

A PILOT STUDY ON PROBLEMS FACED BY PHARMA SALES REPRESENTATIVES WORKING AT DHULE HEADQUARTER

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ABSTRACT: *Economic prosperity on our country depends on growth of various industrial sectors. Pharmaceuticals sector is one whose contribution is quiet significant. This market comprises of various pharmaceutical preparations such as antibiotics, antacids, & many other types of preparations. The reasons of dynamic environment of the pharma market can be traced in latest technologies used by giant pharmaceutical companies in preparation of pharmaceutical products. In the ancient era, preparations of ayurvedic origin were the only remedies for different types of ailments & illnesses. However, it's essential to mention that the pharma market surges ahead mainly on the basis of exhaustive legwork of pharma sales representatives. They sweat day in & day out ceaselessly in the field to sell their products. To survive in the cut throat competition prevailing in the market is certainly not a cakewalk for any pharma company. Seriousness as well as alertness & agility in the field are the key factors to remain competitive in the field. This paper tries to focus on the problems encountered by pharma sales representatives working at Dhule headquarter while working in the field.*

Key Words- *Antibiotics, Antacids, Tonics, Topical Preparations.*

Introduction- Its difficult for anyone to make concrete statement about entry of allopathic medicines in India, but some researchers claims that it may be the era of 19th century. Britishers ruled India for almost 150 years and it is believed that they use to bring some allopathic medicines along with them to treat certain ailments & illnesses. This is supposed to be the reason how allopathic medicine entered in India. Later on Britishers use to import some allopathic medicines from countries like Germany & UK & this continued for decades together. It was P.C.Ray who established Bengal Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals in 1901 in Kolkata. In 1954, Indian Government took initiative and led the foundation of Hindustan Antibiotics Limited. The company started manufacturing antibiotics like penicillin. *Antibiotics are the drugs which prevent the growth of bacteria or kill them.* Later on in 1961, the then central government established another pharma company, Indian Drugs & Private Limited. After successful establishment of these two public limited companies under its banner, government seriously thought about the rapid industrialization and provided momentum to the growth of pharmaceutical companies. It is a very well accepted fact that progress of nation is the prime concern for rulers & the progress of any nation depends on its people and their imitative & contribution in the progress work of the nation. But it can happen only when the people of the nation are fit and healthy. Because of increasing population & industrialization, unfortunately there is rise in ailments & health related problems of Indian population. Life style diseases such as diabetes, heart attack, cancer, back ache, obesity etc are increasing. Moreover, because of poor sanitation and poor hygiene habits, the epidemic diseases such as chicken guinea, cholera, malaria, dengue, etc are also on rise. Obviously, because of these reasons the pharma market in India is growing by leaps & bounds. Hence, different types of pharma companies such as regional, national & multinational companies are consistently in the race to grab maximum market share. Pharma companies are taking help of marketing experts of their marketing departments who are indulged in designing marketing strategies for selling their products. But effective implementation of these strategies mainly depends on pharma sales representatives who are actually working in the field. They actually meet doctors and pharma retailers & stockiest who are customers of pharma companies. In the marketing of pharma products pharma sales representatives play very important role and the success of pharma companies mainly depend on them. Pharma sales representatives are the live interface between pharma companies and their customers. Various researches related to marketing of pharma products accentuate the fact that selling of pharma products can be effectively done only through pharma sales representatives and hence it is time tested strategy which is adopted by every pharma company operating in the pharma market for achievement of long term objectives. Pharma sales representatives are the persons who are appointed at different headquarters. Headquarters are mostly the district places encompassing villages & towns belonging to those districts. Companies provide the list of certain number of doctors to the pharma sales representatives or sometimes ask them to prepare the list of doctors keeping in mind the range of products that

they are having. Pharma sales representatives meet these doctors at regular frequency as per policies or guidelines of the companies. The frequency of visit in a particular period of time varies from company to company. During their visit pharma sales representatives convenience the doctors about their products so that they prescribe it for their patients. Patients purchase the products from the pharma retail shop and thus pharma products are sold. As these representatives are meeting doctors on regular basis, they develop a good rapport with doctors. Moreover, face to face communication creates long lasting impact on doctors as various queries and doubts of the doctors are answered by the pharma sales representatives from time to time. Pharma sales representatives not only act as an interface for doctors but they also meet regularly to chemists & stockiest as they are also important customers. They also work as a live link between doctors & chemists as well as wholesalers or stockiests of pharma products. The working area or territory of every pharma sales representatives is already decided by the company and he has to generate prescriptions for his products so that products are sold on the prescriptions & thus sales take place. Annual as well as monthly sales targets are given by the companies to these representatives and they are supposed to achieve it. In this competitive market, they have to run on the hot foot so as to achieve sales target. While striving hard in the field, its but obvious that they come across many problems which are still not addressed by any researcher. This paper tries to throw light on the problems faced by pharma sales representatives working at Dhule headquarter.

