

**CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ON MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS
INVOLVED IN E-PHARMACY**

Dissertation Submitted to



The IIHMR University, Jaipur

For the partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

In

Pharmaceutical Management

By

Pooja Gupta

Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr. Sandeep Narula

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled **Consumer Behaviour on Marketing Mix Elements Involved in E-Pharmacy** is 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 Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.

Pooja Gupta

30th June 2021

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Pooja Gupta** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA (Pharmaceutical Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur has successfully completed her/his internship at Getwell Oncology during March 22, 2021 to June 19, 2021.

Place: Gurgaon

Rekha Singh

(Senior Product Manager)

Date: 30-June-2021

Getwell Oncology

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that dissertation titled **Consumer Behaviour on Marketing Mix Elements Involved in E-Pharmacy** is a record of the research work undertaken by Pooja Gupta in partial fulfilment 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/her approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.

Dr. Sandeep Narula

(Faculty Guide)

Date:

Dr. Saurabh Kumar

Dean SPM

IIHMR University, Jaipur

ABSTRACT

E-pharmacies have emerged as new trend in the recent year. It seems to be a whole new take on the offline pharmacies. During this pandemic the online pharmacies plays a vital role during lockdown in India. These e-pharmacies took the order by uploading prescription which is then verified by the registered pharmacist. For this project we tried to find out about the consumer behaviour towards online pharmacies or E-pharmacies. During this COVID-19, a global pandemic, the E-pharmacies come out as an exceptionally favoured means to purchase of medicines online, mostly because of quarantine and lockdown introduced by many countries to avert the spread of the virus. Also the use of smartphones has only fuel this boom (using e-pharmacies). Due to the current situation people are using internet more to know about their health issues, and carry out self-diagnosis and purchase health-related products & services, where we cannot trust the reliability of the sources. In India, existing E-pharmacies have played a major role during COVID-19. As stated by Dharma Sheth (Founder of Pharm Easy), there is a huge demand for the medicines that are used for cough & cold, common flu, multivitamins, immunity boosters from these e-pharmacies due to COVID-19 surge and the lockdown. Solely because everyone wanted to hoard these medicines irrespective of whether they actually need them or not. Though all the online pharmacies adhere to the guidelines of essential services during pandemic by Government of India.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is a gratification to express my profound sense of thanks and gratitude to my mentor and guide **Ms. Rekha Singh**, Senior Product Manager, Getwell Oncology. Her dedication and keen interest above all her overwhelming attitude to help me had been solely and mainly responsible for completing my work. Her timely advice, meticulous scrutiny, scholarly advice and scientific approach have helped me to a very great extent to accomplish the task.

I owe a deep sense of gratitude to **Dr. Sandeep Narula**, Associate Professor, IIHMR University, Jaipur for his keen interest on my dissertation at every step of my research. His prompt inspirations, timely suggestions with kindness, enthusiasm and dynamism has enabled me to complete my thesis.

I thank profusely all the staff members of **Getwell Oncology, Gurgaon**, for their kind help and co-operation throughout my study period.

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INTRODUCTION

E-pharmacy which is also known as online pharmacy, internet pharmacy or mail-order pharmacy, these are known so because they operates over the internet network and collects order online and sends them to customers through mail, shipping companies or online web portals. In today's world internet makes everything easy and convenient. Wherever a patient is all they have to do is register themselves on any online pharmacy and upload their prescription and make a purchase. They will get their order at their doorstep.

When customer place their order on an online platform, their request is then sent to a physical retail store. There the prescription is then validated and verified by the pharmacists and after the verification the order is accepted for fulfilment. The pharmacy then receives the order and then fulfils the order which are compliant to the drugs and cosmetics act. Consumers can select drugs or medicines on their websites or applications. Prescription can be in the form of e-prescription or you can upload the scanned image of the prescription on their website or application. All the orders received on e-pharmacies or online pharmacies are only transferred to the registered pharmacy. These registered pharmacies then verify the order against the prescription and then prepares the order.

In this Covid-19 era, we have seen a surge in E-commerce, which includes online shopping, and this also includes sales of prescription as well as non-prescription medicines. More than two decades, the idea of online pharmacies has been a trend worldwide. In the year 2008, approximately 2986 online pharmacies are operating globally, and these numbers are only on the rising as of today. In recent times, Indian consumers have also began using these online services. Laws regarding E-commerce are ill-defined and subject to varied interpretations. Various laws such as the Information Technology Act, 2000; the Drug and Cosmetics Act, 1940; Drugs and Cosmetic Rules, 1945; Pharmacy Act, 1948; and the Indian Medical Act, 1956, govern the online pharmacies in India. Many of these law includes Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, under which drug advertisements are controlled, were set down when the use of computers or the internet was not common. However, laws do exist for e-pharmacies of online pharmacies in India. According to the laws in India, only registered pharmacies can sold the medicines. These pharmacies have a retail license and a registered pharmacist on a payroll. Except for the sales of over the counter medicines, a prescription is necessary

for the medicines ordered on e-pharmacies. Orders are only applicable in the areas where the pharmacy retail license applies. All the medicines and prescription need to be verified and certified by the registered pharmacist before their delivery. However, there is uncertainty about the shipping of medicines from one state to another state in India and if a pharmacist is allowed to collect money before the delivery of the medicines. Export of medicines directly to the customers is highly regulated in India. Also there are no rules to recognise whether the prescription is written by a doctor who is registered in India. A patient cannot make a purchase of Schedule X drug without a prescription. It is essential to maintain a customer record which should include the patient's name, doctor, address, for every Schedule H and Schedule X medicines sold by the pharmacies. Trade of banned medicine, selling of medicines to minors without prescription, and selling medicines at a cost higher than its retail price are prohibited. Additional technological requirements related to privacy, cyber laws, data protection, and internet advertising are required to be complied by these pharmacies.

For this project we tried to find out about the consumer behaviour towards online pharmacies or E-pharmacies. During this COVID-19, a global pandemic, the E-pharmacies emerged as an extremely popular way to make a purchase of medicines online, mostly because of quarantine measures introduced by many countries to prevent the spread of the virus. The use of smartphones has only fuel this boom (using e-pharmacies). Due to the current situation people are using internet more to know about their health issues, and carry out self-diagnosis and purchase health-related products & services, where we cannot trust the reliability of the sources. In India, existing E-pharmacies have played a major role during COVID-19. As stated by Dharma Sheth (Founder of Pharm Easy), there is a huge demand for the medicines that are used for cough & cold, common flu, multivitamins, immunity boosters from these e-pharmacies due to COVID-19 surge and the lockdown. Solely because everyone wanted to hoard these medicines irrespective of whether they actually need them or not. Though all the online pharmacies adhere to the guidelines of essential services during pandemic by Government of India.

