INTERVIEWS | INTERVIEW

“One of the major challenges facing cold chain logistics in India is the lack of modern infrastructure and the deep regional fragmentation across the country”

Sanjay Sharma, CEO, Coldman Logistics

By **Mansi Jamsudkar** | July 1, 2025



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India's cold chain logistics sector is at a pivotal stage, grappling with infrastructure gaps and regional imbalances while trying to meet the growing demands of the food and beverage industry. Despite its fragmented nature, the sector is witnessing a wave of innovation driven by private players and startups focused on sustainability and efficiency. Among the leaders making a meaningful impact is Coldman Logistics, known for its end-to-end cold chain solutions and eco-conscious approach. In this exclusive interview with NUFFOODS Spectrum, Sanjay Sharma, CEO of Coldman Logistics, offers valuable insights into the current state of India's cold chain landscape. He discusses how the company is addressing F&B-specific challenges while expanding its presence in Tier 2 and 3 cities, and integrating sustainable practices like solar-powered facilities and green refrigerants. Sharma also shares his views on government initiatives, growth strategies, and pointers for new entrants looking to make a mark in this dynamic sector. Edited excerpts:

How do you view the current state of cold chain logistics in India, especially in relation to the growing demands of the food and beverage sector?

India's cold chain sector remains largely fragmented and continues to lack a cohesive, long-term vision to effectively address the issue of post-harvest food losses. Despite the problem being discussed for decades, tangible progress has been limited, primarily due to poor integration among stakeholders and the absence of a unified approach to infrastructure development and supply chain consolidation.

However, there is a promising shift underway. A growing number of young startups and agri-tech ventures are entering the space with innovative solutions, digital tools, and last-mile cold chain models. This renewed interest is creating positive momentum and has the potential to drive much-needed transformation in the industry.

What are the key challenges cold chain logistics companies face today while serving India's F&B sector?

One of the major challenges facing cold chain logistics in India is the lack of modern infrastructure and the deep regional fragmentation across the country. Cold storage facilities are heavily concentrated in a few states, leaving vast regions underserved. This imbalance leads to bottlenecks, scalability issues, and hampers the development of an efficient and cost-effective cold chain network.

Fragmentation leads to scaling issues and thus increases the capital investment required for infrastructure, coupled with substantial operating costs, poses a significant barrier for private players looking to enter or expand within the sector.

Could you tell us about some key initiatives you've recently implemented to address F&B-specific storage or transport needs?

Our mission is to build a sustainable cold chain network across India by integrating key value chain processes such as pre-cooling, repacking, labelling, blast freezing and direct-to-consumer deliveries. Our warehouses are thoughtfully designed to offer clients real-time visibility into how their products are stored, ensuring full compliance with temperature controls and environmental standards.

We are committed to environmentally responsible operations. Our refrigeration systems utilise energy-efficient refrigerants with zero Ozone Depletion Potential (ODP), significantly reducing environmental impact. In line with our green energy goals, we have transitioned 50 per cent of our facilities to solar power over the past three years—an important step toward a cleaner, more sustainable future.

In terms of total annual revenue, what percentage is contributed by the F&B offerings? How do you see this rising in the coming years?

Our major share of business (approx more than 90 per cent) is focused on F&B, including Dairy, Poultry, processed RTE food and food Ingredients. We see the volume growing Y-o-Y, especially in Tier 2 and 3 cities, which are our focus area in the next 3-5 years.

Given India’s geographical diversity, how do you tackle the challenge of uneven cold chain infrastructure across different regions?

We are focusing on a strategic pan-India presence, with warehouses and facilities located in key metros and emerging markets to ensure broad regional coverage. Our multi-temperature, modular warehouses accommodate diverse product needs, enabling flexibility and scalability. We also offer integrated services like repacking, labelling, and last-mile reach, creating an end-to-end cold chain ecosystem that reduces reliance on external infrastructure. Sustainability is prioritised by powering 50 per cent of facilities with solar energy and using eco-friendly refrigerants, ensuring reliable operations even in energy-challenged regions. Through a cluster-based hub-and-spoke model, we efficiently connect production hubs with consumption centres, overcoming geographic diversity with technology, reach, and innovation.

What are your expectations from government policies or infrastructure development initiatives like the PM Gati Shakti plan or cold chain subsidies for the F&B sector?

We expect government initiatives like the PM Gati Shakti plan and cold chain subsidies to greatly boost India's cold chain infrastructure for the F&B sector. Improved connectivity and multimodal transport will reduce delays and spoilage, while subsidies will encourage private investment in modern, energy-efficient storage and transport. Supportive policies will also drive adoption of sustainable technologies, helping build a cost-effective, scalable cold chain that reduces food loss and benefits both farmers and consumers.

Where do you see Coldman Logistics in the next 3–5 years in terms of expansion, innovation, and support to the Indian F&B industry?

Our goal is to significantly expand our footprint across India, with a focus on increasing warehouse capacity in emerging markets. As the replenishment landscape evolves with new-age business models like e-commerce and Q-commerce, our facility designs will undergo a fundamental transformation to meet these dynamic demands. Innovation will remain at the heart of our strategy, driving investments in advanced technologies such as AI-powered supply chain analytics, IoT-enabled real-time monitoring, and sustainable refrigeration solutions. These efforts will enhance operational efficiency while minimising environmental impact, positioning us to meet the future needs of the industry effectively.

What would be your message to emerging startups or logistics players entering the F&B-focused cold chain space?

The F&B cold chain sector in India offers tremendous opportunities but also poses significant challenges, from maintaining strict temperature controls to managing diverse regional infrastructure. New startups should prioritise creating genuine value over chasing valuations, focusing on long-term, sustainable growth with the customer at the centre of their operations. Unfortunately, many new entrants tend to prioritise convenience over quality—a risky approach in the food industry where safety and integrity are paramount. Building trust through consistent quality and reliability must remain the foundation for success in this critical sector.

Mansi Jamsudkar

mansi.jamsudkar@mmactiv.com

Read online: https://nuffoodsspectrum.in/interviews/23/22519/one-of-the-major-challenges-facing-cold-chain-logistics-in-india-is-the-lack-of-modern-infrastructure-and-the-deep-regional-fragmentation-across-the-country.html

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