

ASSESSMENT OF CHALLENGES AND VALUE-ADDED SERVICES OF COMMUNITY PHARMACIES FROM SATARA DISTRICT OF INDIA

Amitkumar Anandrao Khade*, P. K. Mudalkar¹

*Research Scholar, ¹Research Guide

Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University Pune, Maharashtra, India.

ABSTRACT

Community pharmacy is also known as retail pharmacy or pharmacy shop or chemist and druggist shop. These days management of retail pharmacy is challenging factor for community pharmacists. The study focuses on factors affecting as well as value added services provided by retail pharmacies of Satara district. The study also aims the impact of online pharmacy and organized pharmacy on community pharmacy practices. The study is both descriptive and explorative in nature. A survey method was used to capture data. A total of 178 community pharmacists participated in the study carried out for 8 months from 1st May 2021 to 31st December 2021. Sale value of the pharmacy was influenced by value added services as well as challenges faced by community pharmacists. Online pharmacy and organized pharmacy were major challenging factors for community pharmacies.

KEYWORDS: Community pharmacy, retail pharmacy, Challenges of Community Pharmacies, Value-Added Services Of Community Pharmacies

INTRODUCTION

Community pharmacy is also known as retail pharmacy or pharmacy shop or chemist and druggist shop. This is common practice which dispenses drugs as well as counsel patients.^{1,2,3}

Indian pharmaceutical market is divided into two parts which are domestic market and export market. Domestic market is divided into retail market and institutional market. Indian retail

pharmaceutical market is distributed among unorganized pharmacy, organized pharmacy and online pharmacy.

The management of community pharmacies is challenging due to strategic and operational factors. Pharmacy shop owners, managers and pharmacists are expected to be capable enough in finances, marketing, managing human resources, store inventory, management information systems and developing infrastructure of the pharmacy.³

To safeguard the health of the population and provide professional healthcare services are the key roles of community pharmacists.⁷

Various services such as disease management, medicines sale, use, review, promotional activities were impinged and earmarked upon community pharmacists to develop and deliver. The application of these services are rarely practiced worldwide.^{14, 15}

The study focuses to evaluate factors affecting community pharmacy practice and value added services. The study aims to assess the impact of online pharmacy, organized pharmacy on community pharmacy practices.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate value added services of community pharmacy.
2. To evaluate challenges influencing community pharmacy practice.
3. To study effect of organized pharmacy and online pharmacy on community pharmacy.

RESEARCH METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is both descriptive and explorative in nature. A survey method was used to capture data.

SAMPLING DESIGN

Sampling Method:

Quota sampling method was used.

Respondents:

Pharmacist from community pharmacy outlets of Satara district of India

DATA COLLECTION

Questionnaire was used to evaluate value added services and to assess the factors influencing community pharmacy practice. The questionnaire was administered to the identified target participants; these were community pharmacists of selected pharmacies of Satara district.

SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION**Pharmacists:**

Researcher has adopted quota sampling method. 178 community pharmacists have participated in the study.

10 % of 1780 (Total Community Pharmacies in Satara District) = 178

RESULTS

A total of 178 community pharmacists participated in the survey carried out from 1st May 2021 to 31st December 2021 for the period of 8 months. Among the studied 178 participants, there were 135 (75.84%) males and 43 females (24.15%); 113 (63.48%) participants were urban and 65 (36.51%) participants were rural.

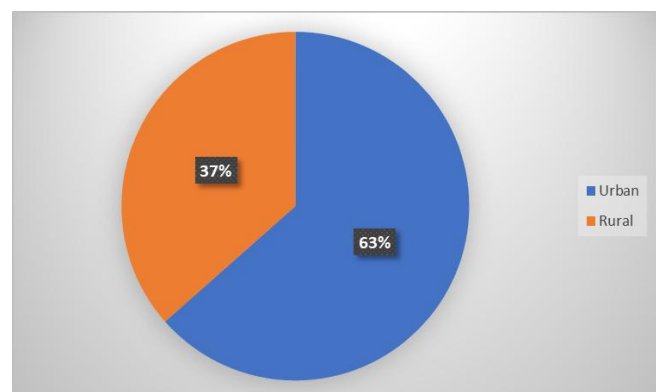
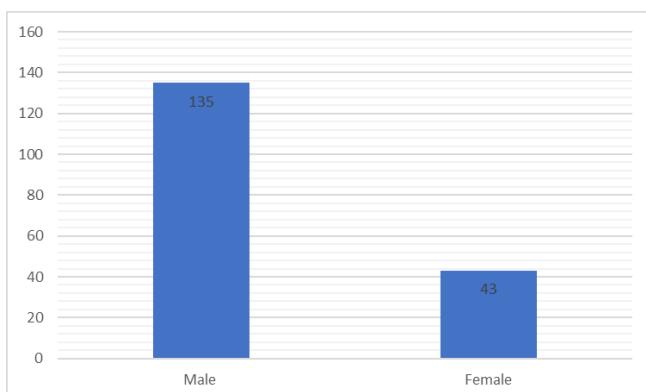