Also Anupam Mishra, who is a Pharma Analyst at Global Data says that the factors like huge discounts on medicines and healthcare products does contribute to the rise in demand for these e-pharmacies like 1mg, Netmed, PharmEasy etc.

In 2019, the market share of e-pharmacies was about \$20 billion and in which 47% shares were only contributed by the essential medicines which is going to be evidently increase by 60% before 2023. *(Source: Statistic Portal Statista)

1mg, PharmEasy, Netmed, Medlife, Pharmasafe, are the major e-pharmacies which operate online. 30% of the market shares in Indian e-pharmacy market is owned by Medlife which makes it the leader of this segment.

However, In India, the e-pharmacy market is still in the blooming stage and it is not fully developed yet when it is correlated to other online shopping sites. Despite this, the online pharmacy market in India shows the capability to set off as the huge industry in the future.

Let's have a look at the advantages and disadvantages which contribute to the market of online pharmacies in India.

Advantages:

- The number of smart phone users have increased significantly in the past years
- There is increased internet penetration in India
- There have been a competitive pricing strategy on online pharmacies
- There is ease of access
- Heavy discounts provided on the online pharmacies
- It is efficient when it comes to time and money
- Due to ease of access, it is more convenient
- All the online pharmacies have refund policies
- There is a wide variety of health products and medicines available on online portal
- Also it follows social distancing during COVID-19 pandemic

Disadvantages:

- There is no physical evaluation in place
- There are some safeguard issues
- There can be chances of fraud
- E-pharmacies encourage self-medication
- There can be delayed delivery of the medicines in case of emergency
- There is a probability of misdiagnosis
- People can misuse certain drugs
- Misuse can lead to Drug Addiction
- There can be adulteration of the drugs
- The cycle of Doctor → Pharmacist → Patient can break
- There can be negative impact on the offline pharmacies business

Some of the largest conglomerates of India and many MNC e-commerce companies are eyeing over to secure a position in the sector.

Amazon, the world's largest e-commerce company, is considering a \$100 million investment in Apollo Drugstore, the world's largest branded pharmacy chain. In August 2020, one of the main online retailers partnered with its largest seller Cloudtail India to begin its own prescription drug delivery service in Bengaluru. Reliance Retail bought a majority share in Chennai-based Netmeds for Rs. 620 crores in early 2020, while Tata Group is in talks with 1mg.

The surge in this market is due to the increased sales of integrated healthcare platforms, as well as their linked services such as online consultations, remote diagnostics, and even at-home-care services.

Research Objective:

The objective of the present research pursuit is to understand the impact of consumer behaviour towards e-pharmacies.

Following are the key objectives of the research:

1. To find the perspective of consumer towards telemedicine or e-pharmacies.
2. To find if we can enter telemedicine with our own website domain in future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- ❖ In her article "Online Pharmacies: A boon or a bane?" Chetna Desai analyzes online pharmacies in India and if they're a boon or a curse. She spoke of significance of creating awareness about the relevance of testing the validity of both the service provider and the product, as well as preventing site offers drugs without a legal prescription. Online pharmacies that really are trusted have well-defined safety standards, clear privacy and security guidelines, a recognized physical address, and a licenced pharmacist on board. Clinicians must become familiar with a few reputable and legitimate online pharmacies that they might recommend their patients to. For better patient management and also to avoid the consequences of self-medication, both participants has to be aware of the patient's online orders of medicines. To develop a symbiotic physician-pharmacist-patient connection, online pharmacies must take into account the interests and inclinations for their customers. Digital safeguards, along with adequate government regulation, can help consumers reap the great benefits of these pharmacies while minimizing the inherent risks.

- ❖ Ravinder K. Sah, Rakhamaji D. Chandane, Umesh Suranagi, Sachin Manocha, Ajita Kapur, and Priyanka Hotha talk about online pharmacy awareness and consumer behaviour. They discussed how online pharmacies provide a simple way to obtain a wide selection of drugs in their article "Awareness and Behavioural Outlook toward Online Pharmacy Services among Consumers in Delhi, India: A Pilot Survey." These have a number of advantages, including reduced costs, easier accessibility, and delivery to your house. Online pharmacies can have drawbacks, such as a lack of engagement with physicians, the delivery of drugs without prescriptions, and the sale of defective medications, among others. In India, there is a dearth of research on consumer awareness of internet pharmacies. As a result, a study in Delhi, India was designed to analyse customer awareness and behaviour about the usage of online pharmacy services. Research methods: A questionnaire-based cross-sectional study was done to measure consumer awareness and behaviour regarding the use of internet platforms.

- ❖ Nicola J Gray discusses how time and technology are changing, as well as how the pharmaceutical industry is evolving. She explored the topic of buying drugs online in the article "The Evolution of Online Pharmacies," which has been a source of concern for pharmacists and the larger healthcare community over the past decade. Many critics have noted linked hazards and benefits for persons seeking drugs, with or without a prescription, via the Internet. Peer-reviewed literature and related commentary are studied in this review study to demonstrate the evolution of online pharmacy. While it is acknowledged that counterfeit drugs and the increased usage of consumer medicine information on the internet are directly related to this problem, these concerns are outside the scope of this research. The information presented here reflects a variety of viewpoints on customer motives and experiences while purchasing drugs online. Negative opinions of online drug distribution are highlighted, such as the acquisition of prohibited medicines without a prescription and the absence of information provided to supplement the product. There's also a strong seam that documents good practise in internet pharmacy, dating back to the anarchic pre-regulation period. While the advantages of 24/7 access and privacy appear to be well-supported, the cost benefits are more debatable.
- ❖ H. Singh, A. Majumdar, and N. Malviya (2020) investigated the fundamental difficulties and obstacles surrounding internet pharmacy, as well as how it may benefit society and the pharmaceutical industry in a pandemic situation. The influence of E-Pharmacy on society in COVID-19, the Pharma sector in a pandemic crisis, and the impact of COVID -19 on the pharma sector were all investigated by the researchers.
- ❖ The FICCI E-Pharmacy white paper, E-Pharmacies at COVID-19 frontline (August 2020), highlighted digital health in India as a critical need. They also expanded on the consumer perspective on purchasing drugs during a pandemic, trends toward E-Consultation during a pandemic, and government policy on E-commerce during a pandemic. (<http://ficci.in/spdocument/23316/FICCI-ePharmacyWhitepaper.pdf>)
- ❖ Saraswat S, Jain R K, and Awasthi S. (2020) investigated the benefits and risks to people's health posed by India's contentious internet pharmacies. The researchers stated that the government should work on developing a policy and regulatory framework to supervise the operations of online pharmacies in order to overcome

the challenge posed by online pharmacies to Indian patients, limit risk, and increase benefits

- ❖ The impact of COVID-19 on the e-Pharma industry was explored in the E-Pharmacy Market Global Research Report 2020. According to the analysis, between 2020 and 2025, the E-Pharmacy market would grow at a significant rate. The influence of COVID-19 on the global economy and the E-Pharma business is also examined in the report. (<https://www.marketresearchfuture.com/reports/epharmacy-market-6615>)
- ❖ S.Priya Nair and Anil Middha (2019) revealed the outcomes of a survey to assess the online drug purchasing patterns of young people across India, as well as their understanding and perceptions about e-pharmacy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the secondary research of consumer behaviour on marketing mix elements involved in e-pharmacy, we have reviewed MEDLINE, EMBASE, SCOPUS, Econlit and PubMed. For this conduction of review, screening of title/abstracts and methodology were done. Later on, full review followed by result and discussion were made.

