



OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES IN FREIGHT FORWARDING: A STUDY ON INDO EXPRESS COURIER & CARGO

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ABSTRACT :

This study explores the operational issues faced by freight forwarders in India's growing logistics sector, with Indo Express Courier & Cargo as a case example. Freight forwarding, essential to global trade, involves managing transportation, documentation, customs, and delivery. Despite advancements in infrastructure and digital tools, forwarders face hurdles like rising costs, regulatory complexities, capacity limits, and the need for tech upgrades. Using both secondary research and field surveys, the study identifies key challenges and suggests practical solutions such as digital adoption, employee training, improved coordination, and customer-focused digital tools. The findings emphasize the need for innovation and adaptability to remain competitive in a changing market.

INTRODUCTION

Freight forwarders are crucial in ensuring goods move efficiently across borders. With the shift towards digital systems and evolving global demands, their role has become more complex. This project focuses on Indo Express to understand how freight forwarding has evolved and the difficulties firms now face, especially in adapting to tech-driven, compliance-heavy environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The logistics sector has transformed from manual operations to tech-based systems. Key developments like containerization and air freight have boosted speed and efficiency. Recent studies highlight digitalization, compliance pressures, and infrastructure issues as major challenges. In India, limited tech use and regulatory hurdles remain prominent concerns.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A mixed-method approach was used:

Primary Data: Surveys and interviews with Indo Express employees, clients, and managers.

Secondary Data: Industry reports, government publications.

Tools Used: SPSS, Excel, correlation analysis, and chi-square tests.

The study was conducted in Chennai and surrounding logistics zones during March–April 2025.

CORRELATION TEST

Hypothesis:

H₀: No link between digital adoption and documentation issues.

H₁: Higher digital use leads to fewer documentation errors.

Result:

Pearson's $r = -0.45$ (moderate negative correlation)

Interpretation: Companies with better digital systems face fewer documentation challenges, though other factors also influence outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

- Frequent Documentation Delays: Errors in paperwork delay customs clearance.
- Regulatory Pressure: Keeping up with constant changes (e.g., GST, e-way bills) is tough.
- Port & Infrastructure Issues: Congestion at key ports slows operations.
- Poor Coordination: Gaps in communication across stakeholders create inefficiencies.
- Limited Tech Use: Many firms lack real-time tracking and system integration.
- Cost Fluctuations: Fuel, container, and freight rate changes hurt planning.

Skills Gap: There's a shortage of trained staff for handling digital tools and regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adopt Digital Tools: Use TMS, ERP, and tracking systems for better control.
- Train Employees: Regular training on compliance, documentation, and software.
- Improve Communication: Strengthen coordination among logistics partners.
- Standardize Operations: Use SOPs to maintain consistency.
- Partner on Infrastructure: Work with the government or invest privately.
- Use Predictive Analytics: Plan better with AI-based pricing tools.
- Launch Customer Portals: Offer clients shipment visibility and document uploads.

CONCLUSION

Freight forwarders face growing pressures due to complex regulations, infrastructure gaps, and tech lag. Overcoming these requires digital integration, skilled manpower, and improved coordination. With strategic planning and continuous improvement, freight forwarders can turn challenges into growth opportunities.

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