Figure No. 1

Figure No. 2

Services Provided by Retail Pharmacy:

In sale related services, drug selling is the only service which is provided by all community pharmacies (178, 100%); followed by cosmetics, food products and packaging materials etc. (Fig. 3)

In health services, community pharmacies do not provide most of the services. About 10% of services are provided by community pharmacies. (Fig. 4)

Community pharmacy’s infrastructure is very poor. Only 83 (46.62%) pharmacies provide drinking water facility and 36 (20.22%) pharmacies provide sitting arrangement. LED and Air Conditioning services are not provided by most of the pharmacies. (Fig. 5)

Current community pharmacies are much behind in technology services such as SMS, Telephonic Communication, Greetings and Social Media presence. More than 90% of pharmacies are not available on social media. (Fig. 6)

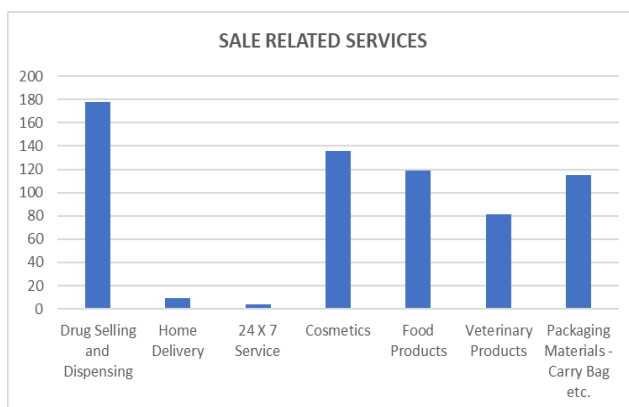


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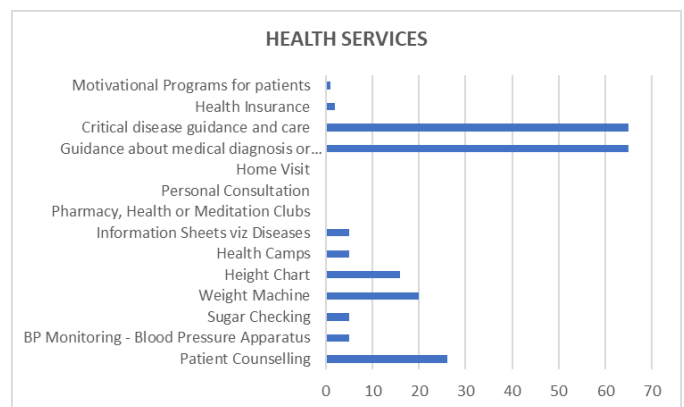


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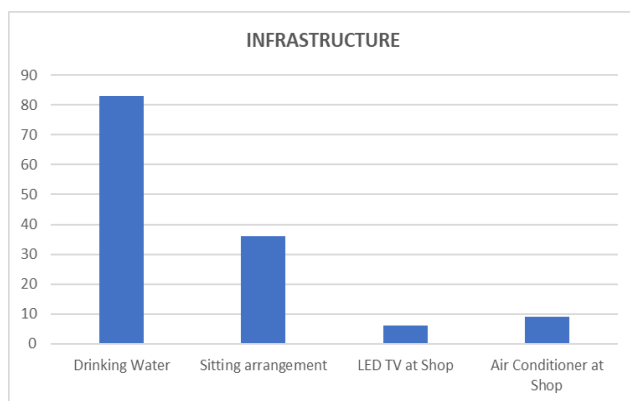


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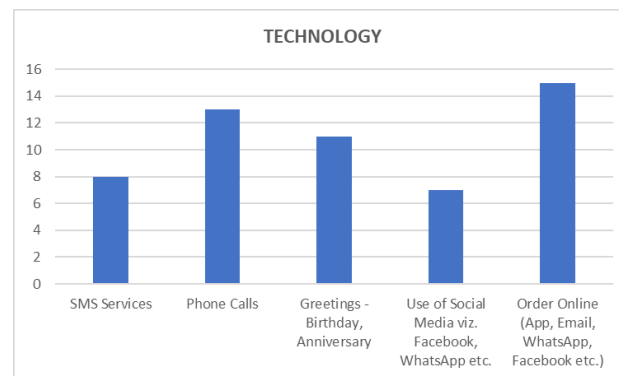


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Problems Faced by Retail Pharmacy:

There are several challenges faced by community pharmacists.