For the primary research of impact of consumer behaviour on marketing mix elements involved in e-pharmacy, we have made a google form which comprises of ten questions on marketing mix elements. Our targeted sample size was 150. We targeted general public as our target audience. They include colleagues, prospects, friends, and family.

In our google form, we include both close-ended and open-ended questions. A closed-ended question includes a predefined list of options for answer, while open-ended questions asks the respondents to provide an answer in their own words.

Methods For Smapling:

1. Simple Random Sampling:

In this method every individual is chosen completely by circumstantially and every member from the population has an equal chance, or probability, of being selected. This sampling method is meant to be totally an unbiased representation of group. For eg: Say there are 30 employees that are chosen out of a company of 300 employees. In this case, the population is all 300 employees and the sample is random because each employee has an equal chance of being chosen. This type of random sampling is done to conduct a randomized control tests for blind experiments.

3. Systematic Sampling:

Systematic Sampling is a probability sampling method in which a random sample is selected from a larger population, with a fixed interval of time. This fixed interval of time is also known as Sampling Interval. It is calculated by dividing the population size by the desired sample size. Some other advantages includes, there is a low probability of contaminating data and it also eliminates the phenomena of clustered selection. However, it also has some disadvantages which includes over or under representation of particular patterns and also there is a significant risk of data manipulation.

4. Stratified Random Sampling:

Researchers can use stratified random sampling to create a sample population that best represents the total population being researched. This sample splits the entire population into strata, or homogeneous groupings. It also requires the selection of data at random from a full population, so each conceivable sample has an equal chance of occurring.

5. Clustered Sampling:

Cluster Sampling splits the population into groups, and then the samples are taken from these clusters which are also the small groups. It is a random statistical measure. Cluster sampling is generally used by marketing groups and professionals. It is two-step method. The first step includes the segregation of the whole population into the groups which are also known as clusters. The second step includes the selection of random samples from these clusters. The primary advantage of this method is that it is a simple manual process that saves money and time. This process also allows to increase the sample size. However, the key disadvantage is that there is a larger sampling error associated with it, which makes it less precise than the other methods of sampling.

For this dissertation I have used Simple Random Sampling, where I have randomly collected samples among population. The collected sample size is 240.

Every data analysis requires some statistical techniques. The most important Statistical techniques are as follows:

1. Mean:

The arithmetic mean, sometimes known as "the average," is computed by adding all of the numbers in a list and then dividing that total by the number of items on the list.

2. Standard Deviation:

A low standard deviation system suggests that more data lines up with the mean, whereas a high standard deviation system means that more data lines up with the mean. It may be used to quickly determine the scattering of data points.

3. Regression:

Regression is a simulation of the relationship between the dependent and explanatory variables, which is typically represented by a scatter plot. It also reveals

whether the connection is healthy or unhealthy. It also aids in the analysis of patterns over time.

4. Sample Size Determination:

Sample size determination is the action of choosing the number of observations or the replicas which are included in a statistical sample. Here the strategy is to determine the right size for a sample to be precise.

5. Hypothesis Testing:

Hypothesis Testing is also known as **t testing**, it evaluates if a certain assumption is actually true for a data set or a population. In data analysis, result of hypothesis test is considered statistically significant only if the results could not have happened by any random chance.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

The qualitative research method, often known as the Market Research Method, is centred on gathering information through open-ended and conversational discussion. It entails gathering and analysing non-numerical data in order to better understand thoughts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to capture in-depth perceptions of a problem or to generate fresh research ideas..

Following are the research methods for qualitative research:

1. Observations:

In this strategy, you keep thorough field notes of everything you see, hear, and encounter.

2. Interviews:

In interviews you personally ask question to the people in one-one conversation.

3. Focus Groups:

In focus group, within a targeted market, a limited group of people are selected (mostly from 6-10 people are there). Within these group we ask questions and try to generate discussion among the group. The main objective of a focus group is to find answers to the why, what and how questions.

4. Surveys:

In surveys, a questionnaire is distributed with both close ended and open ended question. Then there is data analysis from the answers given to the question

5. Secondary Research:

In secondary research we collect data on the basis of previous published texts like journals, research papers, etc., videos, audios, images, recordings, etc.

For my dissertation I did survey among general public to know more about consumer behaviour for online pharmacies.

There are five steps included in Qualitative analysis. These are as follows:

1. In the first step we prepare and organize the data.
2. After the first step, we review our data to examine if there is any repetition of data or a pattern. Then we explore the data so that we can find more new ideas.
3. According to our previous idea, we set codes for data to categorize it.
4. In this step we assign these codes to the data.
5. In the last step we link codes into connected theme.

Consent:

At the start of the questionnaire, people are asked about their consent, and if they choose to participate, they can go ahead with the questions and if they are not interested they can exit the questionnaire window. The following is the written consent before every questionnaire:

“My name is Pooja Gupta, a student of IIHMR University. I am conducting this survey as a part of my dissertation project needed for the completion of my post-graduation degree. I am requesting you to provide your views on "CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ON MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN E-PHARMACY".

I hereby assure you that the information provided by you will be confidential. I am looking forward to your co-operation to help a budding student.

Mail Id - poojagupta.j19@iihmr.in”

RESULT

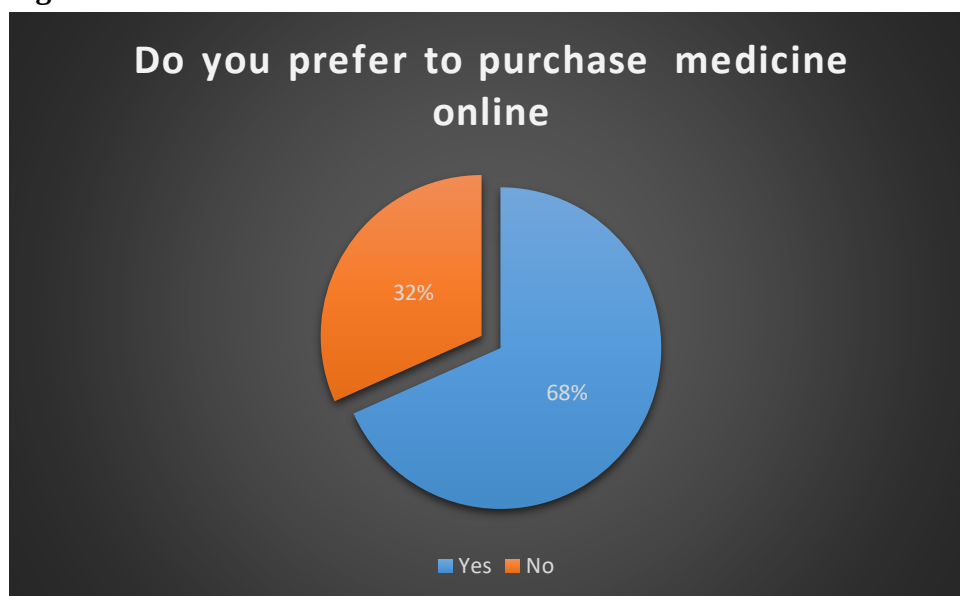
The result of the survey is as follows:

Q1. Do you prefer to purchase medicine online?