Objectives of the Study- The main objectives of this study are,

1. To understand the method of working of pharma sales representatives.
2. To understand & document the problems faced by the pharma sales representatives working at Dhule headquarter.

Scope of the Study- The scope of the research is confined to the Dhule headquarter because it is done at Dhule headquarter and being pilot study, the sample size taken for this study is just of 20 representatives and the survey is done in the month of November this year. So the outcome of this survey applicable to Dhule headquarter only.

Limitations of the Study - Being pilot study, most important limitation is territory under consideration. The pilot study is conducted at only one head quarter i. e. Dhule. Another important limitation of the study was the availability of pharma sales representatives as they are always on tour.

Research Design-

Sample Population- Population consists of pharma sales representatives working in different types of companies such as regional, national & multinational and they have varied experience and mixed gender. The total population of pharma sales representatives is 200.

Sample Size- The sample size selected is 20 which is 10 % of the total population.

Method of Sample Selection- Samples are selected by using convenient sampling technique.

Sample Description- The selected samples from the sample population are from different types of pharma companies & they have varied years of experience. The samples are selected on the basis of convenient sampling technique & does not have any female candidate amongst the selected samples.

Type of Organization	No. of Pharma Representatives	Years of Experience	No. of Pharma Representatives
Multinational	8	0-5	3
National	11	5-10	6
Regional	2	10-15	2
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Total	20		20

Research Tool-

1. Primary data is collected with the help of questionnaire which served as research tool for this pilot research study.
2. Secondary data used for collecting information required for this research is collected from different books and research journals related to the topic of study.

Hypothesis- Hypothesis statement is as follows,

“ Pharma sales representatives working in the multinational companies have to cover more number of villages or towns while working in the field.”

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Data Analysis- The questionnaire used for survey had 10 questions and data analysis includes the analysis & interpretation of every question.

The data analysis and interpretation of data of every question is done separately and it is as follows.

1. Do you come across problems while doing your job ?	Total	%
a. Frequently	4	20
b. Never	1	5
c. Occasionally	10	50
d. Rarely	5	25
Grand Total	20	100

Interpretation- Data shows that some or the other time pharma sales representatives come across problems while working in the field. 20% of the sample population come across problems frequently, where as 50 % of the pharma sales representatives working in the selected geographical area come across problems while working in the field. Data also shows that only 5 % of the selected sample size said that they do not come across problems while working in the field & 25% of the sample population rarely come across problems while working in the field. So it can be interpreted that occurrence of different types of problems is common while working in the field of pharma selling in Dhule head quarter.

2. What is your opinion about clerical work that you have to do in your company?	Total	%
a. It is excessive	8	40
b. It is not excessive	12	60
Grand Total	20	100

Interpretation- Clerical work is a part of duty of pharma sales representatives. The 60 % of the sample population feels that it is not excessive where as 40 % sample population is of the opinion that it is excessive. The people who feel that the clerical work given to them is excessive which a not is also a small chunk of sample population under consideration. So companies need to think over it.

3. Why do you feel that clerical work given to you is excessive ?	Total	%
a. Because of frequent updation of customer list	5	25
b. Because of more number of reports	9	45
c. Preparation of presentation at the times of sales meetings.	6	30
Grand Total	20	100

Interpretation - The percentage of population of the sample population who feels that clerical work given to them is excessive because of more number of reports is 45%, where as 30% sample population feels that clerical work is excessive because of preparation of presentation at the time of sales meeting is 30 % where as 25 % feel that frequent updation of customer list is a reason of excessive clerical work. So the interpretation is that because of either reason mentioned above 60% sample population the sample population feels that clerical work is excessive.

4. Does excessive clerical work has adverse impact on effectivity of your field work?	Total	%
a. Oftenly	3	15
b. Some times	17	85
Grand Total	20	100

Interpretation- From the above chart it is clear that all the twenty respondents do agree that excessive clerical work does have adverse impact on effectivity of field work. 85% respondents feel that sometimes they do experience the adverse impact on the effectivity of their field work, where as 15 % sample population feels that they often experience the adverse impact on effectivity of field work. Therefore, it can be interpreted that excessive clerical work adversely affects effectivity of Pharma sales representatives in the field.

5. According to you is there unethical competition in pharma market where you are working ?	Total	%
Can't say	3	15
No	2	10
Yes	15	75

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Grand Total	20	100
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Interpretation- Like any other market, pharma market is also very competitive. Unethical competition means use of unfair means for achieving sale. The major chunk of the selected sample size i.e. 75% population feels that there is unethical or unhealthy competition in the field. 15 % population of the selected sample size were not having certain opinion so, they said that can't say anything about any unethical competition. Just 10% of the sample population is of the opinion that there is no unethical competition in pharma field.

