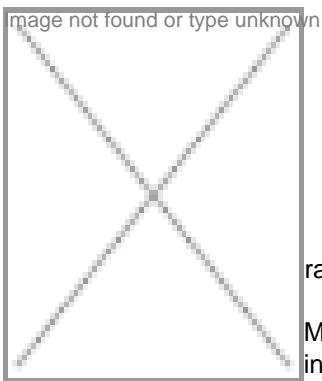


"We're set to launch many new products"

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Mumbai-based Pharmalab, is an engineering company that looks at the designing, manufacturing, installing and commissioning of fabricated stainless steel process and packaging equipments for the Indian pharmaceutical companies. Since its inception in 1962, the company has been operating in the Indian market with constant upgradation, innovation and customization of its products. In 2010, the company ventured into alliances with European companies, thus registering a growth rate of about 20 percent.

In an interview with *BioSpectrum*, Mr Karnik Parikh, director, Pharmalab, throws light on the company's achievements over the past one year, global initiatives, product launches and future plans. Some excerpts:

Q What the major achievements of Pharmalab in the last one year?

We manufactured hi-tech freeze dryers in technical collaboration with Serail of France. Serail's expertise in loading and unloading of vials and bulk products gives comprehensive solution to achieve the latest good manufacturing practice (GMP)

standards and meet regulatory requirements. We also brought out a state-of-the-art Aseptic Barrier Technology from SKAN of Switzerland.

The isolation technology offered by SKAN is unique with fully-integrated vaporized hydrogen peroxide sanitization facility, built in the system.

Pharmalab also tied-up with FILTROX of Switzerland to bring high-tech filtration systems, filter consumables and modules for the Indian biotech, pharma and beverage industry. Manufacturing license for leaf filters is under negotiation.

We partnered with Albet Hahnemuhle of Germany to bring laboratory filter papers and consumables to the Indian market. This allowed us to find markets in Europe and South American countries apart from Asian markets. Our collaboration with Sterichem TBM of France was to manufacture Ethylene Oxide Gas Sterilizers for the medical devices market. All these alliances were possible due to better market demands, innovative methods adopted by Indian pharma and biotech industry and Indian companies were willing to offer indigenously manufactured equipment to counter challenges posed by reputed international manufacturers.

Q How favorable has the Indian life sciences market been for the company till date?

The Indian life sciences market has been quite favorable for Pharmalab. We have been able to innovate and bring world-class technology to India. We have been able to grow the business at the rate of 15-20 percent barring 2008-09, which was the year of consolidation as most companies held back investment in new projects. Our group revenue for the current year is expected to be about \$17 million (₹80 crore).

Q What has been the performance of the company in the global markets, and what are the new markets the company will focus on in the coming years?

Our export revenue growth was 30 percent in the last fiscal. We are now exporting to almost 35 countries including European markets. Turkey, Syria, Iran, Mexico, UAE, Kenya and Nigeria are also some of the growth markets. We also export to our collaborators Serail and Sterichem in France. We always look for new markets for growth. Our focus would now be towards South American markets of Chile, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. North African countries like Tunisia and Algeria are also on our agenda.

Q What are the new product launches in the pipeline, and what will be the Indian market share?

We intend to launch many new products in the coming fiscal that include TOC measuring device, range of hospital equipment, magnetic mixers of latest standards, bag filtration systems, steam quality testing devices and ETO sterilizers for medical devices market.

Q Are there any plans to venture into alliances and what criteria do you use for striking an alliance?

We already have many alliances mostly with European companies. We are planning to form alliances with Metenova of Sweden for magnetic mixers and Letzner of Germany for water purification systems and TOC measuring devices. We always look for a partner who can add value to our operations in terms of technology transfer and market support.

Q What are the expansion plans and revenue target for Pharmalab in the next fiscal?

We have four manufacturing plants within the group and we are constantly upgrading and manufacturing processes. Introducing new welding, polishing and testing equipments are planned for next fiscal. We are expecting a growth of 20 percent in the next fiscal with export growing at 30 percent.

Nayantara Som in Mumbai