

Godrej bets on medical fridges

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HYDERABAD

Ensuring vaccine efficacy

- Use of Sure Chill technology ensures temperature control
- Avoids risk of freezing and doesn't require a constant power source
- Can work in an on-grid situation with intermittent power
- Uses solar panel in an off-grid situation
- Delivers performance with as little as 2½ hours of electricity per day
- It doesn't need a battery



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— KAMAL NANDI,
EV-P, GODREJ APPLIANCES

Godrej Appliances which primarily focuses on home appliances space is keen to expand its presence in the medical refrigerators segment. The company forayed into this space three years back and it has licensed technology from Sure Chill of UK. Sure Chill has developed the technology and has been doing research to find solutions for the 50-60 per cent wastage of vaccines happening in the cold chain.

Godrej Appliances business head and executive vice-president Kamal Nandi told *Telangana Today*, "When the vaccines come in contact with ice or when the temperature of the vaccines goes up above eight degree, the efficacy of the vaccines are lost. When these vaccines are stored in cold chains and when temperature fluctuations happen, there are significant wastages. The technology works on properties of water and it allows the vaccines to be stored at precise 4 degrees temperature. It allows the vaccines to be retained at 4 degrees for ten days even without any cooling."

The vaccines lose efficacy below 2 per cent or over 6 per cent. The technology can preserve vaccines at 4 degrees for almost 10 days. Even when there are power outages, the vaccines can be held

over without losing efficacy. The company has developed solar technology for places where there is no regular power that will create a blanket of ice and then it runs. Any undeveloped country with frequent power outages will find it suitable. The refrigerators are used for both vaccines and blood.

"We have supplied the medical refrigerators through UNICEF to 24 countries worldwide. The Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) and global Vaccine Alliance Gavi are backing this initiative. We

are also supplying within India to State governments for their hospitals and blood banks. We have supplied to States such as Karnataka and Rajasthan and are also talking to the central government for this," he added.

Godrej is now in the process of coming out with a small version of refrigerators (25 litre capacity) for private doctors to store vaccines and even pharmacies can use this. This will be ready next year.

The plan is to have a full range of refrigerators that can meet different hold over periods (duration the equip-

ment works even without electricity). Hold over builds the cost. Those who need a high duty refrigerators can order them and those who don't need them can go for lighter versions (3 days and below). The higher versions are 50-100 litre capacity refrigerators. The 50-litre refrigerator costs Rs 75,000 whereas the 100-litre (highest capacity in its portfolio) refrigerator costs Rs 2.5 lakh.

The company makes these refrigerators at Shirwal unit in Maharashtra. The refrigerators are made to order product. Demand

had been varying year on year globally ranging anywhere from 20,000 to 50,000. PATH is doing a lot of research in this space. CHAI and GATES Foundation are advocating the need for vaccine protection.

Godrej has approached State governments and purchase is mostly cyclical at this stage. No other player in India could offer hold over period of three days, he said.

"We want to take this technology to more States within India, more nations globally. This technology delivers the expectations of cold chain in vaccination and blood bank industry. The adoption is slow as the prices are currently high. Wastages have gone down to zero in the States that have tried. We are in constant discussion with Ministry of Health. We are piloting in many places. Gates Foundation, PATH and CHAI are convinced with the technology," Nandi added.