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Analysis of Startup in India's pain relief sector

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Abstract

India's healthcare sector has generally experienced robust growth in the past decade. With increasing awareness among the population regarding healthcare needs, medication and others, the demand for pain-relief services and over-the-counter pain-relief medicines has increased. Startups in Pain Relief Sector (PRS) have met this demand quite well by providing necessary pain-relief services to patients which in turn has played a critical role in improving the quality of life for the patients. UltraCare PRO, Dhama Innovations, Unexo Life Sciences, Tanyx, 6iPAIN HEALTHCARE and some other startups in the pain-relief sector have performed considerably well. These startups have leveraged modern technology such as AI, AR, VR, data learning and others to provide remote pain-relieving services to patients. Thus, these startups enhanced the quality, accessibility and affordability of such services as well. Despite the growth, there are certain challenges such as complex legal regulations, lack of funding, government support and others that deter the growth of startups in PRS. Public-private partnerships, FDI, and leveraging the existing market gap can help such startups ensure long-term growth in the future.

Keyword: Entrepreneurship, startup, pain relief sector (PRS), India, healthcare, medications, pain relief services, business growth, startup funding, government policies, economic impact, strategic partnerships

1. Introduction

The Indian pharmaceutical industry as a whole has noted significant growth in the past decade with the emergence of new and able startups making India considered the world's pharmacy. Similarly, the Pain Relief Sector (PRS) in India has grown exponentially in the past few years, especially due to the advancement of modern pharm techs, increasing demand for effective solutions for pain management and increasing prevalence of chronic pain among people due to lifestyle diseases. This article focuses on analysing the growth and contribution of Indian Startups in the PRS and evaluates certain challenges that might have stunted the growth further. At the end, the article also provides certain relevant recommendations to assist with the growth of PRS in India in the future.

2. Overview of Start-ups in India's PRS

The revenue from the analgesics sectors i.e. medications that help relieve pain has grown significantly. In 2025 the analgesics market in India generated a revenue of US\$1.23 billion (Statista.com, 2024). Several pain management startups in India have gained prominence by providing effective pain relief services to patients such as UltraCare PRO, Dhama Innovations, Unexo Life Sciences, Tanyx, 6iPAIN HEALTHCARE and others. These startups are noted to use technology-driven solutions such as applied VR, AI algorithms of data learning and others to provide personalised care and pain relief services to patients (Chakraborty, Edirippulige & Ilavarasan, 2023) [2]. These startups focused on making "life easy and pain-free" for patients by developing innovative tools and medications for pain relief (UltraCarePRO.in 2025). These startups in the PRS in India primarily focus on developing a range of healthcare products and medical devices that serve as pain relievers.

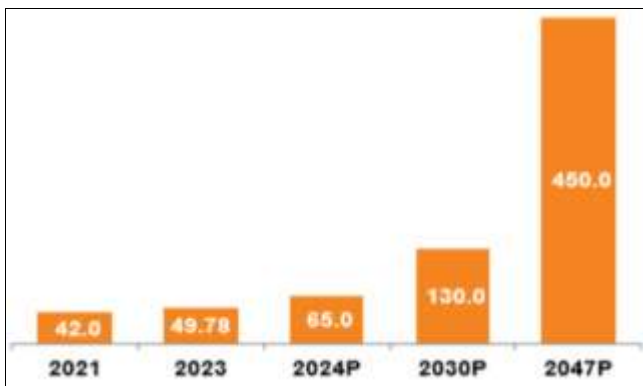
Moreover, increasing healthcare awareness among the general population in India has driven up the demand for pain relief medications, especially "over-the-counter" medications. Moreover, the Indian population is highly dependent on physiotherapy as a form of pain relief services upon which multiple startups were formed succeeding in the market. Multiple startups in India have leveraged new technologies to effectively improve rehab protocol,

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quality of monitoring physical activities and others (Zutshi & Aman, 2021) [15]. It has been further noted that there is a steep rise in the growth and development of economic value in startups from PRS encouraging more entrepreneurs and investors to invest in this sector. This causes PRS to grow further and startups in this sector to thrive from necessary funding.

3. Growth of Start-ups in India's PRS

India's healthcare sector in general has experienced significant growth due to conducive public-private partnerships. Startups in the healthcare sector have played a critical role in revolutionising the industry by developing innovative technologies that help optimise systems of healthcare delivery, reduction of cost and optimise patient care outcomes. As denoted in the diagram below, the pharmaceutical market in India has grown significantly over the years and is expected to grow further with rising awareness regarding healthcare among the general population (IBEF.org, 2024). Ventures in the healthcare sector have risen from 452 in 2016 to around 90,000 in 2023 (Mookim, 2023) [4]. Keeping in mind, the overall growth of startups in the healthcare sector can put the rise of startups in PRS put into perspective.



