

# The Study on Generic vs Branded Drugs: Patient Perception and Market Trends in India

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**Abstract**—The pharmaceutical industry in India plays a significant role in providing affordable and accessible healthcare, with generic and branded medicines forming two major segments of the market. This study, titled “A Study on Generic vs Branded Drugs: Patient Perception and Market Trends in India,” aims to analyze patient awareness, perception, and trust regarding generic and branded medicines, as well as the factors influencing their purchasing decisions.

The research adopts a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms to collect primary data from 306 respondents belonging to diverse demographic backgrounds. The study examines key factors such as price sensitivity, trust in quality and safety, influence of doctors and pharmacists, and marketing strategies that shape consumer behavior toward medicines. Statistical tools, including percentage analysis, Chi-square tests, and T-tests, were used to analyze the collected data and evaluate the relationship between patient perception and medicine preference.

Overall, the research highlights the need for greater awareness, education, and stronger policy initiatives to improve public confidence in generic medicines. Strengthening patient knowledge and encouraging healthcare professionals to promote generics can help make healthcare more cost-effective, accessible, and sustainable for the broader population in India.

**Index Terms**—Generic Medicines, Branded Drugs, Patient Perception, Consumer Behavior, Market Trends, Pharmaceutical Industry.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The pharmaceutical industry plays a vital role in improving healthcare by providing safe, effective, and affordable medicines to the population. In India, the pharmaceutical sector has grown significantly over the past few decades and is recognized globally

for its strong manufacturing capabilities and large supply of generic medicines. India is often referred to as the “pharmacy of the world” because it supplies a substantial share of generic medicines used worldwide.

Within the pharmaceutical market, medicines are broadly categorized into generic drugs and branded drugs. Generic medicines are pharmaceutical products that contain the same active ingredients, dosage, safety, strength, and intended use as branded medicines but are usually available at a lower cost. On the other hand, branded medicines are marketed under a specific brand name and often carry higher prices due to research, development, and promotional expenses.

In India, where a large portion of healthcare expenditure is paid out-of-pocket by patients, the affordability of medicines becomes a crucial factor in treatment decisions. Generic medicines offer a cost-effective alternative, helping to make healthcare more accessible to a wider population. Despite their affordability and regulatory approval, many patients still prefer branded medicines because of higher trust in brand reputation, perceived quality, and recommendations from healthcare professionals.

Patient perception plays an important role in shaping the demand for generic and branded medicines. Factors such as awareness, trust in safety and effectiveness, price sensitivity, physician recommendations, and pharmaceutical marketing strategies influence consumer choices. Understanding these perceptions is essential for policymakers, healthcare providers, and pharmaceutical companies to promote rational drug use and improve access to affordable medicines.

This study aims to examine patient awareness, perception, and preferences regarding generic and

branded medicines in India. It also analyzes the influence of cost, marketing strategies, and healthcare professionals on consumer behavior. By identifying the key factors affecting patient trust and acceptance of generic medicines, the research seeks to provide insights that can support policies and initiatives aimed at improving the accessibility and affordability of healthcare in the country.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Kumar, S., & Singh, A. (2019). Patient perception of generic medicines in India: Barriers and opportunities.

This study highlights patient mistrust towards generic drugs in India, primarily driven by quality concerns and lack of awareness, despite generics being more affordable. Patients often associate lower prices with inferior quality, leading to hesitancy in switching from branded drugs. The authors stress the importance of educating patients about the efficacy and safety of generics. Additionally, increasing transparency in manufacturing and stricter regulation could improve trust and acceptance in the generic market.

2. Patel, R., & Desai, M. (2020). Influence of pharmaceutical branding on drug perception and acceptance in India.

The study reveals that patient perception is heavily influenced by branding and marketing, with many equating branded drugs to higher effectiveness. Physician preferences also play a pivotal role in reinforcing brand loyalty. Marketing campaigns create strong brand awareness, often overshadowing generic options. The research advocates for increased physician and patient education to balance perceptions and encourage the use of equally effective generics.

3. Sharma, V., & Gupta, N. (2018). Market trends and consumer acceptance of generic medicines in urban and rural India.

Findings show rapid growth of generic drug sales in rural areas, largely due to cost constraints, whereas urban populations remain biased towards branded drugs. The study discusses socio-economic factors and lack of awareness as contributors to slow adoption in urban centers. It highlights the need for

targeted outreach and education to urban patients, and policy reforms to support generic penetration nationwide. Consumer behavior patterns suggest gradual improvement but persistent brand preference in cities.