Product related problems; generic (74, 41.57%) is the challenging factor for community pharmacies. (Fig. 7)

Workforce related problems; staff is a problem reported by 113 (63.48%) community pharmacies. (Fig. 8)

Competition related problems; new entry of other pharmacy (174, 97.75%), online pharmacy (133, 74.71%), hospital attached pharmacy (99, 55.61%) and organized pharmacy (101, 56.74%) are leading challenges for community pharmacies. (Fig. 9)

Infrastructure; parking space (91, 51.12%) and absence of counselling space (138, 77.52%) are reported by community pharmacies. (Fig. 10)

Supply related problems; goods shortage (31, 17.41%) is not big challenge but stockiest scheme is reported by 100 (56.17%) pharmacies. (Fig. 11)

Financial problems; financial capital (144, 80.89%), customer reject to pay for other services (162, 91.01%) and lack of confidence to invest in other services (146, 82.02%) are uppermost challenges. (Fig. 12)

Technical problems; lack of recognition (110, 61.79%) and non-availability of training programs (115, 64.60%) are challenges faced by most of the community pharmacies. (Fig. 13)

Regulatory problems; license (11, 6.17%), audit and inspection (26, 14.60%) and other legal issues (21, 11.79%) are not major challenging factors for community pharmacies but Tax structure is a key challenge for 155 (87.07%) community pharmacies. (Fig. 14)

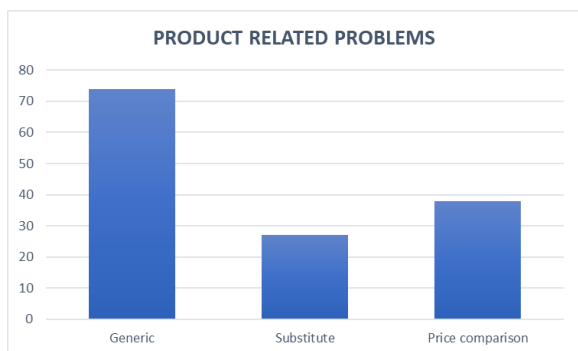


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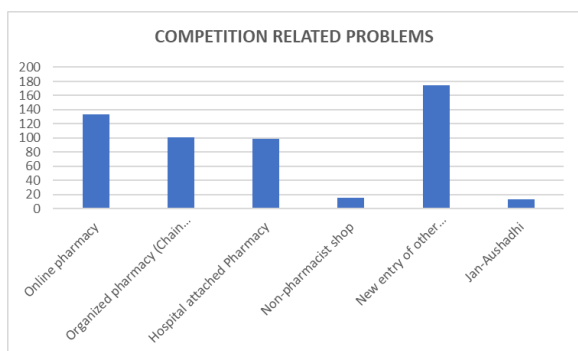


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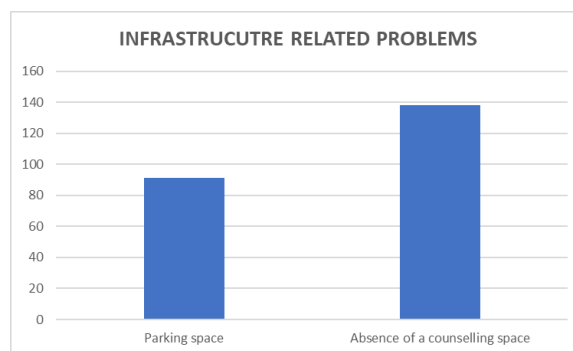


