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Jan Aushadhi Scheme: Affordable Generic Medicines in India

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Jan Aushadhi Scheme: Affordable Generic Medicines in India

A prescription that once cost a family a week’s wages can now cost a fraction of that. More than 20,000 Jan Aushadhi stores across India make this happen daily. Here is how the scheme grew from 80 shops to a nationwide network.

At a Glance

Four facts to hold on to.

01
Launched

November 2008; rebranded PMBJP in 2016.

02
Kendras

20,149 by 30 June 2026.

03
Districts

776 of 784.

04
Savings

About ₹45,000 crore over 12 years.

PMBJPPradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana.

BPPI / PMBI Implementing agency, renamed PMBI.
WHO-GMP Good manufacturing practice standard.
NPPANational Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority.

Chapter 1: What PMBJP Is

Must Know

Timeline

- November 2008: the scheme launches under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
- December 2008: the Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI) is set up to implement it.
- April 2010: BPPI is registered as an independent society.
- 2014: only 80 Jan Aushadhi stores exist.
- 2016: the scheme is rebranded and expanded as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana.
- 7 March 2019: the first Jan Aushadhi Diwas is observed.
- September 2024: a monthly stocking incentive for Kendra owners begins.

The purpose

- PMBJP provides quality generic medicines at affordable prices.
- It sells through dedicated retail outlets called Jan Aushadhi Kendras.
- BPPI was later renamed the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI).
- The same ministry also runs the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals. See Chemicals and Petrochemicals Industry in India.

- The trap: the scheme was rebranded under its current name only in 2016, eight years after the 2008 launch.

The scale today

- Jan Aushadhi medicines are generally priced 50–80% lower than comparable branded medicines.
- The scheme grew from 80 stores in 2014 to over 20,149 Kendras by 30 June 2026.
- They cover 776 of India's 784 districts.
- The basket has 2,110 medicines and 315 surgical items and devices.
- Kendras have saved citizens an estimated ₹45,000 crore over the scheme's 12 years.

Remember: 2008 launch → 2016 rebrand as PMBJP. 80 stores (2014) → 20,149 (June 2026).

> **Quick check 1.** PMBJP was launched in 2016. *(True or False?)*
>
> See answer ↓

Chapter 2: Basket, Quality and Why Generics Are Cheap

Good to Know

The basket and the sellers

- The basket spans cardiovascular, anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, anti-infective, anti-allergic and gastro-intestinal medicines.
- It also has nutraceuticals, surgical items and consumables.
- The government targets 25,000 Kendras by March 2027, mostly through a franchise model.

- Nearly 60% of new stores opened in the last three financial years are run by women entrepreneurs.

Quality control

- Only WHO-GMP certified plants may supply Kendras.
- Every batch gets 100% pre-testing at NABL and GLP-compliant labs before it reaches a Kendra.
- The supply chain runs on 5 warehouses and a network of 42 distributors.

Why generics cost less

- Generic medicines contain the same active ingredients, in the same doses, as branded ones.
- Indian regulators require the same quality and efficacy standards.
- The scheme targets out-of-pocket health spending, a major driver of medical debt for low-income households.
- It shares that goal with Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY), which attacks the problem from the insurance side.

A wider access push

- Jan Aushadhi Diwas is observed every 7 March, marking the day in 2019 when the observance was first launched.
- A week-long “Janaushadhi Week” runs from 1 to 7 March each year.
- Parliament’s Standing Committee has examined healthcare affordability as a subject. See Healthcare Affordability and Accessibility in India.
- Franchisees often come from the same small-entrepreneur base that SIDBI supports.

Remember: Same active ingredient, same dose, same standards, lower price.

> **Quick check 2.** Only WHO-GMP certified plants may supply medicines to Jan Aushadhi Kendras. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

> **Think it through: Think it through: why is a generic cheaper?**
> A brand pays for advertising, packaging and a trademark. A generic skips those and sells the same salt. The medicine inside is the same. The extra cost on the brand is mostly the name.

Chapter 3: Current Affairs

Current Affairs

The 12-year scorecard

- On average, 15 lakh people visit Jan Aushadhi Kendras every day.
- Total MRP sales reached ₹4,274.66 crore over the last two financial years alone. (Source: PIB.)
- Kendra sales grew roughly 270-fold, from ₹7.29 crore in 2014-15 to over ₹2,000 crore by February 2025. (Source: PIB.)

