



DIGITAL MARKETING OF MEDICINE IN INDIA:-TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

Mrs. Anagha P. Bartakke¹ Dr. Mrs. Sharvari S. Kulkarni²

¹*Asst. Professor, B.C.A College, Satara*

Email: apbartakke@gmail.com

²*Principal, Kanya Mahavidyalay, Miraj*

Email: ssk0803@yahoo.com

Abstract:

Covid-19 pandemic has affected all the countries of the world. In this situation many businesses had to face difficulties. Millions lost their jobs. While this is true, there is significant impact on the health care industry. It creates challenges to India as well as opportunities in India for development in Health Care Industry. It is immediately and extensively expanded across the India. Everyone is aware of the stress on the healthcare industry in pandemic situation but there is a lot of scope for development in this sector. This paper will talk about development, challenges of E-pharmacy which is part of the health care industry.

Key Words: Digital Marketing, Health care, Tele-medicine, E-Pharmacy

Introduction:

Covid 19 imposed lock down restrictions everywhere. In this situation many businesses had to face difficulties. Many lost their jobs. But some businesses got boosted in Pandemic situation e.g. online banking, online shopping- online grocery, online electronics, Telemedicine etc. With increasing online services and smart phone apps availability, people have started purchasing most of their requirements by online deliveries. Digital marketing is a element of marketing which uses internet and online based technologies like mobile phones, computers to promote products and services. Government of India launched Digital India campaign to ensure the Government services by improved online infrastructure and by increasing internet activity.

There were 624.0 million internet users in India in January 2021. The number of internet users in India increased by 47 million (+ 8.2%) between 2020 &2021. Internet penetration in India stood at 45% in January 2021. Out of the total internet connections, 61% connections were in urban areas. The Indian E-

commerce market is expected to grow to US\$ 111.40 billion by 2025 from US\$ 46.2 billion as of 2020. By 2030, it is expected to reach US\$ 350 billion. (1)

Objectives of the study:

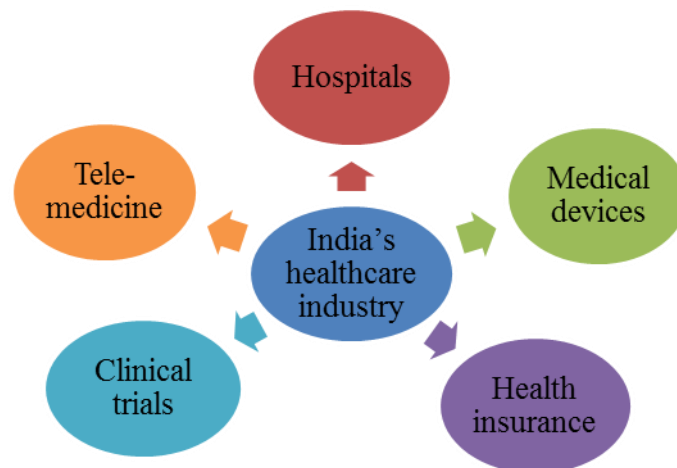
1. To understand the sectors of healthcare industry in India.
2. To assess the trends and growth of E-pharmacy in India.
3. To study the challenges in E-pharmacy.

Limitations of the study:

Indian health sector have various sectors like medical devices, hospitals, Telemedicine, clinical trials etc. For this study, E-pharmacy aspect of health care industry has been considered. The study mainly focused on E-pharmacy in healthcare industry.

Research Methodology:

The major thrust area of present study is E-pharmacy in India. This paper is theoretical and based on secondary data. Research papers, journals, websites, Government records and publication of commercial institution used for the collection of secondary data.

India's Healthcare Industry:

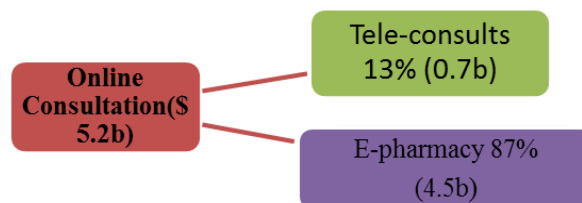
Source: Medical Device Manufacturing in India – A Sunrise

Telemedicine:

World Health Organization has defined telemedicine as, “The delivery of health care services, where distance is critical factor, by all health care professionals using information and communication technologies for the

exchange of valid information for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease and injuries, research and evaluation, and for the continuing education of healthcare providers, all in the interests of advancing the health of individual and their communities.” Telemedicine technologies includes like video conferencing, internet, telephones etc. Health care providers such as e-pharmacies and hospitals have integrated tele medicine platforms and scaled up their existing digital offerings. E-pharmacy platforms have showed a steep growth in adoption by both doctors as well as patients.

Tele consultation and e pharmacy markets in India

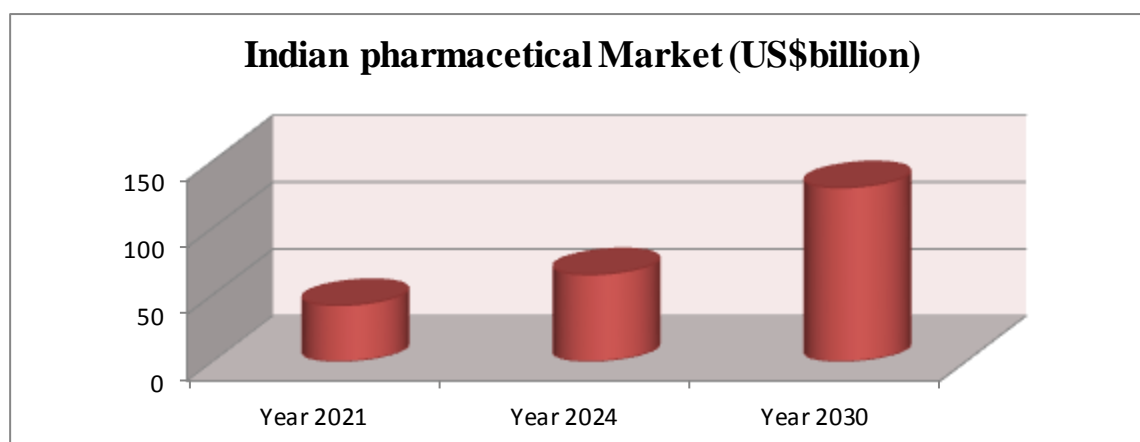


(Source: EY analysis)