Table No- 1

Yes	No
164	76

Fig- 1



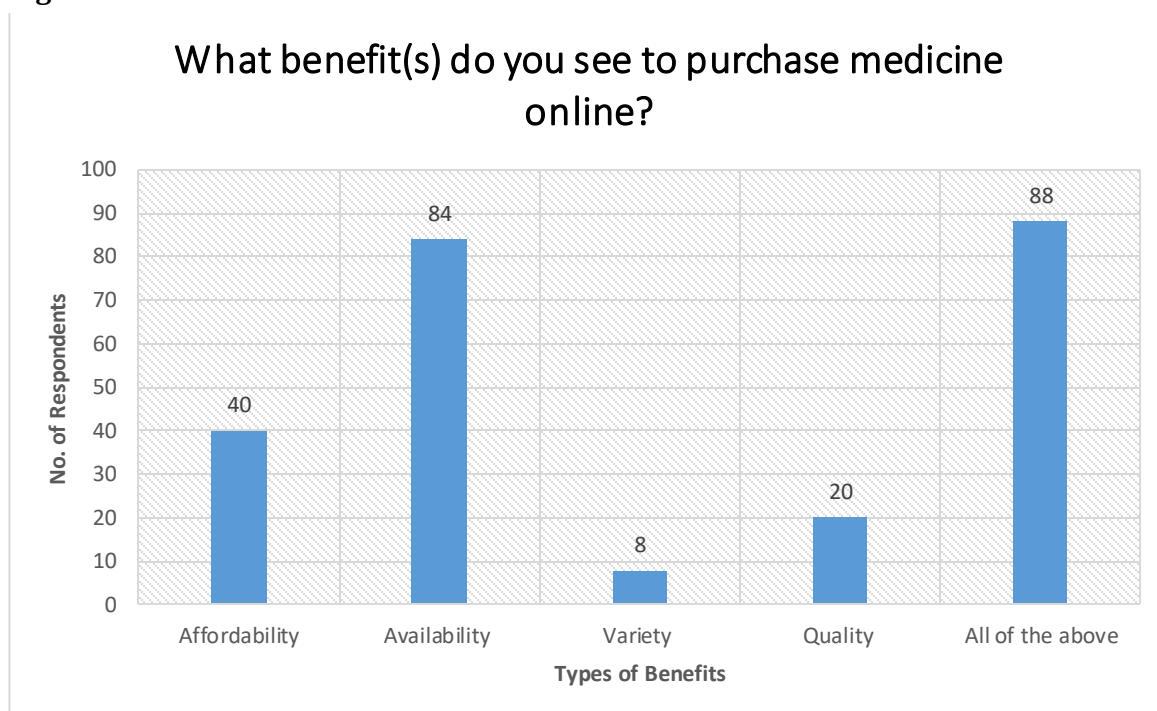
When it is asked if they prefer to purchase medicine online than **164** people said **YES** which accounts for 68% of the surveyed population and **76** people said **NO** which aggregates to 32% of the population.

Q2. What benefit(s) do you see to purchase medicine online?

Table No-2

Affordability	Availability	Variety	Quality	All of the above
40	84	8	20	88

Fig: 2



People were asked about the benefits they seek while making a purchase from an e-pharmacy. They have to choose within Affordability, Availability, Variety, Quality, or All of the above.

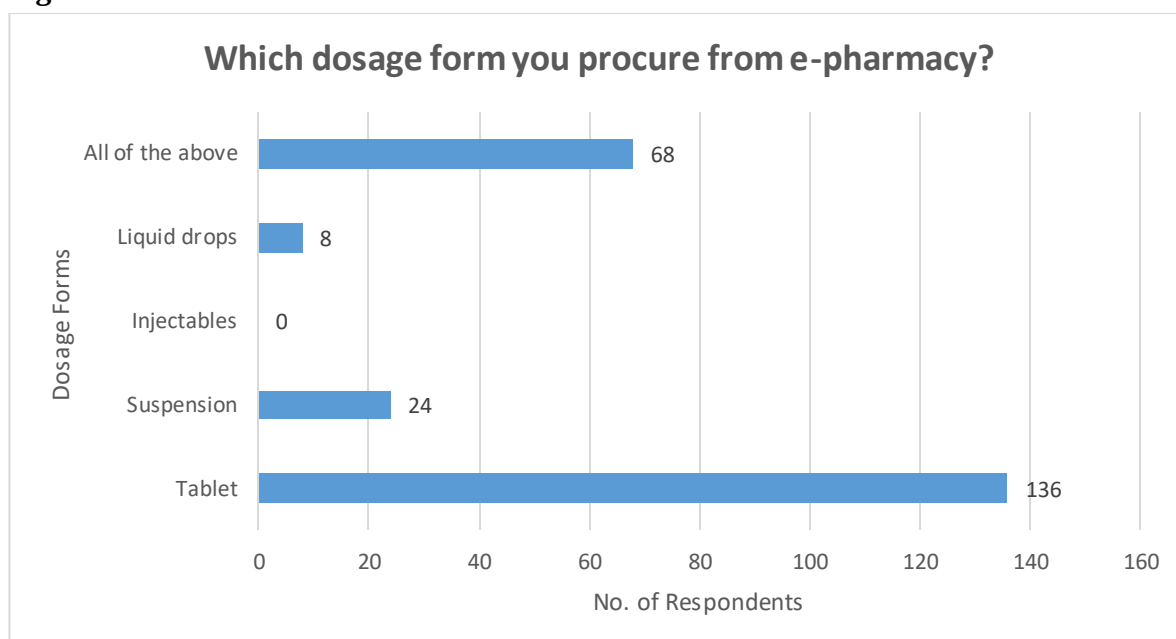
Where, **88** people chose all of the above option, **84** people make a purchase only because of Availability, **40** people see Affordability as a benefit while purchasing medicine, **20** people want only a quality product, and **8** people want to have a look at variety on e-pharmacies.

