with the quality and cost of generic drugs, which helps them reduce out-of-pocket expenditure in health care. Some argue that the quality and contents of generic medicines differ from those of branded drugs.

3. Conclusion and future scope

In 2021, India was ranked 66th of 195 countries in the global healthcare security index. However, India faces a significant challenge in terms of healthcare expenditure. The national health policy ensures

everyone can access high-quality healthcare at reasonable prices. Rural areas in India are experiencing a shortage of healthcare facilities, leading patients to resort to expensive branded services due to the lack of affordable healthcare options. To address these issues, the government of India established Jan Aushadhi Kendras to provide generic medicines at affordable prices. However, the initiative didn't gain popularity due to patients' lack of awareness about generic drugs. Consequently, the government should conduct awareness programs at the grassroots level and launch a web portal that covers the availability of drugs and the locations of nearby Jan Aushadhi Kendras to benefit the customers.

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