Across the world, Pharmacies followed a basic business model which underwent a little change over the last 2-3 decades. The first E-pharmacy was started in the US in late 1990s which focused solely on selling drugs. E-pharmacies in India do not offering drugs to patients without prescription. If a patient does not have a prescription and they cannot upload it to the pharmacies portal. In such a situation the pharmacies have their own doctor consultants who advises the patient then generates the prescription for the patient. After that, patients upload it on the E-pharmacy app or website. Then place an order. The number of E-pharmacies has increased in coronavirus pandemic to avoid unnecessary interaction and practicing social distancing in India. India is significant and rising player in the global pharmaceutical sector. India E-pharmacy market is segmented into:

1. On the basis of Drug: E-pharmacy market can be divided into Prescription drugs and over the counter (OTC) drugs.
2. On the basis of Product: Chronic Diseases, Skin care, Medical Equipment, Nutritional supplement etc.

3. On the basis of Business Model: Inventory based model, market place based model
4. On the basis of Region: South, North, East, West.



(Source: Indian Pharmaceutical Industry: IBEF)

According to the Indian Economic survey 2021 the domestic market is expected to grow 3× in the next decades. India's domestic pharmaceutical market is estimated at US\$ 42 billion in 2021 and likely to be reaching US\$ 65 billion by 2024 and further expand to reach US\$ 120-130 billion by 2030.(2) Investors also invest their funds in e-pharmacy channels. Collaboration, agreements mergers and acquisition are happening in e-pharmacy market.

The major players operating in E-pharmacy market in India:

1. API Holding pvt. Ltd(PharmEasy)	4.Tata digital Limited (1 mg Technologies Pvt.Ltd)
2. Apollo Pharmacy Pvt.Ltd	5..Net meds Marketplace Ltd. (Reliance Retail)
3. CareOnGo	6.Medilife 7.Myra

Benefits to consumers:

Convenient:

Consumers can order their medicine through any internet support gadget from anywhere.This is beneficial for elderly and patients that may difficulty to go local medical store.

Consumers got medicine at home delivery.

Consumers place order anytime and anywhere.24*7 online customer support they got medicine at home.

Lower affordable cost with discounts.

E-pharmacy provides medicine at lower cost because it comes from directly from manufacturer in store. It also provides discount. There are no middlemen in distribution channel.

More accessible to find medicine & Digital payment facility.

Local medical stores have limited stock. E-pharmacy allows consumers to purchase medicine from highly organized platform, digital payment infrastructure from anywhere.

Value added information related medicine.

E-pharmacies provide information about side effects of medicine, substitutes of lower cost etc.

Genuine Authentic medicines.

E-pharmacies ensure supply variety of medicines which is safe for consumption..

Challenges:-**Threats of personal Data misuse:**

The online highly organized platforms available for digital marketing but it depends on valuable insights derived from customer's personal details. So there is risk of misuse of personal information of customers.

Need for technology up gradation.

Industry that use digital marketing platform depends on strong technical infrastructure. For the success E-pharmacies need to focus on utilizing latest technological advancement.

Need for special legal framework:

E-pharmacies involves the health of people so it must be regulated a special legal framework.

Need rural population awareness & Lack of internet connectivity.

Peoples in rural areas still face many problems like electricity problem, poor internet connectivity.

Increasing in rates of smart phone and internet use.

There is constantly increasing in rates of smartphones and internet use. It is not affordable to economically backward peoples.

In emergency it is not useful for patients.

Most important challenge of e-pharmacy is in emergency it is not useful for patients. E-pharmacies take more time for delivering medicines in emergency.

Findings & Conclusion:

1. Due to pandemic, Digital marketing has grown rapidly. Health awareness is increase among the people. Various sectors of healthcare industry rapidly grow in covid pandemic situation. Telemedicine consultancy increased tremendously to avoid unnecessary interaction and practicing social distancing in India.
2. The government launched various schemes and programs for the development health care sector. For the ensure acceptability, accessibility and affordability of quality medicines for the poor Jan Aushadi program launched by the government. . India's pharmaceutical market is likely to be reaching US\$ 65 billion by 2024 and further expand to reach US\$ 120-130 billion by 2030. There is scope for development of E-pharmacies in India.
3. E-pharmacy needs constant regulation and innovation. Increasing global competition, development of digital marketing, advanced technology is positive impact on this sector. Ultimately, every segment of the health care industry needs to take a developmental approach.

Suggestion:

The E-Pharmacy has observed increased number of private players setting up specialized health care facility. Considering the scope of the e-Pharmacy, Qualified pharmacists team essential in E-Pharmacy for validation of prescription and for handling any drug related queries from the patients. To develop the e-pharmacy system, special set of regulations established for e-pharmacies must be in India as early as possible.

E-Pharmacy provided information such as the side effects, cheaper substitutes. Online pharmacy will give boost to self-medication. Online pharmacy gives access 24 × 7 along with information and offers. . Peoples in rural areas still don't have gadgets, poor internet connectivity. There is need of awareness among

the people about online shopping. Govt. of India need to take initiatives in rural area for Digital India then India will become a self-sufficient country.

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