Q3. Which dosage form you procure from e-pharmacy?

Table No- 3

Tablet	Suspension	Injectables	Liquid drops	All of the above
136	24	0	8	68

Fig: 3



There are variety of dosage forms available on e-pharmacies. We purchase them according to our need. This question is asked in order to know which dosage form people buy from these online stores.

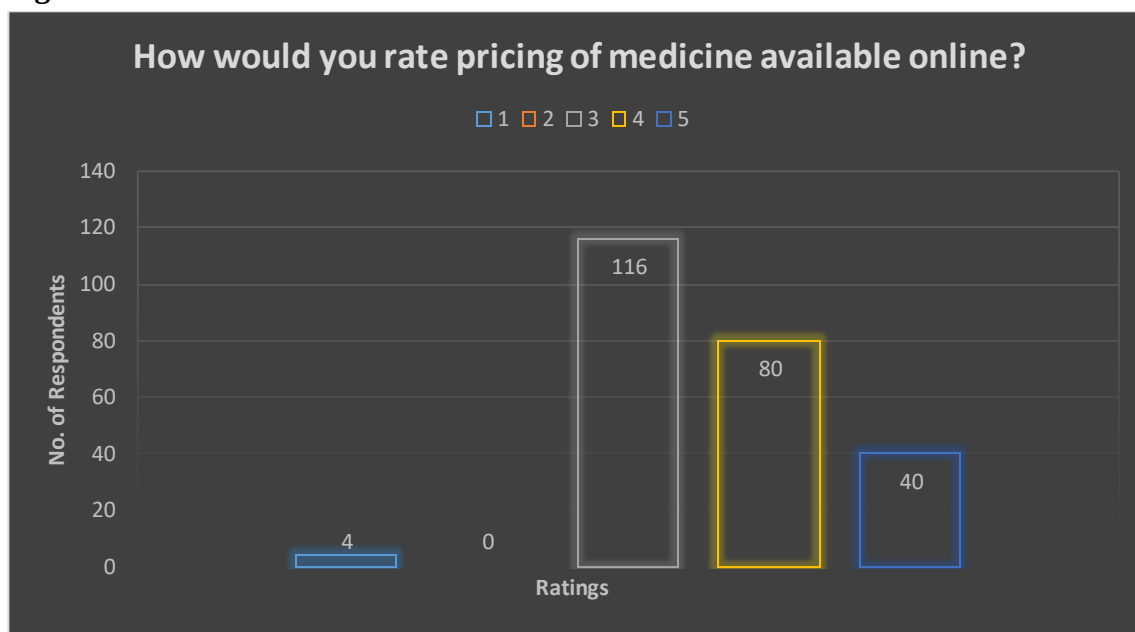
136 people buy tablets or solid dosage form from these e-pharmacies which is highest number among all, **68** peoples said they buy all of the above dosage forms which are Liquid drops, Injection, Suspension, and Tablets. **24** people likes to buy suspension, **8** people buys liquid drops, and **0** people buys injection from e-pharmacies.

Q4. How would you rate pricing of medicine available online?

Table no-4

1	2	3	4	5
4	0	116	80	40

Fig: 4



Generally, e-pharmacies put discount on the medicines or their might be a flash for the time being. Sometime as a marketing strategy they also put money in the e-wallet of the account holder to lure them into purchasing medicine.

Based on this, we asked people about how would they like to rate the pricing available online. It was a linear scale rating from 1 to 5, where 1 being the least rated and 5 being the highest rated.

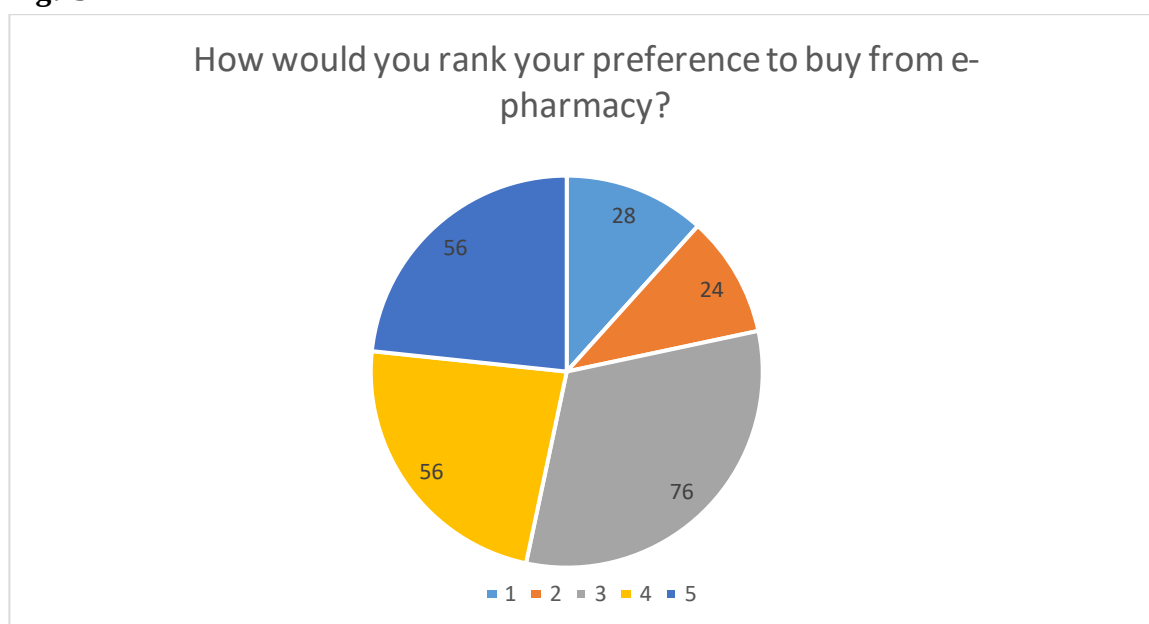
116 people give **3-rating** to the pricing model, **80** people give **4-rating**, **40** people give **5-rating**, and **4** people give **1-rating** to the pricing available at E-pharmacies.

Q5. How would you rank your preference to buy from e-pharmacy?

Table No-5

1	2	3	4	5
28	24	76	56	56

Fig: 5



Since e-pharmacies are in stiff competition with the offline stores. It is very essential to know the buying behaviour of a customer. So I asked about the preference of people, how they would rank their preference to buy from e-pharmacy.

It was a linear scale rating from 1 to 5, where 1 being the least score and the 5 being the highest score.

