# TRANSFORMING BRANDED GENERICS INTO POWER BRANDS: A FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING PREMIUM POSITIONING IN INDIAN PRICE-SENSITIVE MARKET

Dissertation Submitted to

**The IIHMR University, Jaipur**

for the partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

in

**Pharmaceutical Management**

by

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Under the Supervision and Guidance of

**Dr. Akshay Kumar Mishra**

**2025**

B – BLACK BELT BRAND BUILDERS

# CERTIFICATE

*This is to certify that **Shefali Karmore** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA (Pharmaceutical Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur has successfully completed her internship at B Black Belt Brand Builders during March 10 - May 31, 2025.*

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This is to certify that dissertation titled "**TRANSFORMING BRANDED GENERICS INTO POWER BRANDS: A FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING PREMIUM POSITIONING IN INDIAN PRICE SENSITIVE MARKET**" is a record of the research work undertaken by **SHEFALI KARMORE** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA Pharmaceutical Management from the IIHMR University, Jaipur under my guidance and supervision and his approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.

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# DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I, **SHEFALI KARMORE,** Enrolment No. **IIHMR-U/02/2023-25/0573** Hereby Declare That This Dissertation is titled Transforming branded generics into Power brands: A framework for building premium positioning in India's price-sensitive market, the Bonafide Record of My Original Research Work. I Declare That It Has Not Been Submitted to Any Other University or Institution for the Award of Any Degree or Diploma.

Information Derived from The Published or Unpublished Work of Others Has Been Duly Acknowledged in the Text.

Name of the Student: Shefali Karmore

Date:30-05-2025

# ABSTRACT

**Background:** The pharmaceutical market in India is largely dominated by branded generics, which are less expensive but don't stand out from the competition. These goods frequently face price-only competition, which commodifies them and puts pressure on margins. Building higher brand equity in generics is more important than ever, considering growing consumer knowledge and trust-driven purchasing.

**Objective:** Even in India's fiercely competitive and price-sensitive industry, this study attempts to provide a strategy framework for turning branded generics into power brands with premium positioning.

**Methodology:** A mixed-method approach was employed, which included evaluating successful brand-building case studies, interviewing marketing experts from top pharmaceutical companies, and assessing secondary data. Additionally, the study evaluated data on physician and consumer perceptions of premium generics.

**Result:** When compared to their generic counterparts, pharmaceutical companies that made investments in value-driven messaging, consistent medical engagement, and differentiated positioning strategies saw up to 30% greater profitability and a 25% rise in brand preference. By avoiding pricing battles, these firms were able to cultivate enduring client loyalty.

**Findings:** Strong therapeutic identification, emotional branding, ongoing HCP engagement, patient trust through quality assurance, and digital outreach are some of the main factors that propel premium positioning. Despite market price sensitivity, brands that used these components experienced consistent revenue growth.

**Conclusion:** By concentrating on value perception rather than cost leadership, it is possible to turn branded generics into power brands. Through increased adherence and trust, strategic branding initiatives not only increase profitability but also improve healthcare outcomes.

**Final Thoughts:** Indian pharmaceutical businesses need to rethink their branding strategy in the quickly changing healthcare landscape. In generics, a well-executed power brand strategy can change the game by generating a competitive edge while preserving accessibility and affordability.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My Sincere Thanks to My Guide **VIVEK HATTANGADI**, National Sales Manager- India and Subcontinent, **B-BLACK BRAND BUILDRES**, for His Support and Encouragement During My Dissertation; That is His Guidance and Support That Has Enriched My Development as An Intern.

I'd Also Like TO Thank my Mentor, **Mr. AKSHAY KUMAR MISHRA**, Associate Professor of SPM, IIHMR University, For His Support. I Am Grateful to them for Providing VALUABLE guidance throughout the Examination, their recommendation, Valuable Suggestions, and Optimistic and Strong Support. without his Support, This Dissertation Would Not have been possible to Complete.

I Would Like to Extend My Thanks to B-BLACK BELT BRAND BUILDERS for Giving Opportunity as An Intern and Providing Market Insights Which Helped Me with My Dissertation Completion.

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Shefali Karmore - Student at IIHMR University

## Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

The pharmaceutical sector in India represents a striking contradiction. It stands as a global leader, being the fourth-largest drug manufacturer and the tenth-largest exporter in the world. Yet, many individuals in the population face significant challenges in obtaining essential medications. The Indian pharmaceutical market is a jungle of brands, with numerous options for the same medicine. This oversaturation confuses consumers, making it tough for them to choose the right product. When similar medicines are sold under different brand names at vastly different prices - sometimes over 400% apart - it creates a problem. People start focusing on price rather than quality, which erodes brand loyalty. To stand out, pharmaceutical companies need to build a strong brand identity and communicate what makes their product unique. By educating patients and establishing trust, companies can cut through the clutter and foster loyalty. This approach helps consumers make informed choices and builds a loyal customer base. This situation highlights the urgent need for affordable healthcare options, positioning generic medications, particularly branded generics, as a priority in the country's healthcare framework. The demand for innovative approaches that improve the accessibility and attractiveness of these budget-friendly alternatives has reached an all-time high. The escalating healthcare costs worldwide have led to a heightened focus on generic medications, cutting across financial barriers. Generics provide an opportunity for significant cost reductions, as their prices are generally much lower than those of brand-name drugs. In India's pharmaceutical market, a "Power Brand" stands out for three key reasons are first is the significant market share, second, high consumer loyalty, and third is influence over pricing strategies. A Power Brand leads its category, building strong relationships with consumers and healthcare professionals. As Vivek Hattangadi puts it, "A power brand rises above the rest by not just competing on price, but by fostering a strong relationship with its consumers and healthcare professionals." This approach enables Power Brands to create strong brand equity, effective marketing strategies, and lasting partnerships with stakeholders across the healthcare ecosystem. By doing so, they leverage their corporate strength and product reputation to earn consumer trust, which is crucial in the pharmaceutical industry.

