

# Govt can dispense cheaper, quality medicines, says PM

Jan Aushadhi stores number to be scaled up to 5,000

## OUR BUREAU

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Using generic medicines can cut costs by up to 90 per cent and Jan Aushadhi stores can dispense cheaper, good quality medicines, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he interacted with beneficiaries of the Centre's Jan Aushadhi scheme.

The half-an-hour long interaction with patients across India, included those suffering from heart and kidney ailments, diabetes, and those who have undergone knee implants.

Subhash Gawanti of Cuttack in Odisha is a diabetic and has high BP and cholesterol. While earlier he would spend up to ₹3,000 a month on drugs, he says that now he is able to procure the generic

version of the same drugs at ₹500 a month from the government store.

Another patient from Hyderabad, Mala Garu, said that while she would get medicines for 10 days at ₹2,500 from private chemists, at the Jan Aushadhi kendra, it costs ₹200.

## Jan Aushadhi stores

While there are 3,600 Jan Aushadhi stores currently, Modi said they will soon be scaled up to 5,000. Up to 3,000 stores are run by private chemists, who have to get a licence to run them. Of the 850 districts, nearly 750 have these stores.

On frequent complaints of unavailability of generic medicines in these stores, Minister for State, for Chemicals and Fertilisers Mansukhlal Mandaviya told *Business-Line*: "We have supply chain issues that we are working towards solving."



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

For example, Anjan Prakash, a chemist in Jharkhand, stocks 500 of the 700 medicines. He opened the store last year.

"I travel to areas so remote that people do not even get two square meals a day there. It is important to provide them cheap drugs though. So, I opened the store,"

Prakash told Modi during the video interaction. The Jan Aushadhi scheme had come under radar for some drugs failing quality tests in Karnataka recently. Joint Secretary Navdeep Rinwa, Department of Pharmaceuticals, stated, "We have recalled batches of drugs if there is an issue of quality."