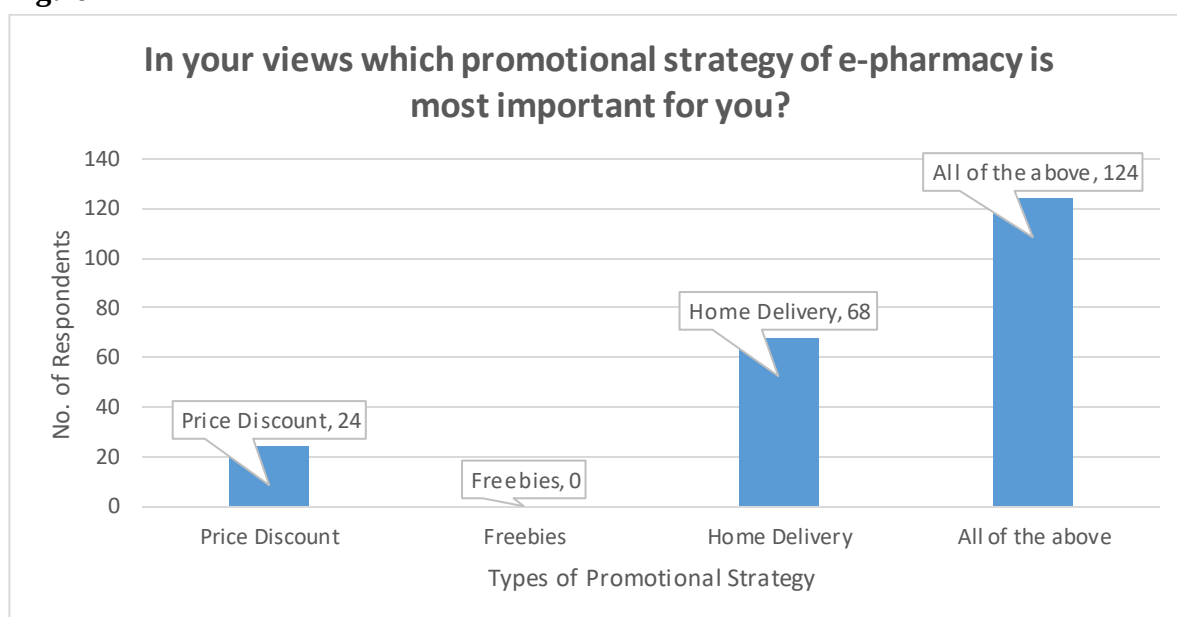
76 people rank their preference a **3-rating**, 56 people for both **4 & 5-rating**, 28 people gives **1-rating**, and 24 people gives **2-rating**.

Q6. In your views which promotional strategy of e-pharmacy is most important for you?

Table no- 6

Price Discount	Freebies	Home Delivery	All of the above
24	0	68	124

Fig: 6



As a promotional strategy, e-pharmacies took help of various tools like home delivery, freebies, price discount to increase their customer base and sales. Our motto was to understand whether these strategies really work for the customers.

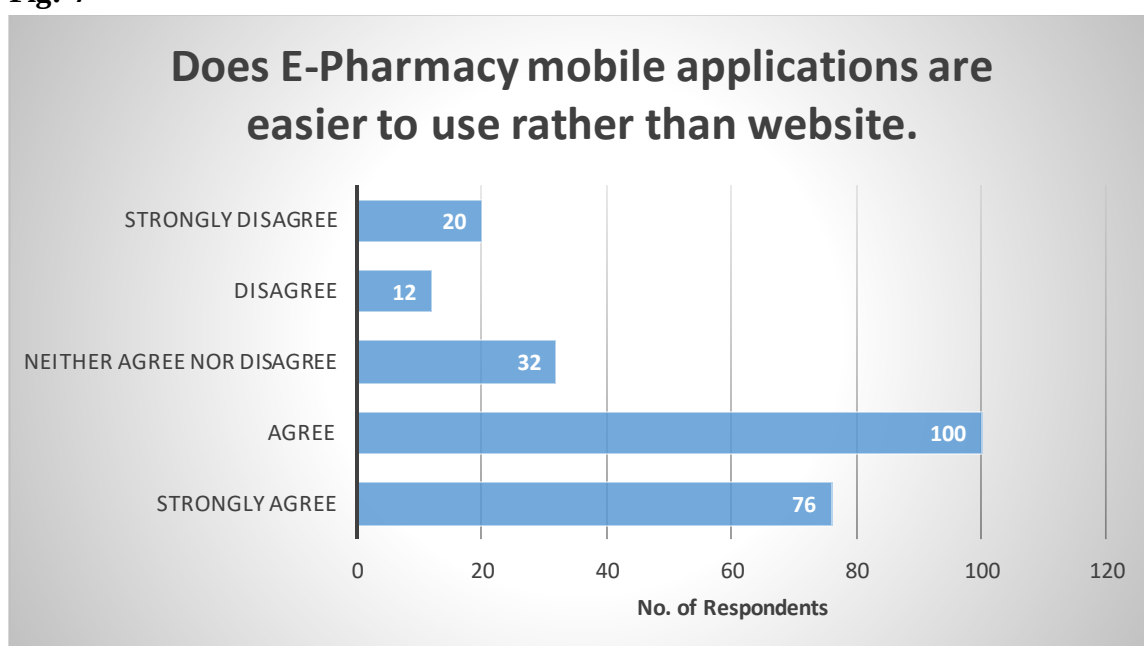
124 people marked all of the above which includes Price Discount, Freebies, and Home Delivery. **68** people chose Home Delivery as an important promotional tool, **24** people give importance to Price Discount, and **0** people think that freebies are important.

Q7. Does E-Pharmacy mobile applications are easier to use rather than website?

Table No-7

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
76	100	32	12	20

Fig: 7



We all know that mobile and website user face are different. The ease of using application does also differ from customer to customer. I asked people if mobile applications are easier to use rather than a website.

This question was on a linear scale rating where you have to choose between Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Here very few people disagree with the statement.

