

# Perception vs. Reality: A Study on Consumer Understanding of Generic Medicines under PMBJP for special reference to Surat city

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## **Abstract:**

This paper assesses consumer awareness and perception of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), a flagship initiative by the Government of India to provide quality generic medicines at affordable prices. The study investigates individuals' knowledge, attitudes, and willingness to use generic medicines offered through Jan Aushadhi Medical Stores in Surat. Despite the widespread availability of affordable generic medicines, a significant portion of the population remains unaware of the scheme. Based on primary data collected from 50 respondents, this paper presents findings and recommendations to enhance public awareness and accessibility to PMBJP.

## **Introduction:**

Rising healthcare costs are a major global concern, especially in developing nations like India. Before 2020, around 70% of Indians reportedly spent 10–20% of their income on healthcare. However, with the implementation of PMBJP, out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure dropped significantly—from 62.6% in 2014–15 to 39.4% in 2021–22. India is a major pharmaceutical producer, but branded drugs often remain unaffordable. PMBJP addresses this gap by offering generic alternatives at much lower prices.

## **Background of the Study:**

The Jan Aushadhi Campaign was launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Government of India, with the objective of making quality generic medicines available at affordable prices. The first Jan Aushadhi store was inaugurated on November 25, 2008. These dedicated outlets, known as Janaushadhi Kendras, were established to provide generic medicines to the public.

However, the scheme initially faced challenges in achieving its objective due to a lack of awareness about generic medicines. To ensure that the benefits of the scheme reach the underprivileged and to reduce out-of-pocket healthcare expenses, the Jan Aushadhi Scheme was revamped as 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana' (PMJAY) in September 2015. Further strengthening the initiative, it was renamed 'Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana' (PMBJP) in November 2016.

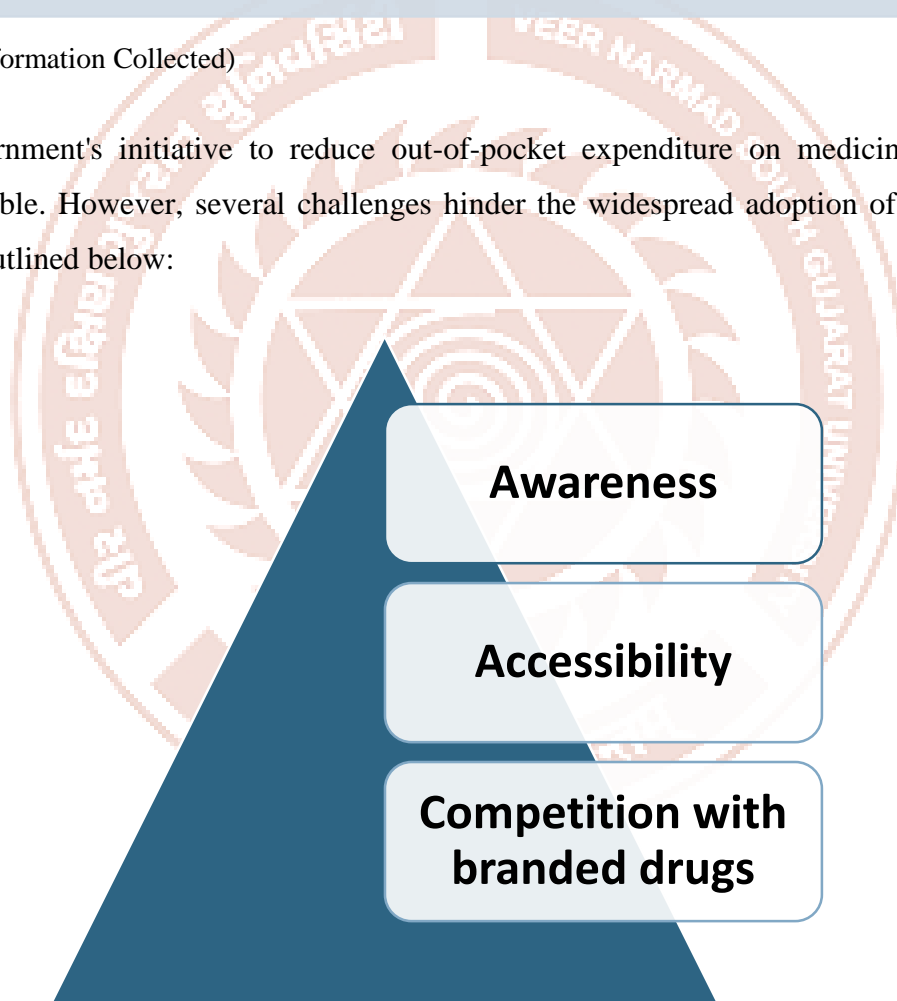
The primary goal of PMBJP is to provide high-quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses. Through Jan Aushadhi Medical Stores, generic medicine which are equivalent in quality and efficacy to expensive branded drugs are made available at significantly lower prices, helping to improve accessibility and affordability in healthcare.