4. Mehta, P., & Rao, K. (2019). Physician prescribing patterns and their impact on generic drug use in India.

This research indicates physicians tend to prescribe branded medicines due to familiarity, perceived efficacy, and pharmaceutical incentives. Patient trust in physicians often translates into brand loyalty, reducing generic acceptance. The study calls for policy changes to incentivize generic prescribing and for continuous medical education to align prescribers with generic use goals. It also notes the potential impact of institutional guidelines promoting generics on prescribing habits.

5. Jain, A., & Kaur, S. (2020). Understanding brand loyalty and challenges to generic drug promotion in India.

Brand loyalty remains a major obstacle to generic drug promotion despite financial advantages. Patients often resist switching due to long-standing habits, perceived quality differences, and influence of pharmacists and doctors. The authors highlight the importance of multifaceted strategies involving patient education, healthcare provider engagement, and regulatory oversight. The paper stresses that without addressing brand loyalty, generics cannot realize their full market potential.

6. Singh, D., & Verma, T. (2017). The impact of awareness campaigns on patient attitudes towards generic drugs in India.

The study finds that awareness campaigns have positively influenced patient perceptions in selected regions, increasing trust and willingness to use generics. Campaigns that clearly explain equivalence and regulatory standards are especially effective. However, the reach of these campaigns remains limited, especially in rural areas. The authors suggest expanding awareness efforts with culturally appropriate messaging and involving community leaders to maximize impact.

7. Khan, M., & Ahmed, S. (2021). Role of government policies in accelerating generic drug market growth in India.

Government initiatives such as price control policies and promotion of Jan Aushadhi stores have accelerated generic drug market growth. Despite this, patient perceptions and physician prescribing habits have been slower to change. The study suggests enhancing policy frameworks to include patient education, physician incentives, and stricter quality assurance mechanisms. It concludes that a holistic approach combining policy and awareness is necessary to sustain market growth.

8. Raj, L., & Bhat, A. (2018). Economic factors influencing patient preference for generic medicines in India.

High out-of-pocket healthcare expenses push patients towards generics, but doubts about drug efficacy and safety dampen this effect. Patients often prioritize short-term cost savings but may revert to branded drugs if side effects occur. The authors emphasize the need for affordable quality generics and improved patient counseling to enhance adherence. Economic evaluations show generics offer substantial savings at population level but require better patient confidence.

9. Das, S., & Roy, P. (2019). Pharmaceutical marketing strategies and their effects on generic drug acceptance in India.

Aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical companies creates brand dominance, overshadowing generic alternatives. Marketing influences both prescribers and patients, creating brand loyalty and skepticism toward generics. The paper calls for regulation of marketing practices and increased promotion of generics through government channels. It also highlights the potential role of pharmacists in advocating for generics if properly incentivized and educated.

10. Nair, V., & Thomas, J. (2020). Effectiveness of patient education in improving generic drug acceptance in India.

Patient education is found to be a critical factor in overcoming misconceptions and increasing generic drug acceptance. Educational programs addressing equivalence, safety, and cost benefits help build

patient trust. The study suggests multi-channel education involving healthcare providers, pharmacists, and media campaigns. Greater patient involvement in decision-making is linked with higher generic drug adherence and satisfaction.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to collect, analyze, and interpret data for the purpose of achieving the objectives of the study. It provides the framework that guides the entire research process, ensuring that the findings are reliable, valid, and relevant to the research problem. In this study on “Generic vs Branded Drugs: Patient Perception and Market Trends in India,” a structured methodological approach was adopted to examine consumer awareness, perception, and preferences regarding generic and branded medicines.

The study follows a quantitative and cross-sectional research design. This approach allows the researcher to collect numerical data from respondents and analyze it statistically to identify patterns, trends, and relationships among variables. The cross-sectional design captures the perceptions and attitudes of respondents at a particular point in time, providing a snapshot of consumer behavior regarding generic and branded medicines.

The study uses both primary and secondary data sources. Primary Data: Collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms.

Secondary Data: Obtained from research journals, articles, books, industry reports, and reliable online sources related to the pharmaceutical industry and generic drug market.

The primary data for this research was collected using an online questionnaire designed in Google Forms. The survey included multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions to capture respondents' awareness, perception, and preferences regarding generic and branded medicines. The online format enabled efficient data collection from respondents belonging to different demographic backgrounds.

The population for this study consists of individual consumers who use or are potential users of pharmaceutical medicines in India. Participants include individuals from various age groups,

educational backgrounds, and occupations to obtain diverse perspectives on generic and branded medicines.