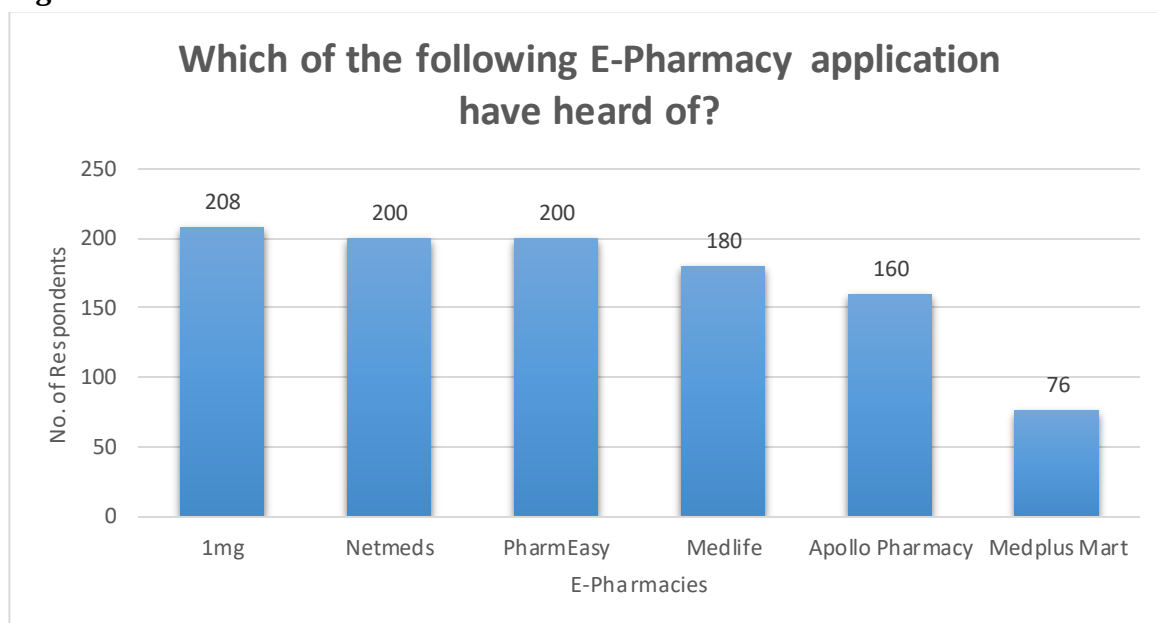
100 respondents **agree** with statement, **76** respondents **strongly agree** with the statement, **32** respondents **neither agree nor disagree**, **20** respondents **strongly disagree**, and only **12** respondents **disagree** with the statement.

Q8. Which of the following E-Pharmacy application have heard of?

Table No- 8

1mg	Netmeds	PharmEasy	Medlife	Apollo Pharmacy	Medplus Mart
208	200	200	180	160	76

Fig: 8



The choice were given between various famous online pharmacies like 1mg, Netmeds, Pharmeasy, Medlife, Apollo Pharmacy, Medplus Mart.

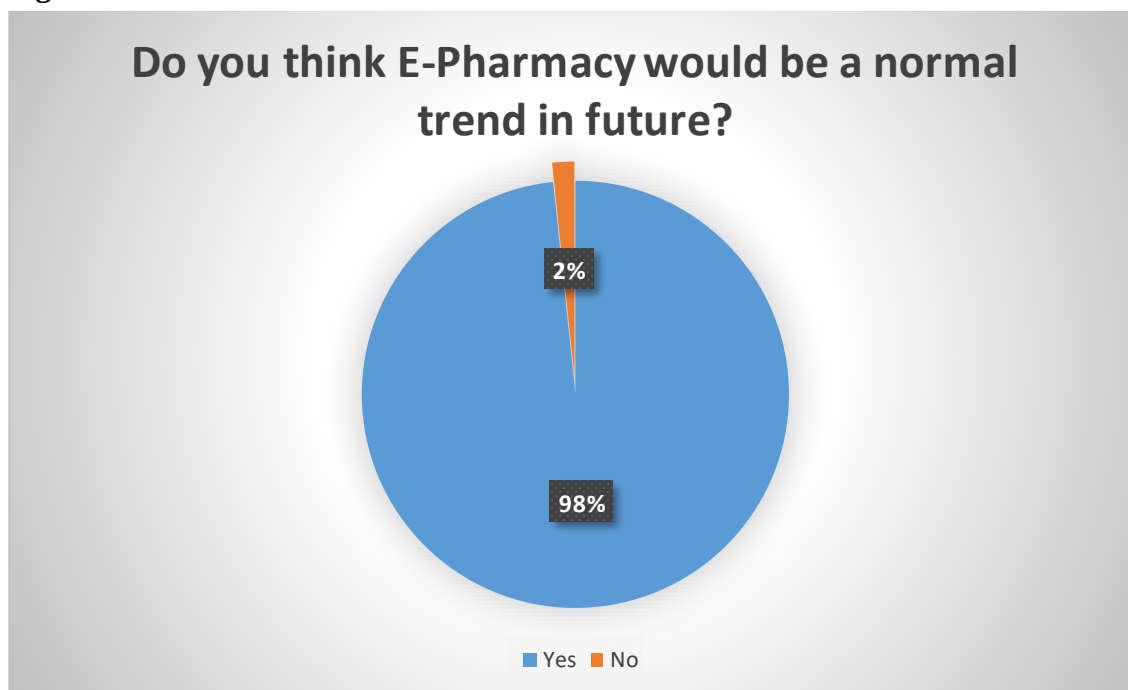
208 respondents knows about **1mg**, **200** respondents knows about **Netmeds** & **Pharmeasy**, **180** respondents knows about **Medlife**, **160** respondents knows about **Apollo Pharmacy**, **76** respondents knows about **Medplus Mart**.

Q9. Do you think E-Pharmacy would be a normal trend in future? If Yes, kindly comment?

Table No- 9

Yes	No
236	4

Fig: 9



As we have seen in these Covid-19 pandemic, people tend towards online shopping more during lockdown. Same is the case with E-pharmacies. The question focuses if the e-pharmacies will become a trend in the future.

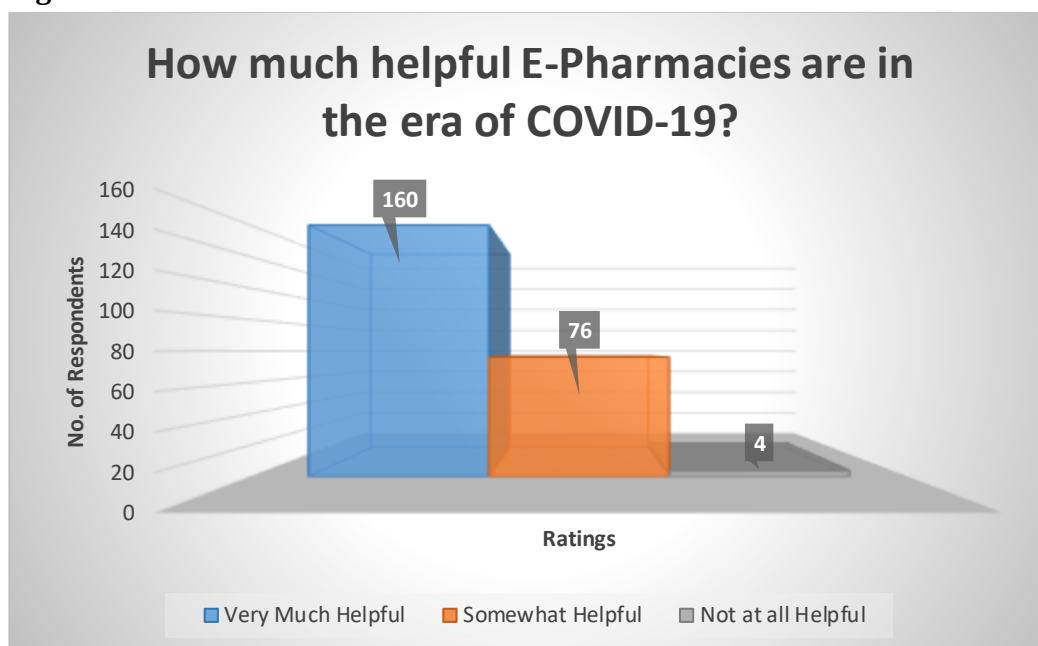
98% respondents thinks that yes E-pharmacies will be a trend in the future, while only **2%** respondents thinks that e-pharmacies won't be a trend.