6. Do your doctors keep demanding something extra from you?	Total	%
a. Always	8	40
b. Never	1	5
c. Sometimes	11	55
Grand Total	20	100

Interpretation- Survey regarding demanding attitude of the doctors shows that 40% of the sample population is of the opinion that doctors always keep demanding something extra, where as 55% pharma sales representatives feels that doctors demand only sometimes. Only 5% of the pharma sales representatives are of the opinion that doctors never demand something extra.

7. What do they preferably demand?	Total	%
a. Commission	2	10
b. More samples	3	15
c. Personal gift	6	30
d. Sponsorship for conference		40
Grand Total	20	100

Interpretation- The above table suggests that sponsorship for the conference is the major demand of the doctors according to 40% pharma sales representatives of the surveyed population. Next major demand of the doctors is personal gift as per opinion of 30% population where as 15% of the population feel that doctors demand extra samples. Only 10% pharma sales representatives believe that commission is the preferred demand of doctors. In brief, it can be interpreted that doctors do demand either of the above mentioned things from pharma sales representatives when they visit to them.

8. According to you what is the percentage of demanding doctors from your doctor list ?	Total	%
a. 0	1	5
b. 0-10%	3	15
c. 10- 20 %	7	35
d. 20- 30%	3	15
e. 30-40%	4	20
f. 40-50%	2	10
Grand Total	20	100

Interpretation - Doctor list is the list of number of doctors to be visited by the pharma sales representatives in a month or cycle. Only 5% pharma sales representatives feel that they do not have any doctor who demands from them. Otherwise there is variable percentage of demanding doctors ranging from 0 to 50 percent. The interpretation from the above finding is that there is significant percentage of doctors in Dhule district who keep demanding something from pharma sales representatives.

9. Do your company fulfill demand of doctors?	Total	%
a. Always	1	5
b. Never	6	30
c. Sometimes	13	65
Grand Total	20	100

Interpretation- Survey regarding the fulfillment of the demand of the doctors reveals that out of total doctors surveyed only 5% Pharma sales representatives agreed that company fulfill the demand of the doctors where as 65 % representatives mentioned that sometimes company show inclination towards fulfilling the demand of the

doctors where as 30 % sales representatives confirmed that their companies do not full fill demand of the doctors.

10.How does doctor reacts if his demand is not fulfilled?	Total	%
a. Doesn't stop prescribing product	3	15
b. Drastically reduces prescription support to the company's product	11	55
c. Stops giving call to the pharma sales people.	2	10
d. Stops prescribing products.	4	20
Grand Total	20	100

Interpretation- If doctors' demand is not fulfilled, doctors react in either way. If their demand is not fulfilled 55 % of the surveyed population of pharma sales representatives confirms that doctors drastically reduce the prescription support to the company's product, whereas 20 % of the pharma sales representatives of the surveyed population feels that doctors stops prescribing the product whereas 10 % sample population states that doctors stops giving call to the representatives. Only 15% of the sample population is of the opinion that doctors do not stop prescribing products. It can be interpreted that doctors strongly feel that their demands should be fulfilled by the company otherwise they react in either way mentioned above.

Hypothesis Testing- The hypothesis reads as,

“ Pharma sales representatives working in the multinational companies have to cover more number of villages or towns while working in the field.”

The above hypothesis is tested with the help of **Microsoft Excel** and the correlation test was applied to two variables of hypothesis i.e. type of company and number of villages and towns that their representatives have to cover while working in the field. The correlation value between these two variables is **-0.25251**. The correlation between the two variables is negative. It means that there is no correlation between type of company and the number of villages or towns that their representatives have to cover while working in the field. Hence, the above hypothesis is rejected. It means there is no relation between type of the company and the number of towns or villages covered by him/her while working in the field.

Conclusion- Every medical or pharma sales representative working in the field at Dhule headquarter faces problem of either kind irrespective of the fact that whether he belongs to regional , national or multinational company. Researcher in this study found that forty percent of the sample population feels that writing work is excessive which do have adverse impact on effectivity of pharma sales representatives working at Dhule head quarter. Study also reveals that more than seventy percent population of the sample size feel that there is unethical competition in the field of pharma selling. Moreover, demanding attitude of doctors and chemists is also on the rise which is supposed to be one of the major problem faced by pharma sales representatives working at Dhule head quarter. When doctors' demands are not fulfilled then it do have adverse impact on the sale of the products of the concerned pharma company. So pilot study on the problems faced by the pharma sales representatives working at Dhule head quarter do come across different problems while working in the field.

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