Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Examine the role of pharmaceutical price regulation in improving access to affordable healthcare in India. What limitations must be addressed to ensure that price controls benefit patients?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 20/10/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
—	~150 words

Answer Hint

NPPA, Drugs (Prices Control) Order, trade margins, essential medicines, out-of-pocket expenditure, generic medicines, availability, quality assurance, public health.

Model Answer

Introduction

High medicine costs contribute to out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure in India. Pharmaceutical price regulation seeks to improve affordability while maintaining the availability of quality medicines.

Role of Price Regulation

Price controls and trade-margin limits can reduce excessive mark-ups, improve price transparency and make essential medicines more affordable. The NPPA plays an important role in implementing pharmaceutical price regulation.

Key Limitations

- **Uneven benefits:** A margin cap may not translate into equal savings for every patient.
- **Availability concerns:** Poorly designed controls may affect the supply of certain medicines.
- **Quality assurance:** Affordability must be accompanied by consistent drug quality.
- **Implementation gaps:** Monitoring retail prices and preventing non-compliance remain important.

- **Information asymmetry:** Patients may lack reliable information about generic alternatives and medicine prices.

Way Forward

The government should strengthen price monitoring, promote quality-assured generics, improve public procurement and expand access to affordable medicines through public healthcare facilities. Regulatory decisions should consider both patient affordability and the need for reliable supply.

Conclusion

Price regulation is an important instrument for improving healthcare affordability, but it must be supported by effective enforcement, quality assurance and dependable medicine availability.

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