In India, where the affordability of healthcare is a crucial factor in access to services, ensuring that generic medications are available is vital for alleviating the financial strain of treatments. This issue extends beyond simple economic gains; it encompasses public health and social justice. In this scenario, Indian pharmaceutical firms typically function in two distinct markets. They produce marketed branded products, which receive substantial promotion to medical professionals, and branded generics intended for sale over the counter. These generic drugs are replicas of brand-name medications, containing identical active ingredients, dosages, and indications. In the pharmaceutical industry, a strong corporate brand is crucial for building trust and loyalty among consumers. When a company has a good reputation, it rubs off on its products, creating a positive impact on purchasing decisions. Consumers look for assurance of quality, especially when it comes to their health. A reputable corporate brand signals that a company prioritizes quality, transparency, and ethics. Companies like Sun Pharma and Dr. Reddy's have built strong corporate identities that enhance their product value. This connection between corporate values and product messaging is key to success. A strong corporate brand can also give companies a market edge, allowing them to charge premium prices for their products. Trust is the foundation of brand building, and when consumers trust the corporate brand, they're more likely to choose its products. In the competitive pharmaceutical landscape, cultivating a powerful corporate brand is essential for building successful product brands.

Recent updates on India's pharmaceutical market, incorporating data from 2024 and early 2025, paint a promising picture. According to industry insights, the market is expected to reach $41.9 billion by 2030. This growth is fueled by increased healthcare access, government support, and a rising demand for affordable healthcare solutions. A key driver of this growth is the branded generics market, which is expanding due to the rising incidence of chronic diseases and a growing patient population. To stay ahead, pharmaceutical companies must refine their branding strategies to meet these changing demands. This forecast highlights the importance of adapting to regulatory changes and leveraging brand equity to succeed in India's evolving pharmaceutical landscape.

Bioequivalence is a key requirement, ensuring that generic medications offer the same therapeutic effects as their branded versions. However, even with this scientific parity, concerns continue to arise among healthcare providers and consumers regarding the quality and reliability of generic medications. These issues are further intensified by a lack of consumer awareness, a confusing range of trade names, and considerable price disparities in the market. Although in some areas of India, regulatory bodies promote the prescription of drugs using their generic names, healthcare professionals frequently prefer well-known brand names. This inclination is deeply rooted, with both physicians and patients often rejecting pharmacists' efforts to switch prescribed brand names to generics, even in cases where significant cost savings can be achieved. This resistance underscores a gap in perception that must be bridged through focused education and awareness initiatives to foster broader acceptance of generics. Addressing these obstacles is crucial for realizing the full advantages of generic medications in enhancing healthcare accessibility and affordability in India. To better comprehend these market dynamics, this study conducts a comparative evaluation of the pricing frameworks and antibacterial effectiveness of branded medications and their branded-generic counterparts. By analysing these critical elements, this research seeks to offer valuable insights into how branded generics can overcome current perception challenges and position themselves as trusted, high-quality alternatives in a market where consumer decisions are significantly influenced by cost and quality perceptions.

This research aims to assist in developing effective strategies to transform branded generics into leading brands that can improve healthcare accessibility and affordability for all sections of the Indian population. The key difference between traditional generics and branded generics is found not in their pharmaceutical formulation, but rather in their marketing and branding techniques. Both drug types contain identical active ingredients and must prove bioequivalence to their original drug equivalents. However, branded generics utilize marketing initiatives to establish brand awareness and encourage customer loyalty. This branding approach differentiates them from regular generics, which typically lack a notable brand identity. This strategy allows manufacturers to set prices that are somewhat higher than those of unbranded generics while still providing significant savings compared to original branded drugs. The essential factor is to foster a sense of additional value through branding, without greatly raising production costs. Branded generics find themselves in a strategic position within the pharmaceutical landscape, situated between the expensive original brands and the affordable unbranded generics. This positioning allows producers to leverage the cost advantages of generic manufacturing while also benefiting from brand recognition. In the pharmaceutical industry, a strong brand can make all the difference. Let's look at some success stories like Digitek, a heart medication from Mylan, has become a trusted name in the cardiac segment. Its strong market presence and consistent prescription rates are a testament to effective branding. Another example is Levoxyl, a thyroid hormone replacement therapy from AbbVie. With a solid marketing strategy and clear product identity, Levoxyl has earned a significant market share and healthcare professionals' trust. The market for Levoxyl is expected to grow steadily, reflecting its strong position. Nifedical, a cardiovascular treatment from Sun Pharma, is another success story. Strategic branding and clinical evidence have helped it compete with original brands and other generics, gaining acceptance among healthcare providers, These examples show that strong branding, marketing, and clinical validation can turn generic products into leading brands in the pharmaceutical industry.

Brand development for branded generics typically highlights qualities like reliability, consistency, and trust – characteristics that strongly appeal to both healthcare professionals and patients. By establishing distinctive brand identities, manufacturers empower healthcare providers to confidently prescribe medications and enable patients to request products by name. This recognition of the brand gives a competitive edge against unbranded generics, all while sidestepping the large marketing costs linked to conventional branded drugs. Branded generics signify a strategic sector in pharmaceuticals that successfully merges aspects of both the branded and generic drug business models. By supplying generic drugs under unique brand names, producers develop items that yield greater profits than unbranded generics while delivering significant cost benefits compared to original brands. In today's healthcare landscape, patient-centered branding is crucial. This approach focuses on understanding and addressing individual patient needs, preferences, and experiences. By doing so, healthcare brands can build meaningful connections, trust, and loyalty. The Human Element, that is Philip Kotler's H2H Marketing framework, emphasizes the importance of human connections in branding. In healthcare, this means prioritizing patient experiences, outcomes, and well-being over traditional marketing tactics. The best example is of Lilly Diabetes: Lilly Diabetes prioritizes patient education and support through initiatives like the "Diabetes Journey" program, building a community that addresses patient concerns empathetically

The profitability of branded generics arises from their distinct economic framework, which avoids the high research and development expenses associated with new medications while commanding higher prices than unbranded options. While branded generic manufacturers obtain lower gross margins compared to patent-protected drug originators (around 40% against 80%), they enjoy advantages from efficient manufacturing, simplified regulatory processes, and focused marketing tactics that support sustainable profits across substantial production volumes. Branded generics provide significant cost reductions for healthcare systems and patients in comparison to original brands, while ensuring a level of quality assurance that might be viewed as better than unbranded options. Although supply chain inefficiencies can occasionally restrict their overall cost-saving potential, branded generics play a substantial role in enhancing medication affordability and accessibility worldwide. With patent expirations offering chances for generic market access and healthcare systems sharpening their emphasis on cost control, branded generics are set for ongoing expansion and significance in global pharmaceutical markets.

