

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ASSESSING THE IMPACT AND ACCESSIBILITY OF PRADHAN MANTRI JAN AUSHADHI YOJANA IN RURAL COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF VASAI TEHSIL, MAHARASHTRA

* *Dr. Sumita Shankar,*

* *Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, NSS College of commerce and Economics, Tardeo, Mumbai*

Introduction:

The poor must have access to affordable medicines; the poor must not lose their lives because of a lack of medicines... That's why Jan Aushadhi Kendra's have been planned across the country.- Shri Narendra Modi (Prime Minister of India)

Access to affordable and quality healthcare is a fundamental right that should be accessible to every individual, regardless of their socio-economic background. Recognizing this crucial need, the Government of India introduced the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana (PMJAY), aiming to ensure the availability of affordable and quality generic medicines to the underprivileged sections of society. Vasai Tehsil located in Maharashtra, represents a rural community where healthcare accessibility and affordability are pressing issues. The aforementioned quote by Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the lack of medicines should not lead to the loss of lives among the poor. Jan Aushadhi Kendras' strategically planned across the country as part of the PMJAY initiative, aim to bridge the healthcare gap and make affordable medicines accessible to all.

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana (PMJAY) stands as a pivotal initiative in India, aiming to make quality generic medicines accessible and affordable to all citizens. Launched with the vision of ensuring "Health for All," PMJAY has gained prominence for its potential to revolutionize the healthcare landscape, particularly in rural areas. This study focuses on assessing the impact and accessibility of PMJAY in the rural communities of Vasai Tehsil, Maharashtra, employing innovative approaches to garner a comprehensive understanding of the program's effectiveness.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need for accessible and affordable healthcare in rural India, where challenges such as limited healthcare infrastructure, economic constraints, and geographical remoteness often hinder the delivery of essential medical services. PMJAY, with its emphasis on providing generic medicines at affordable prices, serves as a critical intervention to address these challenges. However, the success and effectiveness of the program hinge not only on its implementation but also on its impact and accessibility at the grassroots level.

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Vasai Tehsil in Maharashtra serves as an intriguing case study due to its diverse demographic and geographical characteristics. By delving into the local dynamics of this region, this study aims to shed light on the unique challenges and successes encountered by PMJAY in reaching and benefiting the rural populace. Through the exploration of innovative assessment methodologies, including community engagement, healthcare utilization patterns, and socio-economic indicators, the research seeks to offer valuable insights that can inform policy decisions, improve implementation strategies, and contribute to the overall enhancement of healthcare delivery in rural India.

As we embark on this investigation, it is essential to recognize the potential transformative power of PMJAY and to critically evaluate its impact on healthcare accessibility in Vasai Tehsil. This study aspires to contribute to the ongoing discourse on public health policies, offering evidence-based recommendations for optimizing the reach and effectiveness of initiatives like PMJAY in ensuring the right to health for every citizen, irrespective of their geographical location or socio-economic status.

Objectives of the Study:

The proposed study aims to contribute to the understanding of the impact and accessibility of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana among the rural population, doctors, and healthcare givers in selected villages in Vasai Tehsil

- The study aims to examine the impact and accessibility of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana among the rural population in select villages in Vasai Tehsil.
- To measure the extent to which the scheme has reduced the financial burden and improved health care outcomes for the beneficiaries in Vasai Tehsil
- To gather insights from doctors and healthcare givers regarding their opinion and experiences with the implementation of PMJAY in villages in Vasai Tehsil
- To understand the role of Jan Aushadhi Kendra's in select villages in Vasai Tehsil are effectively meeting the healthcare needs of the rural population in terms of availability, affordability, and convenience
- The study aims to Understand the scheme's impact on patient care treatment outcomes and overall healthcare delivery system in Vasai Tehsil.
- To identify the challenges faced in the implementation of PMJAY at the grassroots level in villages in select villages in Vasai Tehsil.
- The study aims to develop evidence-based recommendations to enhance the impact and accessibility of PMJAY in select villages in Vasai Tehsil.

Review of Available Literature:

"Project in Peril" by T.K. Rajalakshmi (Frontline, July 19, 2017): Rajalakshmi's article sheds light on concerns and challenges surrounding the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) in India. It emphasizes the goals of providing affordable generic medicines and enhancing healthcare access, offering critical insights into the practicalities and hurdles faced during the scheme's execution.

