

APIS: SETTING NEW BENCHMARKS IN FMCG SECTOR



MR PANKAJ MISHRA,
CEO, Apis India

Apis India Limited, a fast-growing Indian FMCG company with its flagship product Apis Himalaya Honey, is making new impetus with the third-generation entrepreneurs at the helm.

ORIGINS & FORAYS INTO INDIAN MARKET

Apis India's roots go way back to 1924 when the company was set up in Delhi as a trading firm for spices and honey. Until 2015, the company mainly focused on B2B, manufacturing predominantly for the export market. In 2016, however, the focus was shifted to B2C when the company forayed into the Indian market big time, banking on decades of experience in sourcing and processing of honey. The increased customer preference

for natural sweeteners with rising awareness of benefits of honey have helped boost domestic demand for its products.

GROWTH STORY

The company thus revamped and restructured the brand, putting it on a high growth trajectory by leveraging its traditional strength of B2B and exports to create the unique Apis Himalaya Honey brand. Apis Himalaya Honey has not only carved a name for itself, but also helped to put the company on a growth trajectory.

Over three decades of honey sourcing experience has helped the company to establish a robust network of over 5,000 beekeepers spread across 15 states. The company has state-of-the-art manufacturing facility spread over 7 acres in Roorkee, Uttarakhand. Today, Apis is among the top three honey brands with a distribution reach of over 4 lakh conventional retail outlets. Modern trade chains like Dmart, More, Big Bazaar, Reliance and the likes are helping push the demand, a testimony to the growing stature of the company in the market. Apis India has also successfully leveraged the ecommerce ecosystem like Flipkart, Amazon, etc. Apis Himalaya Honey is one of the preferred honey brands on the ecommerce platforms.

Company's turnover has seen a

growth of 43% during 2015-2019 period – from Rs 140 crores to Rs 200 crores. The company is targeting a three-fold growth in the coming years. The high growth is primarily due to the forward-looking and growth-oriented approach of the company's Managing Director, Mr. Amit Anand. A man with a vision, Mr. Anand foresaw an upsurge in demand for quality honey products years back, and embarked on meeting the expected growth in demand.

LEADING THE WAY

Mr Anand is the man behind the diverse portfolio of brand Apis and has been driving the organization to become the most preferred Indian FMCG brand. He is the brain behind the company's strategic capex management and expansion decisions.

There has been a structural shift towards healthy living among consumers and the pandemic has added to the momentum, wherein many consumers are looking for healthier products for lifestyle which has resulted in heightened demand for honey among other health-related natural products

Amit Anand
Managing Director, Apis India

Mr Amit Anand's vision is shared by Mr. Pankaj Mishra, CEO, Apis India Limited. For strengthening the brand reach Mr. Mishra is aggressively promoting Apis across all modern trade platforms. "We strive to be the top of mind brand for consumers across channels and emerge as the leading national food brand. We are expanding in new territories in a phased manner focusing on the regional flavour for the product offerings. On the brand front, we have been doing 360-degree integrated campaigns covering key markets and augmented markets. Our marketing budgets are in line with aggressive growth plans," notes Mr Mishra.

With its world class in-house testing lab Apis India's strength lies in value chain right from ethical sourcing of honey, its processing and filtration at the state-of-the-art plant, which is certified for food safety by international bodies, to maintain natural nutritional value. This world-class facility has the capacity to process over 100 tons of honey per day after stringent, extensive quality checks to match the global standards.

Apis is now competing in a fast-growing market. Industry estimates suggest the Indian honey market, estimated to be worth Rs 1,729 crore in 2019, is growing rapidly driven by the popularity of ecommerce.

Besides its medicinal applications, the health benefits of honey in a post-COVID world are set to take the Indian honey market to around Rs 3,060 crore by 2025. Besides the strong presence in the domestic market, the company also enjoys the leading status in foreign market. It recently commissioned a new facility in Dubai, capable of handling multiple products besides honey.

The company has rightfully earned the status of "The

Honey Experts". In the domestic market, it has launched a value-added honey brand -- Apis Nature's Potion, "using the age-old Ayurveda tradition of herbs and honey. The range includes Bee Fit Honey, Tulsi Honey, Ginger Honey, Lemon Honey, Sitopladi Honey and Lychee Honey. Apis believes in quality with affordability, offering a unique value to the consumers.

