Making Generic Drugs Compulsory

Why in news?

\n\n

PM had recently said that the government is contemplating a law that will make it **binding for doctors to prescribe generic medicines.**

\n\n

What is the proposed move?

\n\n

\n
- The proposed legislation has the potential of offering the patient a greater say in the choice of a medicine.
\n
- Making it obligatory on the doctor to prescribe a generic drug would mean that the prescription will detail the medicine’s composition.
\n
- It would leave the choice of the brand on the patient.
\n

\n\n

What should be done?

\n\n

\n
- For this to be effective, the proposed law needs to **go beyond the doctor-patient binary** and target each link in the pharma industry’s chain of corruption.
\n
- E.g. there are more than 500 generic versions for the anti-bronchial pneumonia formula, amoxycillin and potassium clavulanate, that cost between Rs 70 to Rs 300 for a packet of 10 tablets.
\n
- A patient with a prescription detailing the composition of the medicine could still be dependent on a pharmacist to make the most suitable drug choice.
\n
- Also a pharmacist is less likely to be sensitive to a patient’s medical and

financial condition than the doctor.
\n
- Therefore the **pharmacists should also be brought under its ambit.**
\n
- The generic medicine industry should also be revamped. Last year, 27 commonly-used medicines in the country failed quality tests.
\n
- Currently in most cases, failure to comply with standards results only in a short-term suspension of a manufacturer’s production licence. Effective deterrents should be formulated.
\n
- Adequate regulations, **ample drug inspectors** and lab facilities to check drug quality should be provided to ensure quality.
\n
- The move needs to be backed by adequate regulatory and legal provisions.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Indian Express

\n\n

\n