

Published Date:	13 Nov 2024	Publication:	The Hindu Business Line [Mumbai]
Journalist:	PT Jyothi Datta	Page No:	10
Circulation:	29,753		

# ‘Reinvention, resilience critical to GSK’s 100-year journey in India’

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 Mumbai

British biopharmaceutical firm GSK clocked 100 years in India, in a journey that saw the making of the antibiotic penicillin to augmentin and paediatric vaccines to the recent shingles vaccine.

Enduring and thriving for a century do not happen out of thin air, said Bhushan Akshikar, Managing Director, GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals Ltd, ahead of a symbolic bell ringing event at the BSE that brought together top executives who had helmed the company, navigating an ecosystem involving patent and drug-pricing challenges.

**‘REPURPOSED’ JOURNEY**  
 The GSK line-up included Renu Karnad, Chairperson, GSK India; Deepak Parekh, Chairman, HDFC Asset Management Co Ltd, and former Chairman, GSK India; and former Managing Directors V Thyagarajan, H



**REMEMBERING THE ROOTS.** (from right) Bhushan Akshikar, MD, GlaxoSmithKline Pharma, with Renu Karnad, Chairperson, GSK India, and Deepak Parekh, former Chairman

Khusrokhhan, Dr H Josphipura and A Vaideesh.

“Re-invention and resilience,” Akshikar said, were key to the company’s “repurposed” journey, from being associated with infant formula and the Glaxo Baby to making penicillin in India, besides other products. Looking back, he said, the company’s leadership had taken a long-term view every

time it faced headwinds. And today, there is a sense of déjà vu as the industry continues to discuss patents and pricing concerns, as it did in the 1970s, he said.

The company has been listed in India for over six decades; it has brands that are as old as the country and participates in about 19 global clinical trials, he said. But nothing can be taken for

granted, he said, as the company looks to further repurpose and adopt advanced technology.

Recounting from his life’s journey in the keynote address, AM Naik, L&T Chairman Emeritus, urged those at GSK to derive “satisfaction” from what they did, rather than merely clock the hours.

Deepak Parekh, Chairman for 20 of his 25 years on the board, recalled several mergers and acquisitions in his time, involving Burroughs Wellcome, SmithKline Beecham and Biddle Sawyer, alongside learnings in the process.

As the lifespan of companies shrink from 60 years earlier to 20 years now, he said, GSK clocked a 100 by staying ahead of the curve. As multinationals look to get a larger piece of the India pie, he urged GSK to look at unmet needs and the ageing population, among other things, as healthcare will continue to be a core priority for the country.