IV. RESULT

Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	159	51.96%
Female	147	48.04%
Total	306	100%

Age Group distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Observation
Under 18	Very few respondents
18–24	Majority of respondents
25–34	Second largest group
35–45	Small proportion
45+	Very few respondents

Trust Level in Generic Vs Branded Medicine

Type of Medicine	High Trust	Low Trust	Total
Generic Medicines	128	78	206
Branded Medicines	72	28	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>306</b>

Factors Influencing Medicine Choice

Factor	Impact on Consumer Choice
Price	Major factor encouraging generic medicine use
Brand Reputation	Increases preference for branded medicines
Doctor’s Recommendation	Strong influence on patient choice
Perceived Quality	Leads patients to trust branded drugs
Awareness	Higher awareness increases acceptance of generics

Statistical Test Results

Test Used	Purpose	Result
Chi-Square Test	Relationship between trust and type of medicine	p-value = 0.041 (Significant)
Paired T-Test	Difference between perception of effectiveness and safety of generics	p-value = 0.0049 (Significant)

Objective 1 To Evaluate Patient Awareness and Perception Towards Generic and Branded Medicines.

Parameter	Observation from Survey	Interpretation
Awareness of Generic Medicines	Majority of respondents are aware of generic medicines	Indicates growing public awareness about affordable medicine alternatives
Perception of Effectiveness	Many respondents believe generic medicines are effective but still prefer branded medicines	Shows that perception of effectiveness is improving but brand influence remains strong
Trust in Safety and Quality	Higher trust is observed for branded medicines compared to generics	Patients associate brand reputation with quality and safety
Acceptance of Generic Medicines	A considerable number of respondents are willing to use generic medicines	Suggests increasing acceptance due to affordability
Influence of Awareness	Respondents with higher awareness show greater willingness to use generics	Awareness plays a key role in improving adoption of generic medicines

Interpretation:

The findings indicate that while awareness of generic medicines is gradually increasing among patients,

branded medicines still enjoy greater trust due to brand reputation and perceived quality. However, with improved awareness and guidance from

healthcare professionals, acceptance of generic medicines is expected to grow in the future.

Pharmacists, and Pricing in Influencing Patient Choice Between Generic and Branded Medicines.

Objective 2 To Analyze the Role of Doctors,

Factor	Observation from Survey	Interpretation
Price Sensitivity	Many respondents consider cost while purchasing medicines	Price plays a major role in encouraging the use of generic medicines
Doctor's Recommendation	A large number of respondents rely on doctors when choosing medicines	Doctors strongly influence patient decisions regarding generic or branded drugs
Pharmacist Advice	Some patients are willing to switch to generics when recommended by pharmacists	Pharmacists play an important advisory role in medicine substitution
Brand Reputation	Branded medicines are often preferred due to well-known brand names	Brand image increases trust and confidence among consumers
Long-Term Treatment Cost	Patients undergoing long-term treatments prefer lower-cost options	Generic medicines become more attractive for chronic treatments

Interpretation:

The findings show that price, doctor recommendations, and brand reputation are major factors influencing patient decisions when choosing between generic and branded medicines. While affordability encourages the use of generics, many patients still rely heavily on doctors and brand reputation when making healthcare decisions.

The study also reveals that patient awareness plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions toward generic medicines. Individuals with better knowledge about generics are more willing to accept them as effective and safe alternatives to branded medicines. Furthermore, the recommendations of healthcare professionals, particularly doctors and pharmacists, significantly influence patient decisions regarding medicine choice.

### V. CONCLUSION

The study titled “A Study on Generic vs Branded Drugs: Patient Perception and Market Trends in India” highlights the growing importance of generic medicines in improving healthcare affordability and accessibility. The research examined patient awareness, perception, trust, and purchasing behavior regarding generic and branded medicines using survey data collected from 306 respondents.

Statistical analysis, including Chi-square and T-test results, confirmed that there is a significant difference in patient perception and trust between generic and branded medicines, indicating the need for stronger efforts to build confidence in generic drugs.

The findings indicate that generic medicines are widely recognized for their affordability, making them an attractive option for many consumers, especially those who are price-sensitive or undergoing long-term treatments. However, despite their cost advantages, branded medicines continue to enjoy higher levels of trust among patients due to brand reputation, perceived quality, and strong influence from doctors and pharmaceutical marketing.

In conclusion, while generic medicines have the potential to make healthcare more affordable and accessible, their widespread adoption requires greater awareness, stronger regulatory assurance, and active promotion by healthcare professionals. Government initiatives, educational campaigns, and transparent communication about the safety and effectiveness of generic medicines can help bridge the trust gap and encourage more patients to adopt these cost-effective alternatives. Ultimately, promoting generic medicines will contribute to a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable healthcare system in India.

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