**Following are the key High lights of the PMBJP Scheme:**

Scheme Initiative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low cost</li><li>• Quality Assurance</li><li>• Opportunities for Employment and Entrepreneurship</li><li>• Technical assistance through Mobile Application</li><li>• Initiatives for Women Health and Hygine</li></ul>

(Source: Information Collected)

The Government's initiative to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure on medicines is highly commendable. However, several challenges hinder the widespread adoption of the scheme, which is outlined below:



(Source: Information Collected)

### **Review of Literature:**

Previous studies highlight a consistent lack of awareness among the public about PMBJP and generic medicines. Research conducted in Gujarat, Kerala, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands indicates that despite the scheme's benefits, patients continue to prefer branded medicines due

to ignorance, skepticism, and lack of doctor endorsement. Studies call for awareness campaigns, better promotion, and community-level engagement.

A research paper on “Modelling Customers’ Buying Behaviour of Jan Aushadhi (Generic Medicines)” presented by Nagarajappa and Srivatsa focused on Jan Aushadhi, a scheme to make affordable generic drugs available to large sections of population launched by the Government of India. This study is exploratory in nature regarding the attitude of customers (Bengaluru, India) towards acceptance of Jan Aushadhi and development of a model for buying behaviour of customers for Jan Aushadhi generic drugs. Primary data are collected using questionnaire and collected data are analysed by using Z-test and exploratory factor analysis. Discriminate analysis was used for model development. The results of the study concluded that the doctors should prescribe generic medicine, increase Jan Aushadhi outlets and provide awareness about the quality and effectiveness of generic drugs.

A research paper on “Knowledge, attitude, and practices towards Jan Aushadhi scheme” by Shamiya Sadiq, Vijay Khajuria and Kanika Khajuria explored the efforts of government to control increased health-care expenses by studying knowledge, attitude, and practices (KAP) among doctors and patients. The area for study was Government Medical College of Jammu and surrounding hospitals. Responses were collected through questionnaire comprising total 42 questions based on KAP. A total of 104 participants' responses (48 doctors and 56 patients) were collected and analysed. The result of the study indicates that all the doctors are aware of the Jan Aushadhi scheme but 1/4 is of the opinion that these medicines are slow to act. 75% of patients were unaware of Jan Aushadhi and all patients agreed that branded medicines are expensive and wanted cheaper alternatives. They believe that Jan Aushadhi medicines are one such alternative. The researcher concluded that the doctors should be encouraged to use more of Jan Aushadhi generic medicines and patients should also be educated about this scheme.

A research article on “Differences in Price of Medicines Available from Pharmaceutical Companies” and “Jan Aushadhi Stores” focused on understanding the price difference in essential medicines marketed by pharmaceutical companies and prices of same essential medicines available through “Jan Aushadhi” Stores in India. In this article, the researcher compared three anti-diabetic molecules in different strengths listed in “Jan Aushadhi” price list and compared with the brands manufactured by pharmaceutical companies and available in the market. The absolute price difference was calculated. The result shows that differences in the rate of medicines range between 0.42 INR to 105.59 INR. It indicates that substantial price differences exist between a few brands available in the Market and medicines available from “Jan Aushadhi” Stores.