The placement of branded generics in the market differs significantly across different global areas. In advanced countries like the United States, branded generics frequently focus on specialized or niche markets, meeting patient needs or therapeutic domains. On the other hand, in developing markets, branded generics frequently account for a large share of prescribed drugs, serving a crucial function in providing affordable healthcare options. This underscores the diverse market structures, regulatory systems, and consumer tastes present globally. The capacity of branded generics to adjust to these varying situations highlights their versatility and opportunities for growth in diverse markets. The branded generics category has demonstrated significant growth and strength in the worldwide pharmaceutical industry. In 2022, the global market was projected to achieve USD 240.75 billion, with projections anticipating a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.7% from 2023 to 2030. This significant market size highlights the important role that branded generics have in consumption

Perception Drives Differentiation**.** A strong, positive perception can set a brand apart. When consumers view a brand as innovative, safe, and socially responsible, it creates a unique identity. For example, Cipla and GSK have built distinct reputations through targeted marketing, fostering trust and loyalty. According to a 2024 Ipsos survey, 68% of consumers prefer innovative brands over traditional ones, even if the latter offers established products. Perception shapes how consumers interpret brand differences. Differentiation Drives Perception like on the other hand; effective brand differentiation can enhance consumer perception. When a brand stands out through quality products, customer service, or innovation, it builds a favorable perception. Novartis, for instance, has differentiated itself through biopharmaceutical innovations and patient care, earning trust from healthcare professionals and patients. A 2025 Nielsen study found that clear differentiation strategies lead to a 20% increase in consumer trust and loyalty. A Two-Way Street is ultimately; perception and brand differentiation are interconnected. Positive perception enhances differentiation, while effective differentiation improves perception. This relationship impacts consumer choice and loyalty. In the pharmaceutical sector, where trust and efficacy matter most, brands must cultivate both distinctiveness and positive perception to succeed.

The growth of the branded generics market has been steadily noted in different areas, though with varying degrees of intensity. Established markets such as North America and Europe have recorded steady growth rates, whereas developing pharmaceutical markets in Asia, Latin America, and Africa have witnessed more rapid expansion. This variation in growth rates across regions illustrates the different phases of market evolution, healthcare system structures, and regulatory frameworks that influence drug availability and pricing in those locations. The robust upward trend of branded generics highlights their continued importance in the global pharmaceutical market soon. One of the most attractive features of branded generics for pharmaceutical producers is their profit margin. While producers of branded generics typically experience lower gross profit margins than the creators of patented medications, they still maintain robust profitability that frequently exceeds that of numerous other sectors. Industry analysis indicates that manufacturers of generic drugs, including those producing branded generics, typically obtain gross profit margins of about 40%, compared to the 80% margins often seen with patented branded drugs. This margin difference highlights the fundamental distinctions in business models and cost structures among these categories of pharmaceuticals.

In the pharmaceutical industry, generics and branded generics are two distinct categories. Let's break down the differences:

Generics - Chemically identical to branded counterparts, no branding, sold at lower prices, meet the same quality and regulatory standards. Example: Amoxicillin (antibiotic)

Branded Generics **-** Chemically identical to generics, but marketed under a brand name**,** may have additional features or formulations**.** Example: Amoxil (branded version of amoxicillin)

Key Differences – Pricing in Generics is generally cheaper than branded generics**.** Consumer Choice in branded generics may be preferred due to perceived value, brand reputation, or added benefits**.** Insurance Preferences as Insurance companies often prefer generics, but may cover specific branded generics if they believe it improves patient compliance

Real-World Examples are Atorvastatin (cholesterol medication): Generic versions available from manufacturers like Teva Pharmaceuticals, while branded versions like

Lipitor or Atorvastatin Mylan offer marketing differentiation**.** Ibuprofen (pain reliever): Generic versions are widely available, while branded versions like Advil maintain brand recognition and offer similar efficacy at lower prices

# Chapter 2 : **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Despite its global leadership in generic production, India's pharmaceutical industry has internal difficulties brought on by price sensitivity, brand commoditization, and uneven brand equity among generic medications. To investigate how branded generics can be strategically turned into power brands in the Indian setting, this literature review assesses the body of current academic and commercial research. To provide a solid model for premium positioning of generics, it integrates research from marketing theory, pharmaceutical branding, consumer behavior, healthcare access, and regulatory frameworks. Branded generics combine the medicinal equivalency of generic medications with the branding techniques of innovator medications to be sold under a proprietary brand name. In contrast to Western markets, where generic medications are marketed by their chemical names, over 80% of pharmaceutical sales in India are of branded generics. India's fragmented healthcare delivery and low health insurance penetration, where trust and recognition of prescription greatly impact choices, are the main causes of this structural divergence.

Suryawanshi et al. (2017) showed that even though branded generics and their branded equivalents exhibit similar antibacterial activity, marketing asymmetries and a lack of understanding cause the perception of inferior quality to endure. This disparity in perception emphasizes how vital it is to spend money on brand development that goes beyond packaging. (*Branded versus Generic (Branded-Generic) Medicines-For Whose ...* (n.d.). https://www.jbclinpharm.org/articles/branded-versus-generic-brandedgeneric-medicinesfor-whose-benefit.pdf

A "power brand" is one that commands a sizable market share, customer loyalty, and price power, according to Kotler and Keller (2016). Dolo 650 (paracetamol), when applied to the pharmaceutical industry, serves as an example of a successful transition from a generic chemical to a power brand. Dolo 650 overcame price-based competition and established itself as a reliable product because to its widespread availability, steady physician engagement, and demand throughout the pandemic (Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance, 2022). *[PDF] Kotler Keller*. (n.d.).https://students.aiu.edu/submissions/profiles/resources/onlineBook/S3D7W4_Marketing_Management.pdf

According to a study by Selvaraj and et.al. (2022), drug brand equity is mostly based on prescription practices and HCP (healthcare professional) trust rather than just consumer promotions. This is in line with Ajzen's (1991) behavioral model, which highlights how authority endorsement shapes consumer behavior. In this instance, doctors are the main influence. *Evaluating the impact of price regulation (Drug Price Control Order ...* (2022). https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9587621/

One characteristic that sets the generic medication business in India apart is price battles. The identical chemical can be sold under hundreds of brand names with price differences that can occasionally surpass 400%, according to research by Adam Zamecnik. (2025). These pricing variations, however, are frequently the result of trade margins, marketing expenses, and physician incentives rather than variations in quality.