Q10. How much helpful E-Pharmacies are in the era of COVID-19?

Table No-10

Very Much Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not at all Helpful
160	76	4

Fig: 10



During the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people depend on online stores due to lockdown, and e-pharmacies proven to be a boon during these difficult times.

160 respondents find e-pharmacies very much helpful, **76** respondents thought that e-pharmacies are somewhat helpful, and only **4** respondents thought they are not at all helpful.

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to know the consumer behaviour regarding e-pharmacies, what are the perceptions among people when it comes to online pharmacies, do they trust enough to make a purchase again and again from the e-pharmacies. E-pharmacies have emerged as new trend in the recent year. It seems to be a whole new take on the offline pharmacies. During this pandemic the online pharmacies plays a vital role during lockdown in India. These e-pharmacies took the order by uploading prescription which is then verified by the registered pharmacist. For this project we tried to find out about the consumer behaviour towards online pharmacies or E-pharmacies. During this COVID-19, a global pandemic, the E-pharmacies emerged as an extremely popular way to make a purchase of medicines online, mostly because of quarantine measures introduced by many countries to prevent the spread of the virus. The use of smartphones has only fuel this boom (using e-pharmacies). Due to the current situation people are using internet more to know about their health issues, and carry out self-diagnosis and purchase health-related products & services, where we cannot trust the reliability of the sources. In India, existing E-pharmacies have played a major role during COVID-19.

When it is asked if they prefer to purchase medicine online than 68% of the surveyed population and 76 people said NO which aggregates to 32% of the population. Respondents says that they choose e-pharmacy because of availability and affordability of the medicines while making a purchase from e-pharmacies. There are variety of dosage forms available on e-pharmacies. We purchase them according to our need. Majority of respondents purchase solid dosage forms, suspensions, liquid drops rather than buying injectable. Generally, e-pharmacies put discount on the medicines or their might be a flash for the time being. Sometime as a marketing strategy they also put money in the e-wallet of the account holder to lure them into purchasing medicine. 116 people give 3-rating to the pricing model, 80 people give 4-rating, 40 people give 5-rating, and 4 people give 1-rating to the pricing available at E-pharmacies.

Since e-pharmacies are in stiff competition with the offline stores. It is very essential to know the buying behaviour of a customer. So I asked about the preference of people, how they would rank their preference to buy from e-pharmacy. 76 people rank their preference a 3-rating, 56 people for both 4 & 5-rating, 28 people gives 1-rating, and 24 people gives 2-rating. As a promotional strategy, e-pharmacies took help of various tools like home delivery, freebies, price discount to increase their customer base and sales. Our motto was to understand whether these strategies really work for the customers.

124 people marked all of the above which includes Price Discount, Freebies, and Home Delivery. 68 people chose Home Delivery as an important promotional tool, 24 people give importance to Price Discount, and 0 people think that freebies are important.

We all know that mobile and website user face are different. The ease of using application does also differ from customer to customer. I asked people if mobile applications are easier to use rather than a website. 100 respondents agree with statement, 76 respondents strongly agree with the statement, 32 respondents neither agree nor disagree, 20 respondents strongly disagree, and only 12 respondents disagree with the statement.

The choice were given between various famous online pharmacies like 1mg, Netmeds, Pharmeasy, Medlife, Apollo Pharmacy, Medplus Mart.

208 respondents knows about 1mg, 200 respondents knows about Netmeds & Pharmeasy, 180 respondents knows about Medlife, 160 respondents knows about Apollo Pharmacy, 76 respondents knows about Medplus Mart.

As we have seen in these Covid-19 pandemic, people tend towards online shopping more during lockdown. Same is the case with E-pharmacies. The question focuses if the e-pharmacies will become a trend in the future.

98% respondents thinks that yes E-pharmacies will be a trend in the future, while only 2% respondents thinks that e-pharmacies won't be a trend.

During the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people depend on online stores due to lockdown, and e-pharmacies proven to be a boon during these difficult times.

160 respondents find e-pharmacies very much helpful, 76 respondents thought that e-pharmacies are somewhat helpful, and only 4 respondents thought they are not at all helpful.

There are some advantages of e-pharmacies:

1. You do not have to go out to buy medicines
2. You don't have wait in the line to make a purchase
3. Purchasing medicines from these online pharmacies save money.
4. E-pharmacies provide privacy and confidentiality to the customers.
5. Patients can have a direct online consultation with the doctor by taking prior appointment.
6. E-pharmacies offers wide ranges of variety of medicine at one click.

7. These online pharmacies also provides in-depth information about the medicine and the illness related to the medicine.

However there are some more disadvantages of the e-pharmacies. These are as follows:

1. E-pharmacies lack physical evaluation capability.
2. There no-one you can contact face to face on online pharmacy if you incur any problems.
3. Some of the Schedule H drugs can be dispensed without any prescription.
4. The e-pharmacies might not protect your personal and financial information.

Suggestion for e-pharmacies:

1. E-pharmacy portals can provide the auto suggestion features which can also include query suggestion. This feature can fasten the search process.
2. They can ease the search by providing the facility to make a search using symptoms or active ingredients.
3. Make sure that the search engines are tolerant to the typos or spelling errors.
4. E-pharmacies can give options for different types of packaging.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 epidemic has prompted a new way of thinking because to movement restrictions under lockdown and the need to maintain physical distance. As a result of the pandemic, the digital and e-commerce industries are becoming increasingly crucial.

Due to the pandemic-induced lockdown, the E-Pharma industry has grown tremendously, as individuals have realised that purchasing drugs online is a safer way to protect themselves from infection.

Consumers gain from E-Pharmacy in lockdown because they can access a consistent supply of medicines, hand sanitizers, face masks, and other health-care supplies in a safe and convenient manner.

The federal and state governments also issued encouraging guidelines for online pharmacies, stating that delivery of medicines via an e-commerce platform is an essential service during a pandemic.

Recognizing the potential of the online pharma business in the future (post-COVID), major E-commerce companies like as Amazon and Reliance Retail have begun to invest in it. The online pharma sector has a lot of promise in the next years because of the comprehensive value proposition supplied by E-pharma companies, historical experiences, and the migration to digital platforms owing to COVID-19.

To address the many obstacles faced by the Indian online pharmacy industry, we also need to establish a robust regulatory support framework to make the E-pharmacy model more fool-proof.

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