A research paper on “A Cost Analysis of the Jan Aushadhi Scheme in India” published by Kanchan Mukherjee focused on providing low-cost affordable medicine and financial risk protection to households from the cost of medicines. The study shows that the JAS price is the lowest in the market for medicines like alprazolam and atorvastatin, as compare to branded medicines. From the policy perspective, it raises serious questions regarding the pricing of medicines in JAS and the goal to be achieved. With information asymmetry and supplier induced demand feature in the healthcare market, the OOP expenditure due to medicines is unlikely to decline in India with the existing JAS. Result of study shows that the Government of India reviews the medicine pricing policy under the JAS also focus on strong supply side regulation. It should also take certain steps for audit of prescription to prevent the widespread prescription of costly branded medicines.

A research article on “An Analysis of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana” by Mukul Asher and Kruti Upadhyay focused on three key economic reasons i.e. role of public sector organizations in reducing monopoly power of pharma suppliers, reduction in total cost of household expenses and application of learning curve concept in public sector organization in India delivering goods, amenities and services. The results of the article strongly emphasize to expand the network of generic medicines, educate doctors, nurses and the general public for using these medicines. The researchers also suggest critically evaluating the progress of PMBJP, with primary and secondary data and give inputs for how it can be better attain its objectives.

A research article “Impact of Bureau of Pharma PSU's India Affordable Cost Medicine Scheme on Economic Consumers” by Srinivasan P. aims to survey about the awareness; knowledge and perception of economic consumers and doctor's knowledge about PMBJP generic drug scheme in the state of TamilNadu, India. The study revealed that the low cost of medicines containing similar drugs and dose reduces household expenses of common people. The low cost generic drugs are favorable and economically viable to the populace in TamilNadu as all the affairs related with it are directly controlled and managed by Government of India. The research gap indicates that due to lack of awareness, poor supply chain and ignorance of doctors, most of the customers are unable to take advantage of these medicines.

A research article “ A Pilot Study on Knowledge and Experience on use of Generic Medicines among Healthcare Professionals” by Gupta Vinay kumar, Singh Amit, Gupta Ajay, Trigubayat A., and Kumar B. have studied knowledge and experience on use of generic medicines among healthcare professionals. The researchers also included that the doctors and nursing staff are also required to be educated for the use of these medicines. The study reveals that 40% of

medically associated people are not aware of such medicines. Research gap of the paper shows that more efforts should be given to serve the purpose of this scheme. So that poor and needy people will get benefits of this scheme.

A research paper “A Descriptive Study to Assess the Knowledge and Attitude regarding the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana among the people Residing in selected Rural Community of Mehsana District Gujarat”,(2019) by Dayalal. D. Patidar and Jayshree Parmar through light on the reduction of health care expenses. The research gap of the study says that due to unawareness and lack of knowledge the purpose of Government cannot be serves.

A research article on “Awareness regarding generic and ethical medicines, and Jan Aushadhi Kendra: A survey-based study focused on steps taken on reduction of health care expenses and increasing awareness among people. The researcher found that even after introduction of this scheme people are not aware about the generic medicines and less effort are made to educate the people regarding Jan aushadhi medicines.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

Though generic medicines offer a cost-effective alternative, limited public knowledge and poor outreach of PMBJP prevent widespread adoption. Misconceptions about efficacy and lack of accessibility further reduce uptake.

**Need for the Study:** To ensure PMBJP reaches its potential, it is essential to:

- Identify factors affecting consumer awareness.
- Evaluate public perception and willingness to switch from branded to generic drugs.
- Provide actionable recommendations to improve the program's effectiveness.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To evaluate public knowledge regarding the benefits and affordability of PMBJP.
2. To assess willingness to purchase generic medicines versus branded ones.
3. To examine accessibility and availability of Jan Aushadhi Stores in Surat.
4. To identify barriers preventing utilization of these stores.
5. To evaluate consumer satisfaction with price, quality, and effectiveness.