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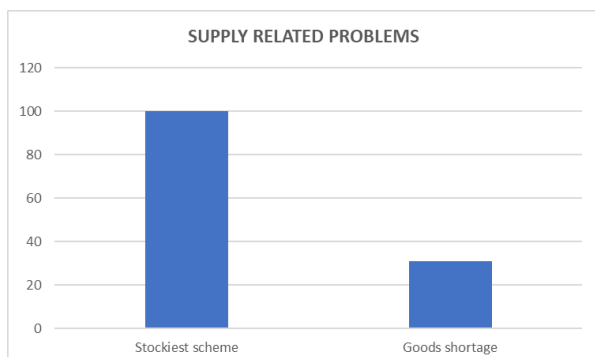


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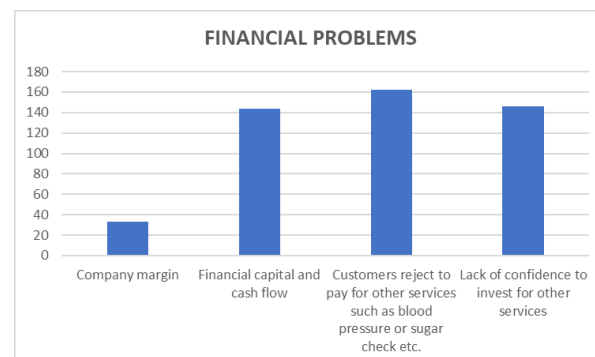


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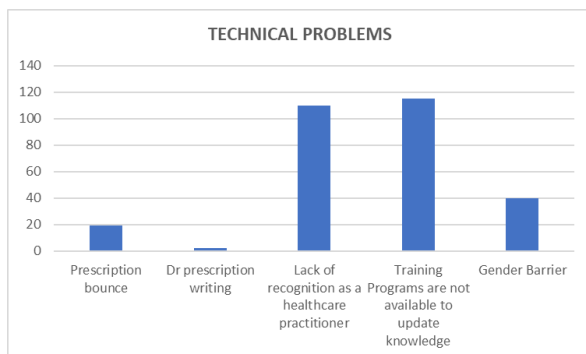


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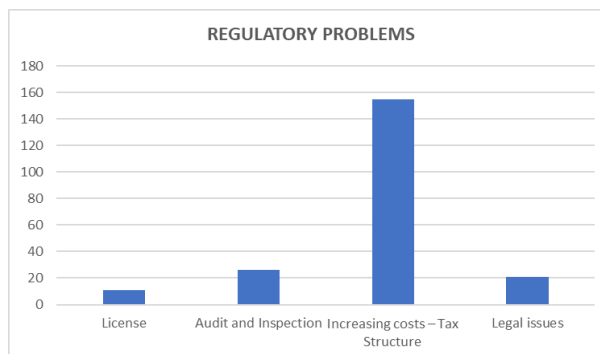


Figure No. 14

Study shows that urban pharmacies provide more value added services than rural pharmacies. Practice of sale related services, health services, infrastructure and use of technology are more prevalent in urban community pharmacy.

Competition related problems, infrastructure related problems are less in rural community pharmacy practice but product related problems, workforce related problems, supply related problems, financial problems, technical problems and regulatory problems are equally influencing urban and rural community pharmacy.

Sale of the pharmacy was associated with value added services as well as challenges faced by community pharmacies.

Value added services and challenges of community pharmacy do not show any significant impact on average percentage growth per year of community pharmacy.

Average turnover value is higher in urban community pharmacies as compared to rural community pharmacies.

There is significant impact shown by organized pharmacy on community pharmacy.

Online pharmacy is a major challenge for urban community pharmacy as well as rural community pharmacy.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- ✚ Infrastructure and Facilities: Community pharmacies in Satara districts may vary in terms of their infrastructure and facilities. Some pharmacies may have modern amenities, while others might lack basic necessities, affecting service quality.
- ✚ Medicines Availability: The availability of essential medicines in community pharmacies could be inconsistent. Some pharmacies may struggle to maintain adequate stock, potentially impacting patient access to necessary medications.
- ✚ Pharmacist Competency: The study likely assessed the expertise and knowledge of pharmacists working in these community pharmacies. Some pharmacists may demonstrate high levels of competency and professionalism, while others may require additional training and education.
- ✚ Customer Satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is a critical aspect of any healthcare service. The study might reveal varying levels of satisfaction among patients visiting these community pharmacies, possibly due to differences in service quality and pharmacist-patient interactions.
- ✚ Regulatory Compliance: The adherence of community pharmacies to regulatory standards and guidelines is vital to ensure patient safety and quality of care. The study may highlight areas where improvements are needed in terms of compliance.

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