"The Prime Minister Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana: Challenges in Effective Implementation" by Dr. Archana Sawshilya: Dr. Sawshilya's article delves into the challenges hindering the effective implementation of the Jan Aushadhi scheme. It explores the concept of generic medicines and their potential to lower healthcare costs, providing a valuable analysis of the barriers encountered in realizing the scheme's objectives.

"A Study on Customer Awareness towards Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra's with Reference to Shimoga" by H. Manjula Bai: Bai's study aims to understand the awareness and perceptions of individuals towards generic medicines provided by Jan Aushadhi Medical Stores. By focusing on customer awareness, the research contributes to evaluating the scheme's reach and impact.

"A Cost Analysis of the Jan Aushadhi Scheme in India" by Kanchan Mukherjee (International Journal of Health Policy and Management, May 2017): Mukherjee's research delves into the cost analysis of the Jan Aushadhi Scheme, comparing the costs of generic medicines with their branded counterparts. This analysis provides crucial insights into the economic implications and feasibility of the scheme.

"A Study on Jan Aushadhi Shops of Udupi District" by Ashwini M. (Asia Pacific Journal of Research, March 2020): This study explores the level of awareness about the Jan Aushadhi scheme among males and females in Udupi District, contributing to the understanding of the scheme's visibility among different demographic groups.

"A Study on Satisfaction Level of Jan Aushadhi Stores" by Roshna Koshi and Akhila M Panicker (Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research): Koshi and Panicker's study focuses on the satisfaction levels of Jan Aushadhi stores, offering insights into the perceptions and experiences of consumers, particularly in Wayanad district, Kerala.

"A Study on Customer Buying Pattern of Generic Medicines from Jan Aushadhi Medical Stores in Coimbatore City of Tamil Nadu" by Arunkumar R, Venkatesa Palanichamy N, Rohini A, and Nirmala Devi (The Pharma Innovation Journal, 2021): This paper examines the factors influencing the purchasing behaviour of customers for generic medicines from Jan Aushadhi medical stores, providing a nuanced understanding of customer preferences.

"Functioning and Productivity of Jan Aushadhi Stores in India: The Owners' Perspective" by Prasanna R. Deshpande, Mohd Kazim Sheriff, and Atmaram P. Pawar: Deshpande, Sheriff, and Pawar assess the functioning and productivity of Jan Aushadhi stores from the owners' perspective, conducting a web-based survey to gauge the impact of the scheme.

"Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices towards Jan Aushadhi Scheme" by Samiya Sadiq and Vijay Khajuria: This study investigates the knowledge, attitude, and practices (KAP) among doctors and patients towards the Jan Aushadhi scheme, offering insights into the perception and utilization patterns among key stakeholders.

These works collectively provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges, successes, and nuances associated with the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana across various regions in India. The literature review forms a robust foundation for understanding the broader context and framing the research questions for the current study on innovative approaches in assessing the scheme's impact in rural communities of Vasai Tehsil, Maharashtra

Identification of Research Gap:

Based on the literature review on available literature articles the research gap for the empirical study could be framed as follows:

There is a absence of empirical research investigating the effects and accessibility of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana on rural communities, specifically focusing on the perspectives of medical practitioners and healthcare providers in Vasai Tehsil, Maharashtra. While several studies have explored aspects such as customer awareness, satisfaction levels, cost analysis, and customer buying patterns of generic medicines through Jan Aushadhi stores, there is limited research that specifically investigates the experiences and perceptions of medical practitioners and healthcare providers in rural areas regarding the implementation and impact of the Jan Aushadhi Yojana. By conducting an empirical study in Vasai Tehsil, Maharashtra, the research aims to fill this gap by exploring the following aspects:

The awareness and knowledge of medical practitioners and healthcare providers and users in Vasai Tehsil regarding the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana. The attitudes and perceptions of medical practitioners and healthcare providers and rural respondents towards generic medicines provided through the Jan Aushadhi Yojana. The accessibility and availability of Jan Aushadhi stores in rural areas, including any challenges faced by medical practitioners and healthcare providers and users in accessing and prescribing generic medicines.