(Source: IBEF.org, 2024)

Fig 1: Pharmaceutical Market in India

It has been noted that, among the general Indian population, there is a rise in demand for pain relief medication (Statista.com, 2024). Along with increasing awareness of medication, the prevalence of self-diagnosis and accessing "over-the-counter" medication, especially with regard to pain relief has increased as well (Statista.com, 2024). Multiple startups in India have considered the market trend of increasing demand for acetaminophen, topical and non-opioid analgesics and developed pain relief medications that cause minimum side effects and deliver localized pain relief. Moreover, the demand for herbal and natural pain-relief medication has increased as well which motivated startups in India to develop drugs and tools to provide pain relief solutions without much side-effect. Moreover, the number of health tech startups focusing on providing pain-relief services in India has increased as well due to increasing demand (Narayanan, 2021) [9]. It therefore becomes evident that startups in the PRS in India have adopted technology efficiently and analysed patient demands to provide services meeting the increasing need for pain-relief services.

4. Contribution of Start-ups in India's PRS

The contribution of startups in PRS is undeniable as multiple opportunities and extensive support from the Indian government enabled these startups to deliver quality medication and services to patients. Focusing on innovations, these startups have ensured that healthcare and pain relief services are accessible and affordable for the general population (Mukherjee, 2024) [8]. Effective pain relief services are necessary to improve the overall quality of life and ensure that individuals can take part in daily activities without hassle. It further ensures that anxiety and stress due to pain from patients are taken care of. Therefore, the contribution of startups in the PRS made sure that the overall quality of life of the Indian population is improved. Moreover, the growth of startups in the PRS has contributed towards India's economic development and financial robustness as well as helping India be the pharmaceutical hub of the world.

Pain-relief medication as well as other pharmaceutical products and tools from India has gained universal recognition. This strengthened India's position as the pharmacy of the world for delivering quality pharmaceutical products at an affordable price (PIB.gov.in, 2024). Moreover, startups are noted to contribute to the PRS by developing innovative and effective technology-driven solutions for treatment, diagnosis and pain management, especially with respect to chronic pain making sure that life of patients otherwise are not hampered. The Indian economy has experienced a significant boost and gained relevance in the world healthcare market due to the incredible performance of startups in the PRS in India as well. Digital platforms, telehealthcare services, remote monitoring, AR and VR along with AI-driven solutions improved the overall quality and capacity of Indian healthcare services as well.

5. Challenges Faced by Startups in India's PRS

Startups in India, especially in the healthcare industry and PRS face multiple challenges to keep business afloat primarily due to complex regulations, lack of funding, minimum allocation of government budget in healthcare, fragmented market, cybersecurity-related risks and others. Startups in the healthcare industry in India are needed to navigate dynamic and complex issues related to regulation which enhances operational complexity (Lalit *et al.* 2024) [5]. The healthcare industry is highly regulated and requires startups to adapt to critical legal frameworks to make sure that they comply with data protection, security and privacy-related regulations. This deters startups or investors from taking an interest in PRS in India as dealing with complex legal challenges damages business growth in the long run even though business in the healthcare sector in India looks promising.

Lack of government funding is another significant challenge that demotivates entrepreneurs to invest in PRS in India. Approval for businesses takes a long time and there is blatant corruption in the legal and political systems in India (Lee, 2020) [6]. Hence, startups in PRS in the healthcare industry face issues in terms of business operation, funding, approval, patenting rights and others. Navigating such regulatory and operational challenges for new businesses is especially challenging due to the lack of a stronghold in the market and existing businesses perform much better in this regard which increases the market competition for such startups. As mentioned above, complex regulations in the

healthcare sector deter startups from investing in innovation as managing such complex regulatory requirements can be highly time-consuming and expensive which strains the resources of the startups. Moreover, healthcare startups have to deal with sensitive data which poses a risk for cyber-attacks.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations for Startups in PRS in India

This article demonstrated how despite certain challenges, startups in the PRS in India have experienced exponential growth. To meet this increasing demand, startups in India have focused on innovation through technology incorporation to provide pain-relief medication and services to patients. As noted in the article, startups while developing and providing such services and medication usually focus on minimising side-effects which enhance the effectiveness of these services. Hence, most startups in the PRS in India experienced significant success and growth. However, startups in PRS in India face certain challenges as mentioned above for which some relevant recommendations are provided below.

7. Recommendations

1. The startups in PRS must focus on meeting the existing healthcare gaps to avoid unnecessary market competition. The Indian population, especially in the rural landscape, is always in need of quality and affordable healthcare services (Verma & Dash, 2020) ^[14]. Therefore, meeting this healthcare gap startups can focus on delivering affordable and quality pain-relief services and medication to the rural population of India.
2. Startups in PRS in India can look for public-private partnership (PPP) opportunities and better technology incorporation to gain favourable government support. According to Ganapathy *et al.* (2021) ^[3], PPP enhances the effectiveness of digital healthcare services. Therefore, with the efficient adoption of technology and necessary government support, startups will be able to provide pain relief services at an affordable rate to the general population.
3. Gaining access to foreign investors would solve the issue of lack of funding for startups in PRS in India. In this context, smoothening investment barriers from foreign investors can ensure favourable results as well (Bhattacharyay, 2020) ^[1]. Gaining better scope at FDI would further boost innovation for startups in PRS in India.

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