

INTERVIEW: CHANDER MOHAN SETHI

CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR, RECKITT BENCKISER INDIA

Our acquisition focus is on healthcare, hygiene & home care

Reckitt Benckiser India CMD Chandar Mohan Sethi is busy drawing up strategic growth plans to sustain the company's competitive edge in the consumer healthcare industry in India. Sethi's game plan includes, acquisitions, rural penetration, consumer education programmes, innovative products and fresh brand investments. In an interview with Lalitha Srinivasan, Sethi talks about the company's growth plans. Edited excerpts:

area of healthcare, hygiene and home care. There's got to be a strategic fit. I think acquisitions are automatic if there are good opportunities for growth. From an acquisition point of view, the company always looks at critical mass where they can pick up strong brands to expand on internationally.

What are your plans to export Paras Pharma's brands?

We are evaluating opportunities to export Paras Pharma brands to key global markets. In fact, we have begun exporting Paras Pharma's brands to ten countries in South Africa and West Asian countries.

How important is Reckitt Benckiser India in your world-



wide operations?

It is amongst the top 10 key markets. Most of our categories that are globally No. 1 are growing in India and the other categories have a huge potential to expand. In essence, India is one of the biggest of all developing markets for Reckitt Benckiser.

How do you plan to sustain your competitive edge in India?

We are market leaders in various categories that we are in. Our core focus is going to be in the area of healthcare and hygiene which is also our global strategy. We plan to invest more behind our brands. Growth expectations from the Indian business are high and will continue to get higher as we expand the size of our portfolio.

What's the update on Reckitt Benckiser India's ad war with Hindustan Unilever over Dettol's kitchen cleaning gels?

The matter is in the area of courts (Delhi and Kolkata high courts). We will advertise and make claims which are scientifically sustainable. Our

courts and ASCI have ruled in our favour. We will continue with our ads.

With rising input costs have you taken price hikes?

Yes, we have increased prices of some products across the board to offset rising input costs. We have taken price hikes for our brands Harpic and Lizol.

What are major challenges RB faces in India. How do you plan to address these?

The depreciation of the Indian rupee poses a major challenge for us. Changing consumers' is a key challenge for us and other FMCG companies. Primarily, we try to understand consumer's changing needs and accordingly offer new products.

Industry