Science & Technology · GS - III

The proliferation of counterfeit medicines poses a serious threat to public health and weakens confidence in India's pharmaceutical sector. Examine the regulatory and enforcement challenges involved in combating spurious drugs.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 20/11/2026	GS - III	Science & Technology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Spurious drugs, Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940, CDSCO, State drug regulators, public health, pharmaceutical supply chains, quality control, interstate coordination, traceability.

Model Answer

Introduction

India is a major global pharmaceutical producer, but counterfeit and spurious medicines remain a serious public health concern. Their manufacture using unsafe or ineffective substances can cause treatment failure, adverse reactions and loss of public confidence.

Major Challenges

1. Public Health Risks

- Medicines containing incorrect or ineffective ingredients can worsen illnesses.
- Patients may face serious complications due to contaminated or substandard formulations.

2. Complex Supply Chains

- Counterfeit manufacturers exploit interstate distribution networks and misleading packaging.

- Fake branding and packaging machinery make detection difficult.

3. Regulatory Gaps

- Uneven enforcement capacity among state drug regulators creates vulnerabilities.
- Limited laboratory infrastructure and delays in testing affect timely action.
- Online sales and informal distribution channels complicate surveillance.

4. Institutional Coordination

- Interstate operations require coordinated investigations involving multiple state authorities.
- Weak information-sharing can allow manufacturers and distributors to evade enforcement.

Measures Required

- Strengthen CDSCO and state drug control departments through staffing, laboratories and modern testing facilities.
- Improve track-and-trace systems and digital verification of pharmaceutical products.
- Conduct risk-based inspections and strict action against manufacturers and distributors.
- Strengthen interstate intelligence sharing and prosecution.
- Increase public awareness and accessible mechanisms for reporting suspicious medicines.

Conclusion

Ensuring medicine quality is fundamental to the right to health and public safety. Strong regulatory coordination, scientific testing, supply-chain traceability and deterrent enforcement are essential to eliminate counterfeit pharmaceutical networks.

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