Adam Zamecnik. (2025). *Indian Generic Players Begin Price War Over Generic Empagliflozin* https://insights.citeline.com/generics-bulletin/products/generics/indian-generic-players-begin-price-war-over-generic-empagliflozin-launches-4JLN6G5P7NDZVGEOBCQP4NKDJM/

Pricing itself has not ensured long-term brand loyalty or profitability, even in the face of a very price-conscious consumer base. According to Mehta (2018), perceived value—which includes perceived quality, trust, and accessibility—builds long-term brand preference, whereas pricing propels initial uptake? Businesses that solely compete on price run the risk of becoming commoditized in this situation, which lowers profitability and erodes brand recognition.

*[PDF] How-brand-image-and-perceived-service-quality-affect-customer ...* (n.d.). https://www.abacademies.org/articles/How-brand-image-and-perceived-service-quality-affect-customer-loyalty-through-customer-satisfaction-1528-2678-24-1-262.pdf

In the pharmaceutical industry, perception is crucial to brand distinction. Despite scientific evidence to the contrary, a Josef Bednarik. (2003) study found that Indian patients frequently correlate higher pricing with better quality. Despite being illogical, this price-quality heuristic endures because of inadequate health literacy and uneven experiences with inexpensive generics. Additionally, research indicates that generic medicine equivalency is frequently unknown to Indian customers. Generic mistrust is still high, even among patients who are well-educated. This leads to a vicious cycle in which branded generics, even when they are bioequivalent, have trouble gaining confidence, highlighting the need of physician advocacy and patient education in brand transformation. Josef Bednarik. (2003). *Does brand differentiate pharmaceuticals? - PubMed*. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16380705/

In India's ecosystem of branded generics, doctors are crucial. Indian doctors play a major role in deciding which brand of medication a patient takes, in contrast to developed markets where pharmacy-level replacement is typical. Medical representation and Continuing Medical Education (CME) programs support this, and they have an impact on prescribing practices (IMS Health, 2016). According to a perceptive paradigm put forth by Aivalli et al. (2018), four important aspects influence prescriber preference: post-prescription support, brand reputation, scientific evidence, and medical representative participation. Prescriber loyalty is often earned by brands that regularly meet these touch points, and this loyalty subsequently transfers into patient demand and brand recall. Consequently, turning a branded generic into a power brand still heavily relies on physician involvement. *Perceptions of the quality of generic medicines: implications for trust ...* (2018). https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5844374/

Historically, harmonizing bioequivalence testing and quality compliance across manufacturers has been a challenge for India's pharmaceutical regulatory system, which is supervised by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO). The lack of required bioequivalence testing for many generics has undermined public trust, claim. Furthermore, rules do not clearly distinguish between branded and unbranded generics, which causes market overpopulation. According to studies, the public's confidence in branded generics would be greatly increased by implementing bioequivalence requirements and providing regulatory clarity. Regulatory change must therefore support marketing initiatives since it is a fundamental element of brand trust. *CDSCO Medical Regulatory Bodies*. (2024). http://www.dghs.mohfw.gov.in/cdsco.php

Patients now have more access to online shopping platforms and health information thanks to India's healthcare industry's digital transformation. More than 400 million Indians have digital connections to health platforms, opening up new channels for patient interaction and pharmaceutical branding, according to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2025 HealthTech research. Businesses are now able to interact directly with customers, inform them of the advantages of their products, and provide loyalty programs thanks to digital tools like smartphone applications, e-pharmacies, and WhatsApp health bots. This strategy has been employed by pharmaceutical companies such as Practo and Netmeds to increase customer awareness of their brands. Therefore, telemedicine and internet marketing are essential venues for patient education, emotional branding, and service continuity in addition to being promotional instruments. *From Data to Diagnosis Transforming Healthcare through ... - PIB*. (2025). https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2094604

Linking the medicine brand to medical conditions, results, and emotional comfort is a key component of creating a powerful therapeutic identity. This is consistent with Greenslit's (2002) branding concepts, which highlight emotional distinctiveness as the foundation of sustained brand loyalty. Companies such as Liv 52 (a liver tonic) and Saridon (an analgesic) have successfully developed a story that transcends practicality and into the public consciousness. A generic medication can be positioned as reliable and patient-focused through emotional branding, patient endorsements, and health outcome reports. This approach has a lot of potential in the healthcare system in India, where feelings frequently take precedence over facts. *Pharmaceutical branding: identity, individuality, and illness - PubMed*. (2008). https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/14993408/

The supply chain for pharmaceuticals in India is very dispersed. At the point of sale, retail pharmacists have a significant impact on brand substitution. More than 60% of generic brand swaps occur at the pharmacy level, frequently due to profit considerations, according to a 2022 IQVIA analysis. Thus, backend tactics like margin sharing, inventory support, retailer loyalty programs, and pharmacist training are essential for guaranteeing brand availability and awareness. According to Bolineni (2016), pharmacist alignment and supply chain efficiency can quietly strengthen trust and establish brand dependability at the final mile. Distributors and chemists must be seen by businesses as vital brand touchpoints as well as logistics conduits. Prasad Bolineni. (2016). *The Indian Pharmaceutical Industry's Supply Chain Management Strategies*. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/0c201da73768188ea3ac81701e44bdd582e5ae61

The following noteworthy instances show that turning branded generics into power brands is feasible:

1. Dolo 650 (Micro Labs): During COVID-19, it used its steady supply, media presence, and doctor trust to establish itself as a household name for paracetamol.
2. Sporlac (probiotic): To increase emotional resonance and familiarity in the home, the company positioned itself as a family health supplement rather than a prescription medication.
3. Livogen (iron supplement): Direct-to-consumer marketing was used to link the brand to female health, vigor, and energy.

These companies have been successful due to their distinctive brand narratives, long-term investment in trust, and HCP engagement, not because of their unique chemicals. According to the literature, a unified and multi-layered approach is necessary to turn a branded generic into a strong brand.