The impact of the Jan Aushadhi Yojana on healthcare costs and affordability for rural communities in Vasai Tehsil and their satisfaction level with the scheme. By addressing these research questions, the study can provide valuable insights into the experiences, challenges, and potential benefits of the Jan Aushadhi Yojana from the perspective of medical practitioners and healthcare providers in rural communities, specifically in Vasai Tehsil, Maharashtra.

Major Hypotheses:

Null hypotheses:

H0a: The implementation of PMJAY has not improved the accessibility and impact on rural population in select villages in Vasi Tehsil.

H0b: The implementation of PMJAY has not reduced the financial burden and improved health care outcomes for the beneficiaries of select villages in Vasai Tehsil

H0c: Doctors and health care givers do not perceive the PMJAY scheme positively.

H0d: Jan Aushadhi kendra's are not effectively meeting health care needs of the rural population in terms of availability, affordability, and convenience.

H0e: Barriers such as lack of awareness, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of coordination among stakeholders do not hinder the effective implementation of PMJAY in Vasai Tehsil.

Alternative hypotheses:

H1a: The implementation of PMJAY has improved the accessibility and impact on rural population in select villages in Vasi Tehsil.

H1b: The implementation of PMJAY has reduced the financial burden and improved health care outcomes

for the beneficiaries of select villages in Vasai Tehsil

H1c: Doctors and health care givers perceive the PMJAY scheme positively.

H1d: Jan Aushadhi kendra's are effectively meeting health care needs of the rural population in terms of availability, affordability, and convenience.

H1e: Barriers such as lack of awareness, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of coordination among stakeholders hinder the effective implementation of PMJAY in Vasai Tehsil.

Research methodology:

The research study on the evaluation of the impact and accessibility of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana among the rural population, doctors, and healthcare givers in Vasai Tehsil, Maharashtra will employ a mixed-methods approach. This approach combines quantitative and qualitative research methods to gather comprehensive and robust data. The methodology is outlined below:

Research Design:

- 1) The study is descriptive and empirical in nature, having a mixed approach as it involves qualitative and quantitative data. Primary and secondary data is used to ensure a holistic understanding of the research topic. Structured questionnaires were administered to users and non-users of (PMJAY) scheme. Unstructured data is collected through interview with doctors and health care givers and Focus group discussion. The sample size is Sample of villages – 10 villages from Vasai Tehsil
- 2) Sample of rural respondents – 400 respondents selected
The sample included rural residents of 10 select villages in Vasai Tehsil. The selected by convenience sampling method. Further, Doctors practicing in the village, and healthcare givers involved in the implementation of the Jan Aushadhi Yojana have been contacted

Data Collection:

Quantitative Data: A structured survey questionnaire was administered to 400 respondents to gather quantitative data from the participants. The questionnaire was designed to assess variables such as healthcare accessibility, affordability, utilization patterns, and financial burden.

Qualitative Data: In-depth interviews with healthcare givers, Doctors and focus group discussions was conducted with selected participants which explored their experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to the Jan Aushadhi Yojana. This qualitative data provided valuable insights into the scheme's impact and effectiveness. Themes and patterns are identified to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences.

Ethical Considerations:

Ethical guidelines are followed throughout the research process, ensuring the protection of participants' rights, confidentiality, and informed consent.

Relevance of the proposed study for policy making: The proposed study on the impact and accessibility of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana (PMJAY) among the rural population, doctors, and healthcare givers in Vasai Tehsil, Maharashtra holds significant relevance for policy making in the healthcare sector.

Firstly, the study can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and impact of the PMJAY in rural areas. By evaluating the accessibility and utilization of the scheme's affordable generic medicines among the target population, policymakers can assess the program's effectiveness in meeting its objectives. The findings can help identify gaps or challenges in the implementation of the scheme, enabling policymakers to make necessary improvements to ensure its success.

Secondly, understanding the perceptions and experiences of doctors and healthcare givers regarding the PMJAY is crucial for policy making. Their feedback can shed light on the program's efficiency, ease of access, and quality of medicines. Policymakers can use this information to refine the scheme and address any concerns or issues raised by healthcare professionals, thereby enhancing the program's overall impact.