### **Research Methodology**

- **Design:** Descriptive and empirical
- **Sample Size:** 50 respondents in Surat
- **Sampling Technique:** Convenience sampling
- **Data Collection:** Structured questionnaire (primary data) and secondary sources from government websites and reports

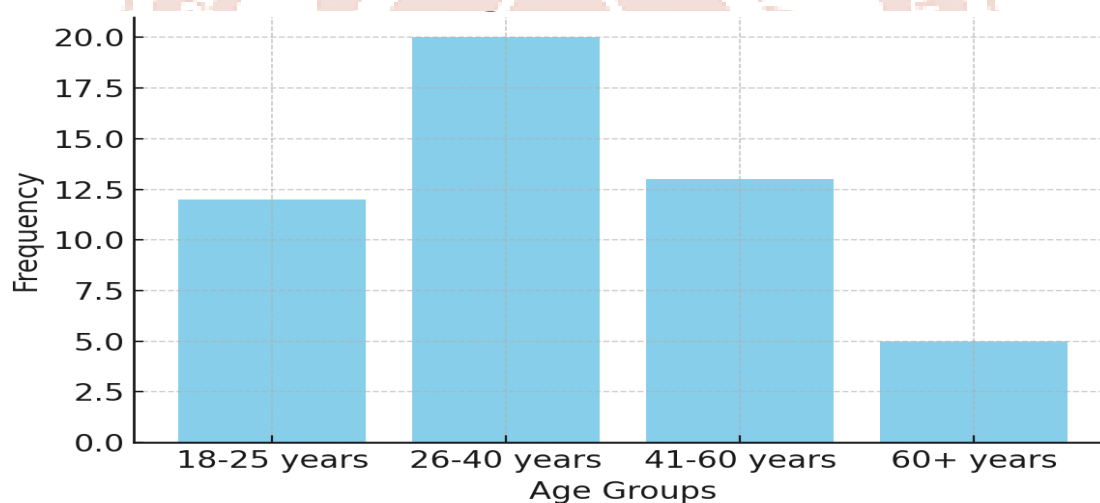
- **Data Analysis and Interpretation:** The study was conducted based on data collected from 50 customers of Jan Aushadhi Stores.

**1. Demographic Profile of Respondents:** This information will help provide insight into the distribution of respondents across different categories.

**Table 1.1 Demographic Profiles of Respondents**

Age Group	Frequency (n=50)	Percentage (%)
18–25 years	12	24%
26–40 years	20	40%
41–60 years	13	26%
60+ years	5	10%

**Figure 1.1 Demographic Profiles of Respondents**



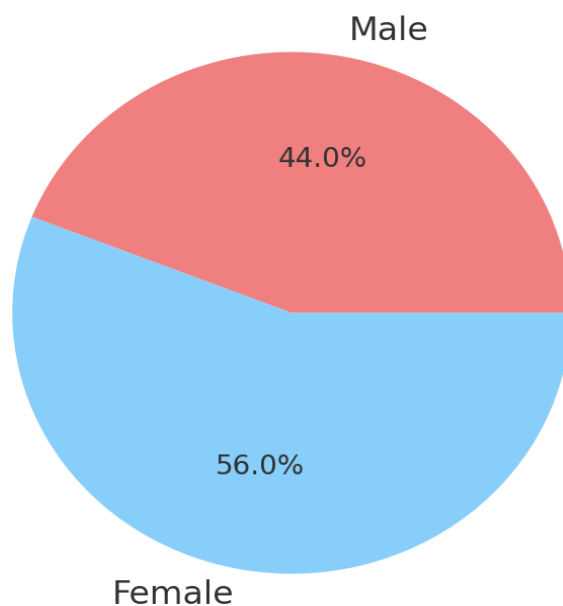
The age distribution of the respondents shows that the majority of them i.e.40% belong to the age group of 26–40 years, followed by 26% in the 41–60 years category. Young adults aged 18–25 make up 24% of the sample, while only 10% are aged above 60 years. This suggests that awareness and participation in the study are higher among the middle-aged population.