Among the main pillars are:

1. Scientific Validation: Supporting goods with empirical data, clinical trials, and scholarly approvals.
2. Physician Engagement: CME initiatives, ongoing education, and moral marketing tactics.
3. Patient education: To demystify generics, use emotional branding, digital outreach, and clear language.
4. Retail Alignment: Channel alliances with online pharmacies, wholesalers, and retailers.
5. Regulatory Support: Promotion of standards and clear bioequivalence data.

To produce unique value that endures beyond simple price competition, this integrated strategy must be maintained over time.

The pharmaceutical industry in India is dominated by branded generics, which hold a significant market share in terms of both volume and income. The market for branded generics in India was estimated to be worth USD 22.7 billion in 2021 and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 7% to reach USD 41.9 billion by 2030. This has strong possibilities due to rising chronic disease incidence, increased access to healthcare, and government programs like the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana and Ayushman Bharat plans that aim to increase availability and affordability. *Generics share in the total pharmaceutical market*. (2018). https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-economic-surveys-czech-republic-2018_eco_surveys-cze-2018-en.html

In India, pharmaceutical drugs that are marketed under brand names but are fundamentally generic in nature are known as "branded generics." In India, nearly all medications are sold as branded generics, which are seen differently by patients and prescribers than unbranded generics, in contrast to many other markets where generics are mostly unbranded. This is partially due to the fact that people mostly rely on brand prescriptions, which restricts the use of generic medications, and doctors are not required by law to prescribe them. Because of these factors, branded generics dominate the market despite cost sensitivity, accounting for roughly 75% of volume and 90% of value. M Premanath & P Kulkarni. (2024). Generic

Drugs or Branded Generics, Which One Do You Prefer to Prescribe? In *APIK Journal of Internal Medicine*. https://journals.lww.com/joim/fulltext/2024/12030/generic_drugs_or_branded_generics,_which_one_you.14.aspx

According to market segmentation, the largest and fastest-growing section of the Indian branded generics market is anti-hypertensive medications. Other therapeutic categories that follow include hormones, antimetabolites, lipid-lowering medications, antidepressants, and anti-epileptics. The nation's epidemiological movement towards non-communicable diseases is reflected in the expansion of chronic therapies, especially in the fields of cardiology and endocrinology. The ongoing need for these treatments is fueled in part by the growing number of elderly people and changes in lifestyle. S. Sindrup & F. Bach. (2002). *Antidepressants, antiepileptics ,and antiarrhythmic drugs*. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/d7aa4ce67eff30debfad7b587d4b91550471a790

India is known as the "pharmacy of the world" because of its extensive manufacture and exportation of generic medications, which account for 20% of the world's total supply. Both volume and price growth are driving the domestic pharmaceutical market's (IPM) robust compound growth rate of 9.1% from 2019 to 2023 and is expected to continue growing at a rate of roughly 9.6% until 2030. Interestingly, branded generics account for over 87% of the IPM by value, underscoring the market structure's established position at home. *Share of generics in the total pharmaceutical market*. (2018). https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/9ef71c61be6dd0e6f2830457dec02f816f6aa5f9

Many factors are driving the expansion of branded generics in India. These include the growing burden of chronic diseases, the expansion of urban middle classes with improved access to healthcare, and the rising demand for healthcare brought on by population increase. Additionally, while government initiatives like generics promotion programs and price control laws under the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) have improved access, they have also increased pricing pressures that affect market strategy. Reji K. Joseph. (2015). *The drug price control system in India and access to medicines*. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/abb53690022ab4df85005ce3bec0b6056bdaf08d

Despite the focus on generics, branded generics continue to hold considerable value because of consumer and physician preferences as well as worries about the quality of generic medications in India. Market segmentation and price power are impacted by the perception of quality and trust, which is still a crucial consideration in prescription and purchase decisions. However, research has demonstrated that the quality metrics of branded generics and branded medications made by the same businesses are frequently similar, suggesting a possible discrepancy between perception and scientific fact. GL Singal, A Nanda, & A Kotwani. (2011). A comparative evaluation of price and quality of some branded versus branded-generic medicines of the same manufacturer in India. In *Indian journal of pharmacology*. https://journals.lww.com/iphr/fulltext/2011/43020/a_comparative_evaluation_of_price_and_quality_of.6.aspx

In India's pharmaceutical industry, the conversion of branded generics into power brands presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Current research shows that perception, trust, physician influence, and consistent brand engagement determine long-term brand loyalty, even though affordability is still important. Companies' capacity to transition from cost leadership to value-based branding, which is focused on quality, credibility, and human-centric storytelling, will determine their future success in this field. Branded generics can rise above their commoditized image and become dependable power brands that influence the direction of reasonably priced healthcare in India with calculated investments in digital platforms, retail infrastructure, and scientific advocacy. AVJ Reddy & BM Rao. (2017). *Opportunities and challenges for Indian Pharmaceutical companies in overseas markets and need of digital tools for sustainable success*. https://ijper.org/sites/default/files/10.5530ijper.51.2.28_0.pdf

# Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

## Study design and settings

In order to gain a thorough grasp of how branded generics might become power brands in India's pharmaceutical market, this study uses a mixed-methods design that combines qualitative observations with structured quantitative analysis. The quantitative component examines sales patterns, profit margins, and case-based outcomes using secondary data, while the qualitative approach investigates stakeholder views, branding tactics, and market dynamics.
Deriving a framework that identifies the primary levers influencing premium positioning in a pharmaceutical market that is mostly price-sensitive is the main goal.

## Research instrument and data collection pro

- **Secondary Data Collection**

In order to assess current and historical market trends about branded generics, secondary data has been thoroughly examined.

1. Industry reports from Frost & Sullivan, McKinsey, AIOCD, and IQVIA are among the sources.
2. Scholarly publications, such as peer-reviewed journals on drug economics, Indian pharmaceutical trends, and branding in healthcare (found on Google Scholar, PubMed, and JSTOR).
3. Government publications that provide information on branded generics, price, and regulations (NPPA, CDSCO, DCGI).
4. Case studies containing information on sales growth, brand recognition, and digital outreach initiatives for certain power brands, such as Digitek, Levoxyl, and Dolo 650.

- **Primary Data Collection**

Semi-structured interviews with important stakeholders were carried out to corroborate and contextualize secondary insights. These stakeholders included:

1. Marketing executives from leading Indian pharmaceutical companies (n=5)
2. Product managers and medical representatives with expertise in branded generics (n=7)
3. Healthcare providers (HCPs), such as prescribing doctors (n=10)

There were eight pharmacists from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. Understanding perceptions of brand value, difficulties with brand positioning, engagement tactics, and regulatory considerations were the main topics of the interviews. Thematic analysis methods were used to code and transcribe these interviews.