Moreover, the study's findings can contribute to evidence-based decision making in healthcare policy. Policymakers can use the research outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of PMJAY and make informed decisions on resource allocation, program expansion, and policy modifications. The study can also identify best practices and successful strategies employed in Vasai Tehsil, serving as a model for other regions or states to replicate and implement the scheme effectively. Overall, the proposed study can provide policymakers with valuable insights into the impact, accessibility, and effectiveness of the PMJAY in rural areas. By informing policy decisions and improving the implementation of the scheme, the study can contribute to the overall goal of ensuring affordable and accessible healthcare for all.

Relevance of study for society:

Firstly, the study can contribute to enhancing healthcare access and affordability for rural populations. By evaluating the impact of PMJAY on the availability and accessibility of generic medicines in Vasai Tehsil, the research can provide insights into the effectiveness of the scheme in addressing the healthcare needs of the rural communities. The findings can inform policymakers and healthcare authorities about the program's success and highlight areas for improvement, ultimately benefiting the society by ensuring better access to affordable medications.

Secondly, the study can shed light on the experiences and perspectives of medical practitioners and healthcare providers regarding the PMJAY. Their feedback can help identify any challenges or limitations in the implementation of the scheme and inform strategies for strengthening the delivery of healthcare services. This can result in improved collaboration between healthcare professionals and the government, leading to better healthcare outcomes for the society as a whole.

Furthermore, by evaluating the effectiveness of PMJAY in Vasai Tehsil, the study can provide insights that can be extrapolated to similar rural areas across Maharashtra or even other states in India. This broader applicability can help policymakers in designing and implementing more effective healthcare policies and programs, benefiting society by addressing healthcare disparities and ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare services.

Ultimately, the proposed study's relevance lies in its potential to contribute to the improvement of healthcare access, affordability, and quality for rural populations. By generating evidence-based insights, the study can

guide policymakers in developing and implementing policies that cater to the specific healthcare needs of rural communities, thereby benefiting the broader society and promoting overall well-being.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

Quantitative non – experimental descriptive survey research design was used by administering simple random sampling . Out of the 450 questionnaires distributed to respondents, 420 were successfully collected. However, 20 of these questionnaires were found to be incomplete, leading to their exclusion from the final sample. Consequently, the effective sample size for analysis is 400 respondents with complete and usable data.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Description		n	Percentage
Gender	Male	189	47.25
	Females	211	52.75
Age Of Respondents	20 Yrs. to 30 Yrs	56	14
	31 Yrs. to 40 Yrs.	180	45
	41 Yrs. to 50 Yrs	120	30
	51 Yrs to 60 Yrs	42	10.5
	60 Years and above	2	0.5
Awareness of Jan Aushadhi Yojana	Yes	312	78
	No	80	20
	Can 'say	8	2
Sources of awareness	Television	217	
	Radio	43	
	Community Meetings	245	
	Health Care Givers	250	
	Publicity	25	
	News Papers	40	
Availability of Prescribed Medicines	Yes	345	86.25
	No	55	13.75
	No comments	00	00
Proximity to Jan Aushadhi store	1km	105	26.25
	2 to 5 km	190	47.50
	5-6 km	75	18.75
	6-7 km	15	3.75
	Above 7 Kms	15	3.75
Rate accessibility of Jan Aushadhi store in your area	Very Accessible	311	77.75
	Somewhat accessible	89	22.25

	Not accessible	00	00
Frequency of visiting Jan Aushadhi store	Daily	20	5
	Weekly	108	27
	Monthly	240	60
	Rarely	30	7.5
	Never	2	0.5
Affordability of medicines at Jan Aushadhi Aushadhi	Much more affordable	389	97.25
	Somewhat more Affordable	11	2.75
	Similar	00	00
	Some what more expensive	00	00
	Much more expensive	00	00

Gender Distribution:

47.25% of the respondents are male, and 52.75% are female. The majority of respondents fall within the age range of 31 to 40 years (45%), 30% are between 41 and 50 years old.

14% are between 20 and 30 years old. 10.5% are between 51 and 60 years old. 0.5% are 60 years and above.

Awareness of Jan Aushadhi Yojana: 78% of respondents are aware of the Jan Aushadhi Yojana. 20% are not aware. 2% are unsure.