**2. Gender Distribution:** It is also important to know that among the family who is interested in

**Table 1.2 Gender Distribution**

Gender	Frequency (n=50)	Percentage (%)
Male	22	44%
Female	28	56%

**Figure 1.2 Gender Distribution**



The sample consists of 56% female and 44% male respondents. This indicates a slightly higher participation from females, which may reflect gender-specific patterns in healthcare access or interest in the subject of generic medicines.

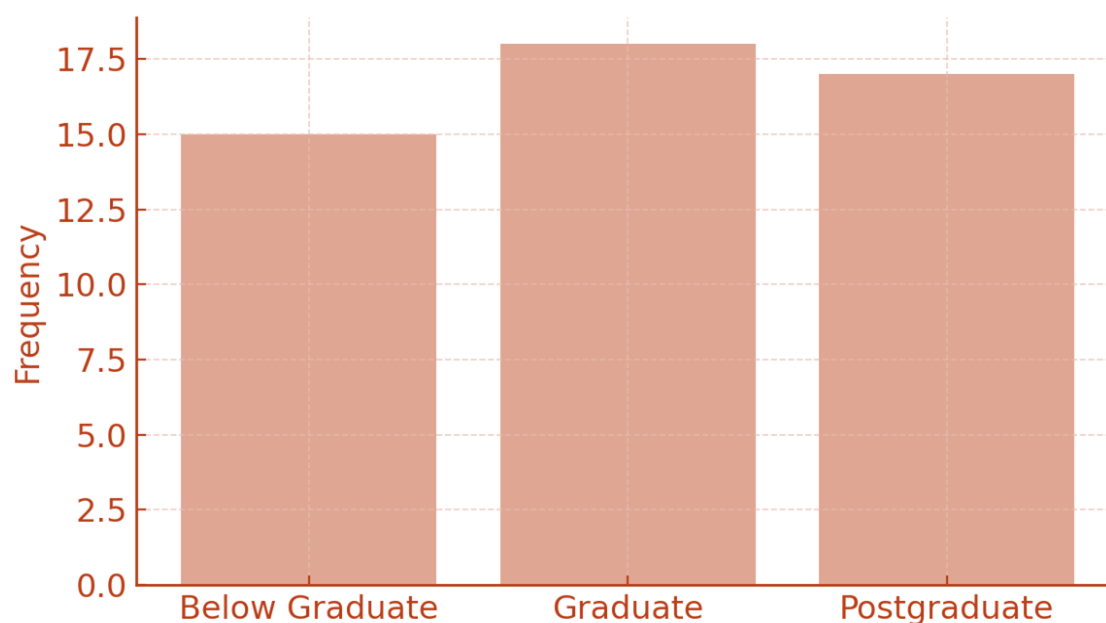
### **3. Classification for Education Level**

**Figure 1.3 Education Level**

Education Level	Frequency (n=50)	Percentage (%)
Below Graduate	15	30%
Graduate	18	36%
Postgraduate	17	34%



**Figure 1.3 Education Level**



A significant portion of the respondents are graduates (36%) or postgraduates (34%), while 30% have education below graduate level. This shows that the sample is relatively well-educated, which could influence awareness and perception toward generic medicines under PMBJP.

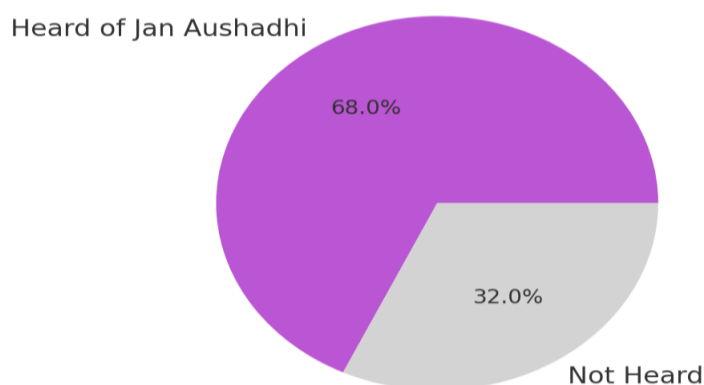
#### **4. Awareness of PMBJP**

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 low cost.