Reach and incentives

- A special one-time ₹2 lakh incentive applies to Kendras in North-Eastern states, Himalayan areas and islands.
- It also covers Aspirational Districts and Kendras run by ex-servicemen, women, divyangjan or SC/ST applicants. (Source: PIB.)
- As on 30 June 2026, 846 Kendras had opened under Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, with over 4,250 more given initial approval. (Source: PIB.)
- Since September 2024, Kendra owners earn a monthly incentive for stocking 200 commonly used medicines: the 100 top-sellers plus 100 fast-selling market drugs. (Source: PIB.)
- PMBI monitors Kendras through a centralised IT system and field inspections.
- No separate district-level body oversees them. (Source: PIB.)

The wider pharma ecosystem

- The Pharmaceuticals PLI scheme has a ₹15,000 crore outlay, of which ₹6,659 crore was disbursed by March 2026.
- A separate Bulk Drugs scheme (₹6,940 crore) has approved 48 projects.
- 18 APIs, including Penicillin G and Atorvastatin, are now in production, cutting import dependency. (Source: PIB.)

- The NPPA caps prices on 935 essential-medicine formulations.
- Their average price fell about 17% after the 2022 National List of Essential Medicines revision.
- It has also fixed retail prices for 3,845 new drug variants.
- The Health Ministry now allows debarment for applicants who submit fake or fabricated data. (Source: PIB.)
- There are 7 NIPERs, all declared Institutions of National Importance. (Source: PIB.)
- On 30 June 2026, the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013 was amended.
- Other manufacturers can now adopt an already-approved price for 12 months without fresh approval. (Source: PIB.)

> **Quick check 3.** Kendra sales grew roughly 270-fold between 2014-15 and February 2025. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick Q&A

Scheme launched?

November 2008.

Rebranded as PMBJP?

2016.

Kendras by June 2026?

20,149.

Target by March 2027?

25,000.

Jan Aushadhi Diwas?

7 March.

Practice: Jan Aushadhi

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Practice MCQs

1. In which year was the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) launched?

A. 2008

B. 2019

C. 2016

D. 2014

See answer ↓

2. Jan Aushadhi medicines are typically priced how much lower than comparable branded medicines?

A. 90-95%

B. 30-40%

C. 50-80%

D. 10-20%

See answer ↓

3. As informed to the Lok Sabha on 24 July 2026, how much have citizens saved cumulatively through Jan Aushadhi Kendras, and how many Kendras were operational as of 30 June 2026?

A. ₹40,000 crore; 18,000 Kendras

B. ₹45,000 crore; 20,149 Kendras

C. ₹28,000 crore; 19,502 Kendras

D. ₹45,000 crore; 25,000 Kendras

See answer ↓

4. What is the implementing agency of PMBJP, originally set up as the Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI)?

A. Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation

B. National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority

C. Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission

D. Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI)

See answer ↓

5. Jan Aushadhi Diwas, observed every 7 March, marks the anniversary of its first observance in which year?

A. 2016

B. 2008

C. 2014

D. 2019

See answer ↓

6. As detailed on 28 July 2026, roughly how many people visit Jan Aushadhi Kendras every day, on average?

A. 15 lakh

B. 50 lakh

C. 5 lakh

D. 1 lakh

See answer ↓

7. Consider the following statements about the Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI):

1. It is the implementing agency of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).

2. It has been registered as an independent society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

See answer ↓

8. As on 30 June 2026, how many Jan Aushadhi Kendras had opened under Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)?

A. 1,346

B. 346

C. 846

D. 4,250

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **A.** PMBJP was launched in November 2008 by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers. It was rebranded and expanded under its current name in 2016. ↑ Q1
2. **C.** Jan Aushadhi medicines are generally priced 50-80% lower than comparable branded medicines. ↑ Q2
3. **B.** The government informed the Lok Sabha that citizens have saved an estimated ₹45,000 crore over the scheme's 12-year history, with 20,149 Kendras operational as of 30 June 2026. ↑ Q3
4. **D.** BPPI, later renamed the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI), implements PMBJP. It was set up in December 2008, and registered as an independent society in April 2010. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** Jan Aushadhi Diwas was first observed on 7 March 2019, and is marked every year since with a week-long 'Janaushadhi Week' from 1-7 March. ↑ Q5
6. **A.** On average, 15 lakh people visit Jan Aushadhi Kendras every day, per a 28 July 2026 government reply. ↑ Q6
7. **C.** The answer is Both 1 and 2. BPPI implements the Janaushadhi scheme for affordable generic medicines and is registered as an independent society. ↑ Q7
8. **C.** 846 JAKs had opened under PACS as on 30 June 2026, with over 4,250 more PACS given initial approval -- part of the scheme's cooperative-sector expansion. ↑ Q8

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** ↑ 1
2. **True.** ↑ 2
3. **True.** ↑ 3

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