

TRAIN OF THOUGHT



We expect to pick up a large share of the growing e-commerce pie. Investments in supply-chain and technology will help us achieve our goal of becoming the largest e-commerce player in India.

— **Binny Bansal, Chief Operating Officer, Flipkart**
in an interview with Livemint.



Traditionally, distributors sent the goods to the stores, took the money and moved on to the next store. Today, modern retailers expect distributors to study the shelves on the store and understand what's selling and what's not. Which is why we are leveraging our distribution capabilities.

— **Anshuman Singh, MD and CEO, Future Supply Chain Solutions**
at a press meet.



We are waiting for reforms. The APMC Act did not get amended in all the states with fidelity. The other reason is that at least three times the Essential Commodities Act has been imposed on us. This means you cannot have a storage facility, and the moment you can't store, you can't buy.

— **YC Deveshwar, Chairman, ITC Ltd** *on why e-choupals have not grown in numbers in an interview with Business Standard*



Our competition is not so much with modern retail chains. Organized retail is still a very small fraction of the total market. Our competition is mainly with the unorganized stores.

— **Thomas Varghese, CEO, Aditya Birla Retail**
in an interview with Business Standard

Cold Chain Lapses Causing Infant Deaths?

The deaths of children after immunization due to a possible breakdown in the cold chain have revealed fissures in the system. Pamela Cheema reports

An alarming rise in the deaths of children after vaccination has put this issue under the scanner of the Union Health Ministry and triggered off ripples of apprehension among the general public. The Union Health Ministry under the Right to Information Act put up by the media conglomerate, The Times of India, disclosed that 128 children died in 2010 due to adverse effects after immunization (AEFI). The number of deaths has escalated over the past three years from 111 in 2008 and 116 in 2009. According to media sources, the numbers only appear to be climbing upwards. Sources in the logistics industry and the medical fraternity are analyzing



the cause of death and indicate that among other reasons, neglect of cold chain facilities could be a possible reason for such deaths.

Breakdown Of Cold Chain
Dr Amin Kaba, a paediatrician practicing at Saifee hospital, Mumbai, emphasizes that “that most doctors have very

poor knowledge of cold chain facilities or even logistics and don't realize how this could impact the health sector. Many doctors store medicines in the

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“While production and the first leg of distribution may still be well-controlled and monitored, the last leg is less monitored with control left to individuals.”

door of the refrigerator in their clinics. In the case of vaccines, it causes the vaccine to lose its potency. However, I would like to point out that even this would not cause death—that could be due to various other factors too. All vaccines should have the Vaccine Vial Monitor (VVM) which is thermosensitive and is present on polio vaccines. This shows if the quality of the vaccine has declined.”

Dr Usha Agboatwala, a consultant paediatrician at Prince Aly Khan and Noor hospitals at Mazagaon, Mumbai, says, “Maintenance of the cold chain is critical. If a vaccine is not properly preserved it becomes useless.” She also highlights the state government’s preference for cheaper vaccines and the lack of a regulatory body to institute stringent quality control as possible reasons for such deaths.

Declining Facilities

Other probable reasons for such deaths are poor immunity of the children, improper administration of vaccines and acute malnourishment of young children who are unable to tolerate the vaccine dose. The largest number of deaths has been registered in Maharashtra (28). “Services in Maharashtra have been on the decline,” says Dr Agboatwala. “There is just no quality check here. The situation

here is different from the southern states where diligence is greater. Even Gujarat is better than Maharashtra in this regard.”

Pawanexh Kohli, Founder of CrossTree techno-visors and Senior VP, Arshiya International Ltd, is convinced that “the deaths are largely due to inefficient cold chain practices from production to the last mile. Generally, the inefficiencies exist at the last leg of a vaccine’s life cycle. While production and the first leg of distribution may still be well-controlled and monitored, the last leg of distribution, storage and time lapse before vaccination at outreach points is less monitored with control left to individuals. Any lack of protocol here would impact quality and efficacy of the vaccine.” Mr Kohli notes that while pharma companies make huge efforts to ensure the quality of the vaccines, the distribution is left to “varying chains of custody and the custodians may not be fully aware or driven to maintain standards.”

While the causes of death after immunization span the entire spectrum from malnutrition, poor health and immunity of children and improper administration of vaccines, the government must simultaneously correct deficiencies in cold chain facilities as this would go a long way in checking infant mortality and bolster the universal immunization programme in the country. 🌟

APPOINTMENT

All eyes on Basu as India head of CSCMP



The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP) has opened its latest branch office in Mumbai, and heading it will be Anshuman Neil Basu, Regional CSCMP Executive Director. With more than 15 years of SCM experience in overseeing projects in India and the Middle East, Mr Basu will be looked upon to provide a big boost to the council seeking to enhance its service to its growing base in India and the surrounding regions, as well expand its reach and programming in South Asia.

Mr Basu’s career highlights include working for global organizations like Philips Electronics India Ltd, Tata Group, 3M, Sony Corp and APL. Founded in 1963, CSCMP is a worldwide professional association dedicated to education, research, and the advancement of the SCM profession.