**Table 1.4 Awareness about Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**

Awareness of PMBJP	Frequency (n=50)	Percentage (%)
Heard of Jan Aushadhi	34	68%
Not Heard	16	32%

**Figure 1.4 Awareness about Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)**



Out of the 50 respondents, 68% reported that they have heard of Jan Aushadhi, while 32% were not aware of the scheme. This suggests a moderately high level of awareness among the surveyed population, which is essential for the success of the PMBJP initiative.

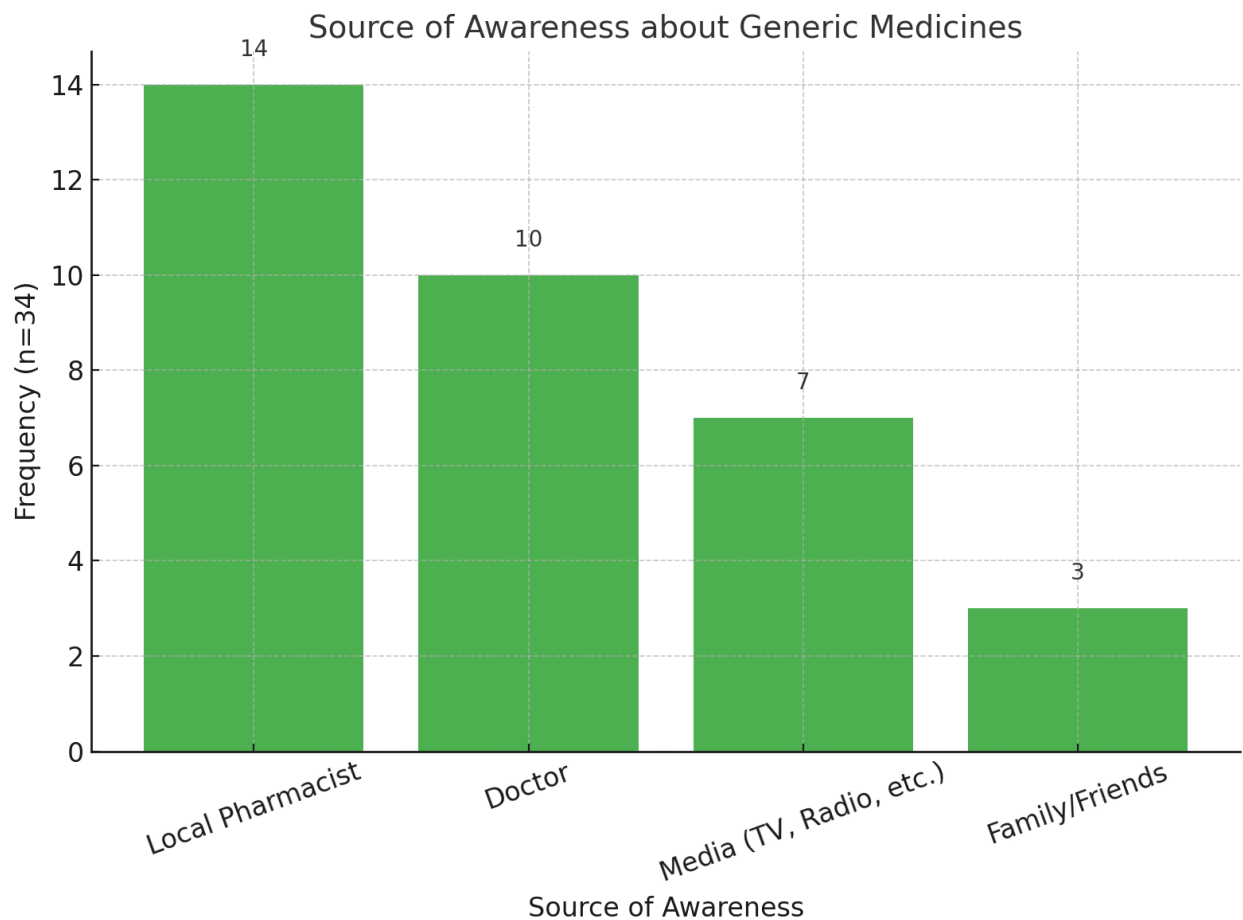
#### **5. Sources of Awareness:**

Sources of awareness play important role among people about generic medicines and make them aware for using such medicines.

**Table 1.5 Sources of Awareness**

Source	Frequency (n=34)	Percentage (%)
Local Pharmacist	14	40%
Doctor	10	30%
Media (TV, Radio, etc.)	7	20%
Family/Friends	3	10%

Figure 1.5: Source of awareness



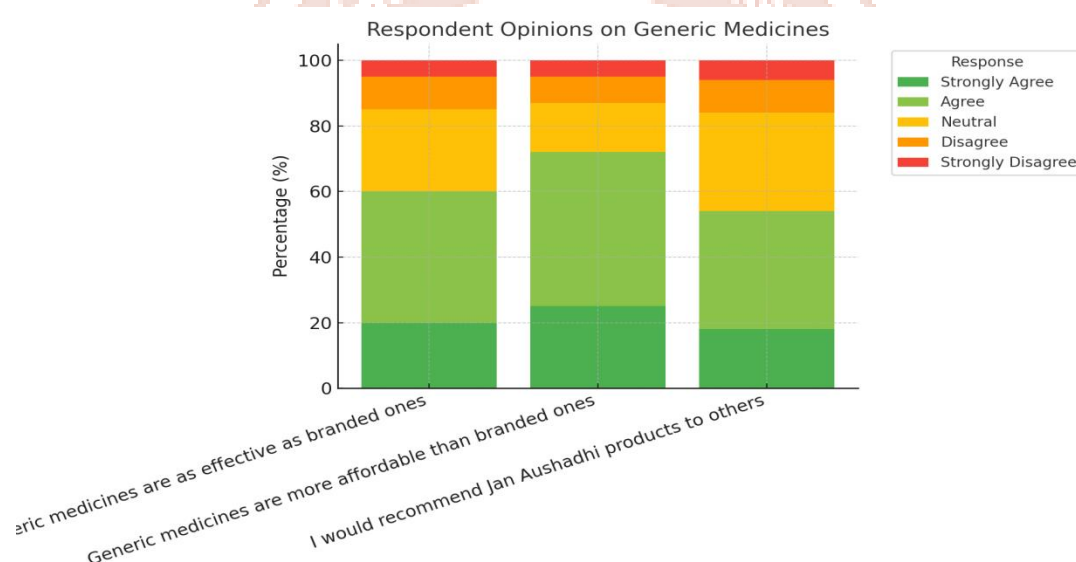
Among the respondents who were aware of Jan Aushadhi, 40% learned about it from local pharmacists, followed by 30% through doctors. Media sources such as TV and radio contributed to 20% of the awareness, while 10% heard about it through family or friends. This highlights the critical role that healthcare professionals and media play in disseminating information about PMBJP.

**6. Perception toward Generic Medicines:** This part through light on how respondents perceive generic medicines compared to branded ones, particularly in terms of efficacy and cost.

Table 1.6 Perception toward Generic Medicines

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Generic medicines are as effective as branded ones	20%	40%	25%	10%	5%
Generic medicines are more affordable than branded ones	25%	47%	15%	8%	5%
I would recommend Jan Aushadhi products to others	18%	36%	30%	10%	6%

Figure: 1.6 Perception toward Generic Medicines

**Interpretation:**

A majority of respondents either **agreed or strongly agreed** that generic medicines are as effective (60%) and more affordable (72%) compared to branded medicines. Additionally, **54%** of respondents indicated they would **recommend Jan Aushadhi products** to others. However, a noticeable proportion (30%) remained **neutral** about recommending, indicating that while cost and effectiveness are acknowledged, full confidence in promotion to others still needs strengthening. Overall, the sentiment towards generic medicines is largely **positive**, especially regarding affordability.