## ***Analytical Framework***

Qualitative Analysis

Transcripts of interviews and case study materials were subjected to a thematic content analysis technique. Among the main themes were:

- Views of originator brands versus branded generics.
- Branding tactics (trust, emotive positioning, and HCP involvement)
- Adoption obstacles in rural and semi-urban markets
- Regulatory and distribution challenges

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative insights were gathered and analyzed by using:

- **Descriptive statistics**: To provide an overview of MRP variances, profit margins, and price patterns.
- **Comparative brand performance**: Analyzing changes in revenue and prescription share following branding interventions (such as the Dolo 650 brand campaign before and after) is known as comparative brand performance.
- **Correlation analysis**: To evaluate how branding expenditures relate to shifts in brand choice or the frequency of HCP recommendations

## ***Ethical Considerations***

Anonymized expert interviews and secondary sources are the main sources used in this study. As a result, no official ethical clearance was needed. Nonetheless, ethical research best practices were adhered to:

- All respondents gave their informed consent.
- Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed.

- Intellectual property rights were upheld, and secondary data sources were properly referenced

***Limitations***

1. **Market Heterogeneity**: Regional differences in branded generic positioning techniques are significant, and this study might not have taken into consideration all sub-regional subtleties.
2. **Sample Size of Interviews**: Despite being intentional, generalizability may be limited by the number of stakeholders interviewed.
3. **Reliance on Secondary Data**: Due to proprietary limitations, some commercial datasets were unavailable, including comprehensive consumer behavior analytics and prescription audit reports.
4. **Perception Bias**: Interviews are prone to personal prejudices and might represent individual experiences instead than more general business patterns.

***Justification for Methodological Approach***

The necessity to combine behavioral insights with market facts led to the choice to use a mixed-methods methodology. Since branding is intrinsically perceptual, it necessitates a more narrative-driven approach than clinical efficacy.

However, quantitative benchmarking also helps commercial results (such market share and brand memory) in the pharmaceutical industry, much like clinical comparison studies do. Therefore, this method provides data-driven credibility and strategic depth, both of which are essential for reaching findings that can be put into practice.

***Conclusion***

The analysis of how pharmaceutical companies might reposition branded generics as power brands in India's intricate healthcare ecosystem is supported by this methodological chapter. The study offers a thorough strategy plan that is in line with realistic business requirements and restrictions by combining market intelligence, stakeholder views, and branding case evidence.

# Chapter 4: RESULT

The transformation of branded generics into power brands within India's pharmaceutical landscape is a complex process influenced by consumer behaviour, market dynamics, and regulatory factors. Our research has identified several key findings that provide insights into this transformation and highlight pathways for establishing premium brand positioning.

**Market Perception and Trust in Quality:** Our analysis indicates significant disparities in the perception of quality between branded generics and original brand-name drugs. Despite studies showing that branded generics often demonstrate similar effectiveness and safety, a prevailing distrust exists among healthcare providers and patients towards their reliability. This perception is largely shaped by the aggressive marketing of brand-name drugs, which creates an aura of trust around them. To counter this, companies must implement targeted educational campaigns that emphasize the quality and therapeutic equivalence of branded generics. By building a narrative around transparency and scientific backing, firms can start to shift the public's perception and build trust in their products.

**Pricing Strategy and Value Proposition**: The Indian market is notably price-sensitive, leading consumers to seek affordable medication options. However, our findings suggest that consumers often equate higher prices with superior quality. The data indicate that companies should develop a comprehensive value proposition that pairs competitive pricing with assurance of quality. Promotional strategies should clearly communicate the benefits of branded generics, reinforcing their value without undermining their affordability. This balance can create a compelling rationale for consumers to choose branded generics over lower-cost alternatives.

**Successful Branding Strategies:** Case studies like Dolo 650 exemplify the potential for branding ordinary molecules to achieve high market recognition and trust. Our research confirmed that effective branding strategies involve more than just attractive packaging; they also require robust marketing campaigns that optimize digital platforms to engage both healthcare professionals and consumers. By leveraging social media and targeted online advertising, companies can enhance visibility and foster brand loyalty. Furthermore, engaging consumers through campaign messages that resonate with their health needs can turn generic products into household names.

**Importance of Distribution Channels**: Our results reveal that distribution channels significantly affect brand positioning. Pharmacists, especially in rural and semi-urban settings, play a crucial role in influencing consumer choices. The study highlighted the need for companies to strengthen relationships with pharmacists through training programs, ethical incentive schemes, and reliable after-sales support. Ensuring consistent product availability through effective inventory management can enhance brand reliability and encourage pharmacists to recommend branded generics to patients confidently.

**Regulatory Landscape and Its Impact:** The regulatory environment poses several challenges for branded generics, particularly due to the market saturation of similar products and varied standards. Our analysis indicates a pressing need for clearer regulatory guidelines governing the approval process and standardization of bioequivalence testing. By streamlining these processes and enhancing oversight, regulatory bodies can help bolster consumer confidence and ease market entry for high-quality branded generics. Addressing these structural issues will enable fair competition and ensure that patients have access to safe and effective medication options.

**Engaging Healthcare Providers:** The research underscored the critical role of physicians in the prescription process, as many practitioners tend to prescribe based on brand recognition. Building relationships through educational programs and partnerships with medical professionals is essential for furthering the acceptance of branded generics. Our study indicated that companies could benefit significantly from investing in Continuing Medical Education (CME) initiatives, which not only inform healthcare providers about the effectiveness of branded generics but also encourage clinical trials that bolster scientific credibility.

Empowering Consumers through Information: The rise of digital health platforms and access to information is transforming patient behaviour in India. Consumers are increasingly taking an active role in their health decisions and becoming informed about their treatment options. Our findings suggest that pharmaceutical companies need to embrace a patient-centric strategy, focusing on educational initiatives that can empower consumers. Communicating clearly about product benefits and ensuring transparency about quality can build trust in the brand and facilitate informed decision-making among patients.

# Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

<u>The Significance of Branded Generics in India’s Pharmaceutical Landscape</u>

Branded generics are essential to India's pharmaceutical industry, which ranks among the largest in the world. As off-patent drugs marketed under different brand identities, they provide a combination of affordability and accessibility that is crucial for effective healthcare. Nevertheless, there are notable challenges within this segment of the market, such as fierce price competition, product commoditization, and weak brand loyalty. These issues contribute to the difficulties encountered in evolving branded generics into well-established brands products that are not only widely accepted but also demand a higher price due to their perceived quality and uniqueness.

<u>Let’s discuss this all together-</u>

- Understanding the Concept of Power Brands
- The Nature of Branded Generics versus Branded Drugs.
- The Role of Perceived Quality and Marketing Strategies
- Regulatory Framework and Market Dynamics
- The Impact of Price on Consumer Choices
- Distribution Strategies and Their Importance
- Engaging Healthcare Professionals for Trust-Building
- Embracing Digital Transformation in Marketing

The phrase "power brand" refers to products that hold a substantial share of the market while also earning consumer trust and allowing for premium pricing. In India, the challenge is to reframe branded generics as power brands, setting them apart from the standard generics seen in Western markets. The key characteristics of power brands consist of strong brand equity, high consumer awareness, and consistent quality. This change is vital to ensure that branded generics are seen not just as cheaper options but as valuable and effective choices. In the pharmaceutical sector, it's crucial to differentiate between branded drugs and branded generics. Branded drugs are original products that undergo significant research and are protected by patents, whereas branded generics contain the same active ingredients as these original medications once the patents expire. Although they are bioequivalent regarding effectiveness and safety, the perception of quality often results in a preference for branded drugs among both healthcare professionals and patients. This scenario highlights the necessity for pharmaceutical companies to build greater trust and credibility around branded generics.

The belief in higher quality associated with branded medications stems from intense marketing strategies and well-established practices in the pharmaceutical industry. Research indicates that healthcare professionals frequently prefer branded drugs because of their perceived reliability, even though studies show that branded generics often have similar effectiveness. As a result, pharmaceutical companies need to allocate resources toward marketing approaches that clearly convey the quality and effectiveness of their branded generics. This could include educational initiatives directed at healthcare providers, emphasizing the thorough quality assurance processes and scientific validations that support their products. The regulatory framework in India plays a crucial role in the dynamics between branded, generic, and branded generic drugs. Authorities such as the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) are responsible for drug approval and the enforcement of quality regulations. However, the combination of market oversaturation and unclear regulatory distinctions may cause a lack of confidence among consumers. Policymakers need to simplify regulations, enabling quicker approval processes and ensuring that quality assessments of branded generics meet established benchmarks. By doing this, the pharmaceutical industry can establish a stronger basis for brand loyalty with both consumers and healthcare professionals.

Pricing continues to be a crucial element in the Indian pharmaceutical industry, which is highly sensitive to costs. Although generics can lower treatment expenses, notable price variations among different brands of the same medication can create confusion for consumers. Patients frequently equate higher prices with superior quality, adding pressure on branded generics that may be offered at lower price points. Pharmaceutical companies must strike a balance by marketing their branded generics as both economical and high-quality options that effectively satisfy the expectations of consumers and healthcare providers.

Successful distribution strategies are crucial for achieving a premium market position. In India, a large percentage of buying decisions are made at the pharmacy, where pharmacists wield considerable influence. Businesses need to prioritize building strong connections with retailers by offering incentives and training initiatives that foster brand loyalty. Additionally, investing in backend logistics and inventory management can enhance reliability and guarantee that products are easily accessible to consumers when required. The way healthcare professionals prescribe medications greatly influences the effectiveness of branded generics. Ongoing education and involvement via scientific liaison programs can cultivate trust and relationships. Collaborations with hospitals and inclusion in formulary lists play a crucial role in increasing the awareness of branded generics in medical environments. By implementing focused initiatives, pharmaceutical companies can establish a reputation for credibility and dependability that leads to increased prescription rates from physicians.

With the growing popularity of digital platforms among consumers and healthcare providers, pharmaceutical firms need to adapt to this trend to improve brand visibility and engagement. Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) marketing tactics can be utilized to inform patients about the advantages and effectiveness of branded generics. By using interactive platforms and providing easy access to information, companies can enable consumers to make well-informed decisions, nurturing a sense of ownership and loyalty toward their brands.

# CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

Transforming branded generics into power brands in India's competitive pharmaceutical landscape is both a challenging and an exciting endeavour. Effective strategies must be put in place to ensure that these products gain the trust of healthcare professionals and consumers alike. Based on the research conducted, the following five recommendations emerge as crucial steps in this transformative journey:

1. **Cultivate a Distinct Brand Identity**
Creating a unique brand identity is fundamental. Pharmaceutical companies must invest effort into developing a brand that conveys reliability, quality, and emotional significance. This identity should not only resonate with healthcare professionals but also connect on a personal level with consumers, establishing a clear differentiation from competitors in the market.

2. **Build Trust through Scientific Validation**
To combat scepticism regarding the quality of branded generics, companies should prioritize the transparency of their scientific processes. Sharing clinical data that validates the therapeutic equivalence of their products to original medications is essential. This not only builds confidence among healthcare providers but also assures consumers about the efficacy of their medications.

3. **Engage and Educate Healthcare Professionals**
Active engagement with healthcare providers is critical. By collaborating with academic institutions and offering continued education, pharmaceutical companies can enhance the understanding and acceptance of branded generics. This strategic partnership helps embed their products into clinical discussions, thereby encouraging prescribers to have confidence in recommending them.

4. **Enhance the Role of Pharmacists in Recommendation**
Pharmacists are trusted healthcare professionals who play a vital role in guiding patients on prescription and over-the-counter medications. Their expertise and accessibility make them influential in brand recommendations.

Prescription vs. Over-the-Counter Markets:

- Prescription Market: Pharmacists ensure safe medication dispensing, counsel patients on usage, and navigate complex therapeutic guidelines.

- Over-the-Counter Market: Pharmacists influence patient decision-making, provide education on self-care products, and offer evidence-based information.

Pharmacists' Impact on Brand Recommendations:

- Personalized Medication Management: Pharmacists provide tailored recommendations based on patients' health histories, allergies, and medications, enhancing therapeutic outcomes.

- Patient Education and Empowerment: Pharmacists educate patients on the appropriate use of medication, demystify brand names, and promote informed choices.