The international market for honey is more evolved. Therefore, Apis exports varieties like multi-flora honey, eucalyptus honey, acacia honey to wild forest honey and lychee honey.

Apis has leveraged its strong brand name and distribution network to diversify to other food categories. Today, it operates in total of eight FMCG categories, including Apis Honey, Apis Spicilicios Pickles, Apis & Lina Dates, Apis Fruit blast Jams, Apis Ginger Garlic paste, Apis Green Tea, Apis Macaroni and newly launched Apis Soya Chunks.

More recently the company has partnered with Arcor Group of Argentina, the worldwide leaders in confectionaries, for exclusive marketing and distribution of their products in India and has introduced Arcor Butter Toffees, Arcor Bon o Bon Chocolates and



MR AMIT ANAND,
Managing Director,
Apis India

Arcor Lollipops.

Apis has strengthened its market presence by including e-commerce and Hypermarkets. Today Apis products can be bought from Amazon, Flipkart, Bigbasket, Grofers, Dmart, Hyper City, More, and Big Bazaar etc. With a strong presence in Southern and Western India, the company plans to further deepen its penetration in North and Eastern regions.

Apis India also holds BRC global, APEDA, NON-GMO, KOSHER certifications and it is also ISO 22000 certified by Intertek - A documented procedure that applies to Food Safety Management System. The company is also amongst the forerunners in honey exports from India to the EU, the USA and the Middle East.

BRAND CONNECT AND RECOGNITIONS

Apis India Limited has bagged numerous international industry and government-conferred Honey Export Awards. Apis has been awarded two times in a row (2018 and 2019) as ET Promising Brand in just 3 years of the launch as a consumer brand in India. It has been thrice





awarded the prestigious APEDA Export Award by the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, for their achievement in exports of honey.

The achievements and growth are the result of strong professional management under the leadership of Mr. Pankaj Mishra, CEO. His untiring and exceptional leadership have been pivotal to the transformation. He has reinvigorated the organization with his expertise in business and strategic planning, financial planning, organizational restructuring, risk management as well as creating sustainable business model. An alumni of the prestigious Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Calcutta, Mr. Mishra has fuelled the growth and expansion of the company. The management team has always focused on new trends and believed in digital transformation that have been crucial in shaping the company's strategies.

To strengthen brand connect, Apis India, for the first time, leveraged IPL by associating with Rajasthan Royals in the 2020 season. The company believes that the Indian Premier League (IPL) is the perfect platform to attract undivided attention from millions of fans across the country, on television and mobile screens. The goal of the collaboration was to strengthen brand value and recall by engaging with a vast consumer base. The brand logo on the team's

helmet is aligned with the overall brand narrative of 'Immunity Building' being a necessity.

Even during the lockdown, the company has aggressively invested in digital promotions specially to mention "#whenithinkhealthy campaign" which was trending across Instagram, twitter and YouTube. The company roped in influencers like Master Chef Ranveer Brar, Comedian Zakir Khan, Fitness enthusiasts, Moms among others. The campaign focused on sharing healthy living ideas -- a relevant theme during this pandemic to spread the message of staying healthy.

APIS CULTURE

Principles of mutual trust, teamwork and spirit are maintained and appreciated by the company. The leadership encourages team growth through collaborative working, skills development, knowledge sharing and co-learning. Employees being valuable assets, are motivated to achieve higher goals. The company has an inclusive culture of understanding each employee to make them understand what the company aims at. Even before Covid, the company used to provide flexibility in working hours, better technology and systems to provide an ease of working to the people. To build better team spirit team get-togethers are often convened. Apis aims to further accentuate its stand for a health-driven lifestyle, impacting lives

positively and disseminate the importance of healthy living.

Moreover, the efforts are also made to contribute to an environment that builds confidence and empowers people through personal and professional growth.

FUTURE PERFECT

Apis is poised to create ground-breaking, impressive products at the optimal cost through continuous value engineering that sets the yardstick of worth and quality to consumer. With clear vision to bring innovative healthy food products at best prices to the consumers, every year Apis is adding new categories to its portfolio. More products are in the pipeline that are expected to hit the market in the next 6-8 months. The company expects the demand for healthy products like honey and dates to grow steadily given the growing preference for better immunity.

To sum up, Apis is eyeing further investment in R&D, innovation, brand building, and market expansion which will help the company make an indelible difference in the lives of the Indian consumers through better products.