**7. Accessibility and Availability:** This part shows how easily people can access Jan Aushadhi Stores and if the stores maintain a steady stock.

**Table 1.7 Accessibility of Jan Aushadhi Store**

Accessibility	Frequency (n=50)	Percentage (%)
Store within 2 km	20	40%
Store between 2-5 km	18	36%
Store over 5 km	12	24%

A significant 76% of respondents have access to a Jan Aushadhi store within 5 km of their residence i.e. 40% within 2 km and 36% between 2–5 km. Only 24% of customers need to travel more than 5 km, indicating reasonably good accessibility.

**8. Consumer Satisfaction:** This part through lights on satisfaction levels regarding price, quality, and availability of medicines.

**Table 1.8 Consumer Satisfaction**

Factor	Very Satisfied (n=50)	Satisfied (n=50)	Neutral (n=50)	Dissatisfied (n=50)	Very Dissatisfied (n=50)	Positive Satisfaction (%) (Very Satisfied + Satisfied)
Price	25	15	7	2	1	80%
Quality	18	20	9	2	1	76%
Availability	14	22	10	3	1	72%

**Figure 1.8 Consumer Satisfaction**



(Source: Primary Data)

The analysis of customer satisfaction across key factors — Price, Quality, and Availability — at Jan Aushadhi stores reveals an overall positive perception among respondents. Regarding the pricing of medicines, 80% of participants reported being either "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied," highlighting the scheme's success in offering affordable healthcare solutions. Satisfaction with the quality of generic medicines also remained high, with 76% of respondents expressing positive feedback. However, while 72% of participants were satisfied with the availability of medicines, a slightly higher neutral and dissatisfied response was noted compared to price and quality. This suggests that while affordability and quality are strongly appreciated, there is still room for improvement in ensuring the consistent availability of medicines across all stores.

### Findings:

- 🚩 **Awareness of PMBJP:** The awareness of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) among consumers is moderate, indicating a need for enhanced outreach and educational initiatives to improve knowledge of the program.
- 🚩 **Consumer Perception of Generic Medicines:** A significant majority of consumers have a positive perception of generic medicines, particularly in terms of their cost-

effectiveness, highlighting the potential of generic medicines as an affordable alternative.

- ✚ **Accessibility Concerns:** Despite the positive perception, accessibility of generic medicines remains a challenge in certain areas, suggesting that logistical barriers may impede the widespread availability of these medicines.
- ✚ **Satisfaction with Pricing and Quality:** Consumers generally express high levels of satisfaction with both the pricing and quality of generic medicines, reflecting the program's success in providing value to its beneficiaries.

### Suggestions:

- **Mass Awareness Campaigns:** It is recommended that comprehensive awareness campaigns be launched through social media platforms and in collaboration with healthcare professionals to effectively reach a broader audience and enhance the understanding of the PMBJP initiative.
- **Training of Healthcare Providers:** A targeted training program for pharmacists and healthcare providers should be implemented to equip them with the necessary knowledge to educate patients about the benefits and usage of generic medicines, thereby fosters informed decision-making.
- **Improved Supply Chain Management:** Enhancing the efficiency of the supply chain is crucial to minimize stockouts, ensuring the continuous availability of generic medicines at all designated Jan Aushadhi Kendras.
- **Expansion of Jan Aushadhi Kendras:** The establishment of additional Jan Aushadhi Kendras in underserved and remote regions is vital to improve accessibility and cater to populations that currently have limited access to affordable medicines.

### Conclusion:

The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) represents a significant advancement towards achieving universal health coverage in India. However, its success is contingent upon increased public awareness and the establishment of greater trust in the program. This study confirms that while consumers exhibit a willingness to embrace generic medicines, systematic outreach efforts and educational interventions are critical to realizing the full potential of this government initiative.

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