Real-World Examples

- A study in the American Journal of Managed Care found that pharmacist interventions increased patient adherence rates to prescribed regimens.

- A CVS Health program showed that pharmacist-led education on OTC pain relief options resulted in a 40% increase in patients choosing appropriate medications.

5. **Leverage Digital Engagement for Broader Reach**

In today's digital age, employing online platforms for patient education is vital. Utilizing mobile applications, social media, and health-oriented websites allows pharmaceutical firms to effectively communicate the benefits of branded generics. This digital outreach not only raises awareness but also facilitates informed decision-making among consumers who seek affordable and quality

These recommendations are grounded in principles of brand management and consumer behaviour in the pharmaceutical industry. The notion of brand identity is supported by research demonstrating that a well-defined brand can lead to higher levels of consumer trust and loyalty. Brand identity is crucial in distinguishing products in a market saturated with alternatives, particularly in price-sensitive environments like India. Scientific validation aligns with the theory of credibility, which posits that consumers and healthcare providers are more likely to trust brands that provide robust evidence of product efficacy. This reflects the necessity of transparency in the pharmaceutical sector, where perceived quality significantly influences prescription behaviours. Engaging healthcare professionals through educational initiatives draws on the theory of relationship marketing. Establishing strong, ongoing relationships with prescribers fosters loyalty and can dramatically impact brand recognition and choice. Furthermore, enhancing the role of pharmacists taps into social influence theory, which highlights how individuals are affected by the opinions and recommendations of others in their community.

Lastly, leveraging digital engagement reflects the current trends in consumer behaviour, where access to information is largely driven by technology. Engaging with consumers online serves to create a more informed patient base, which in turn facilitates a more robust positive perception toward branded generics. By implementing these recommendations with a focus on strategic brand development, transparency, and effective communication, pharmaceutical companies can navigate the complexities of the Indian market and successfully transform their branded generics into power brands. This undertaking, while multifaceted, holds substantial potential to enhance overall healthcare delivery in India.

# CHAPTER 7 : CONCLUSION

The transformation of branded generics into power brands in India's pharmaceutical sector is not merely a marketing endeavour; it is a complex interplay of consumer trust, competitive strategy, regulatory frameworks, and educational outreach. Our research has illuminated the distinct landscape of India's pharmaceutical market, revealing both the challenges and opportunities inherent in repositioning branded generics amidst a rapidly evolving healthcare environment.

Considering our findings, there is a significant disconnect between the actual quality of branded generics and the public perception of these products. Despite evidence underscoring their bioequivalence to original brand-name drugs, many healthcare providers and patients still harbour reservations about the reliability of branded generics. This quality perception gap is critical to address, as it directly affects prescribing behaviours and, ultimately, patient choices in medication.

Educational initiatives aimed at healthcare professionals are essential to changing these perceptions. By investing in robust Continuing Medical Education (CME) programs, pharmaceutical companies can foster a deeper understanding of the efficacy and safety of branded generics among physicians. Engaging medical professionals in clinical research and trials further enhances their trust in these products, creating advocates who are more likely to prescribe them confidently.

Price sensitivity remains a prominent characteristic of the Indian market, where consumers often prioritize affordability. However, our research indicates that price alone is not enough to secure market share. Companies must build a compelling value proposition that not only emphasizes cost but also communicates quality, efficacy, and the overall therapeutic benefits of branded generics. Strategic marketing that positions these generics as reliable alternatives while maintaining competitive pricing can shift consumer attitudes, making them more acceptable as cost-effective solutions to healthcare needs.

Successful case studies, such as Dolo 650, demonstrate how effective branding and strategic positioning can elevate a generic product into a household name. The right combination of branding elements—including attractive packaging, targeted marketing campaigns, and leveraging digital platforms—can engage consumers effectively. By adopting these strategies, companies can create lasting brand identities that resonate with consumers' expectations and influence purchasing decisions.

Moreover, distribution channels significantly impact brand visibility and acceptance. Our findings reveal that pharmacists play a substantial role in shaping consumer choices, particularly in rural and semi-urban markets. To facilitate brand loyalty, pharmaceutical companies should invest in building strong relationships with pharmacists through training, ethical incentive programs, and reliable support systems. Ensuring consistent product availability and effective inventory management at the retail level enhances brand reliability and encourages pharmacists to recommend branded generics over unbranded counterparts.

The regulatory environment in India poses additional challenges that require urgent attention. Saturation of the market with multiple branded generics underlines the need for a cohesive regulatory framework. By establishing clearer guidelines for bioequivalence testing and product approval, regulatory bodies can ensure that only high-quality branded generics enter the market, thus bolstering consumer trust and confidence. Standardizing regulatory practices will promote fair competition and streamline market entry for quality products, ultimately benefiting both manufacturers and patients.

Another key takeaway from our research is the necessity of engaging at the consumer level. As patients increasingly turn to digital platforms for health information, pharmaceutical companies must adopt a patient-centric approach to marketing and education. Clear communication about the benefits and effectiveness of branded generics can empower consumers to make informed healthcare decisions. Transparency regarding product quality and therapeutic advantages fosters trust and can help bridge the gap between generic options and consumer inclination towards brand-name drugs.

In conclusion, transitioning from branded generics to power brands in India's pharmaceutical industry is a multifaceted endeavour that requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders involved. Pharmaceutical companies must embrace innovative marketing strategies that emphasize quality, engage healthcare professionals through educational initiatives, and focus on building direct relationships with consumers. Addressing regulatory ambiguities and enhancing distribution networks will further create an enabling environment for branded generics to flourish as trustworthy alternatives to original drugs. Ultimately, this transformation is about enhancing patient care by ensuring access to high-quality, affordable medications and fostering a healthcare ecosystem that prioritizes transparency, education, and collaboration.

The path forward presents numerous opportunities for impact and change. By reimagining the relationship between branded generics and consumer trust, pharmaceutical companies can create enduring power brands that resonate in India’s competitive market landscape. Fulfilling this potential requires a commitment to ethical marketing, rigorous quality control, and continuous engagement with healthcare providers and patients alike. This holistic approach will not only benefit individual brands but will also contribute significantly to the overall enhancement of healthcare delivery in India, ultimately leading to improved health outcomes and patient satisfaction across the country.

# CHAPTER 8: REFERENCE


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