Sources of Awareness:

The main sources of awareness are Community Meetings (78.75%) and Health Care Givers (81.25%). Television is also a significant contributor, with 86.75% of respondents being aware through this medium.

Availability of Prescribed Medicines:

86.25% of respondents find prescribed medicines available at Jan Aushadhi stores.

13.75% face unavailability.

Proximity to Jan Aushadhi Store:

The majority of respondents (73.75%) have Jan Aushadhi stores located within 1 to 5 km.

7. Rate Accessibility of Jan Aushadhi Store:

77.75% of respondents find Jan Aushadhi stores very accessible.

22.25% find them somewhat accessible.

None of the respondents find them not accessible.

Frequency of Visiting Jan Aushadhi Store:

Most respondents (60%) visit Jan Aushadhi stores monthly, indicating a consistent utilization pattern.

Affordability of Medicines at Jan Aushadhi:

97.25% of respondents perceive medicines at Jan Aushadhi stores as much more affordable.



2.75% find them somewhat more affordable.

The data indicates a comparatively balanced gender distribution, with a significant portion of the population being in the age range of 31 to 40 years. There is a high awareness level about the Jan Aushadhi Yojana, with community meetings and health care givers playing crucial roles in disseminating information. The availability of prescribed medicines is generally high, and Jan Aushadhi stores are perceived as accessible and affordable by the majority of respondents. Overall, the findings suggest a positive impact of the Jan Aushadhi Yojana in the surveyed population.

Innovative approaches to assessing the impact and accessibility of Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana (PMJAY) in rural communities in Vasai Tehsil, Maharashtra can involve a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as leveraging technology for more accurate and real-time data collection. Here are some innovative approaches suggested by respondents

Mobile Application for Data Collection:

Develop a mobile application for survey data collection, allowing real-time responses and GPS tracking to map the geographical distribution of respondents. This can provide a dynamic visualization of the impact across different regions in Vasai Tehsil.

Social Media Sentiment Analysis:

Utilize social media platforms to gather public sentiment regarding PMJAY. Analyse comments, tweets, and posts related to the scheme to understand the public perception, challenges, and success stories. This can provide a nuanced view of the community's experiences.

Pharmacy Transaction Data Analysis:

Collaborate with Jan Aushadhi Kendras to analyze transaction data. Assess the patterns of medication purchases, popular products, and frequency of visits. This can provide insights into the actual utilization and popularity of Jan Aushadhi stores in different demographics.

Telemedicine Interviews:

Conduct telemedicine interviews with healthcare providers and beneficiaries. Utilize video or phone calls to gather insights on the impact of PMJAY on healthcare outcomes. This approach can facilitate remote participation, especially in areas with limited physical accessibility.

Photovoice Methodology:

Implement the "Photovoice" methodology where participants use photography to document and express their experiences with PMJAY. Participants can take pictures of Jan Aushadhi stores, medication purchases, and other relevant aspects, providing a visual narrative of their perspectives.

Participatory Mapping:

Engage the community in participatory mapping exercises where they identify and map healthcare facilities, Jan Aushadhi stores, and accessibility challenges. This can offer a spatial understanding of the community's perception of healthcare accessibility.

Storytelling Workshops:

Storytelling workshops where beneficiaries share their experiences with PMJAY through narratives. This qualitative approach can bring out personal stories, challenges, and successes, providing a deeper understanding of the program's impact.

Virtual Reality (VR) Tours:

Develop VR tours of Jan Aushadhi stores and healthcare facilities. This can be especially useful for stakeholders who are unable to physically visit these locations, providing a virtual immersive experience for better understanding and assessment.

Chatbot Surveys:

Implementing Chatbot-driven surveys on messaging platforms. This approach can make the survey more interactive and engaging for respondents, especially among the tech-savvy population, leading to potentially higher response rates.

Time-Lapse Photography:

Use time-lapse photography to visually document changes in healthcare infrastructure and community engagement over time. This can provide a dynamic representation of the evolution of healthcare accessibility in Vasai Tehsil.

Remember to adapt these approaches according to the specific context and objectives of your study in Vasai Tehsil, Maharashtra. Combining multiple innovative methods can offer a comprehensive understanding of the impact and accessibility of PMJAY in the rural communities.

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