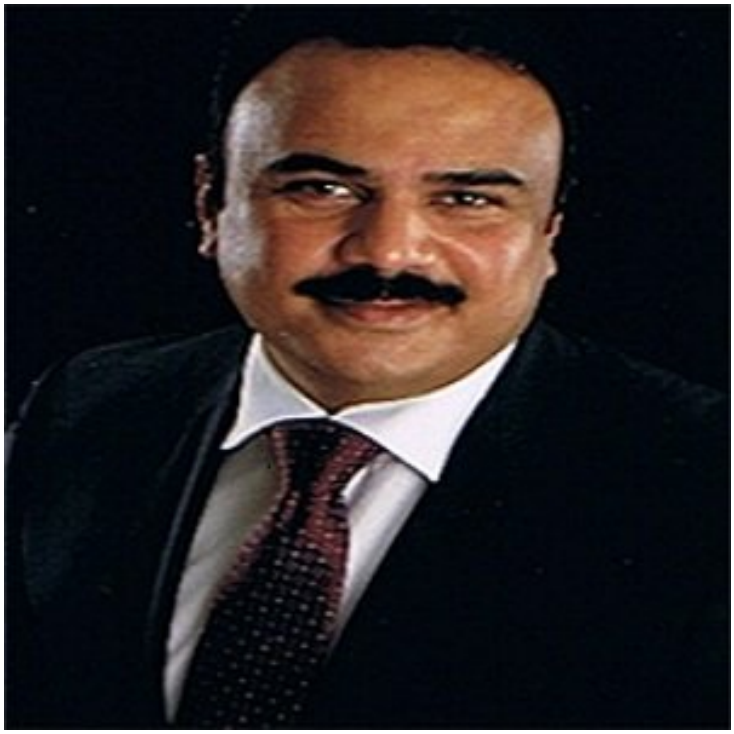
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'We want to grow with the country'

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'We want to grow with the country'



Speaking to BioSpectrum, Mr Anand Shirur, CMD, underscores ConvaTec's India mission and its role in transforming the Indian healthcare sector. Excerpts:

Q. ConvaTec is well known globally, but the company has only recently set up operations in India. How do you see the Indian market?

In India we started the business in 2012, headquartered at the World Trade Center, Bangalore. In the first year of our operations, in 2013, we had 52 products selling in the market. However, this figure has multiplied substantially and now in 2014, we are selling around 400 products. We are experiencing fantastic growth. GDP is growing by 6-7 percent on an average. Being an emerging market, opportunities are big here. The wound care market alone is worth $280 million. We have world-class products and are targeting the 32 percent population present across India and China. Our products are used by surgeons and vascular doctors, oncologists, critical care, and endocrinologists. We have received an overwhelming response from the medical community.

Q. What are the unique products that ConvaTec is bringing into the Indian market?

Our aim is do something different for the country. We realized that there is minimal knowledge about the usage of our products in the Indian market. In order to train nurses and medical practitioners, who eventually take these products to the end users, we have built a state-of-art wound clinic here. This wound clinic is equipped with recent diagnostic capabilities, products, and trained staff who can treat critical conditions like diabetic foot ulcers, venous foot ulcers, and surgical wounds. All protocols and standards used in the clinic are FDA approved.

In the past 6 months, we have treated 1,300 patients and have developed over 600 case studies. We have saved the limbs of at least 10 percent people suffering from critical wound injuries. We have signed an agreement with Ramaiah Medical College to build a wound clinic in their campus. Plans are afoot to advance these clinics to major cities like Delhi, Mumbai etc. We pioneer this in Asia and through this, we are contributing to the development of healthcare in India.

Another key initiative ConvaTec has undertaken is the development of a 'home care model'. With increased life expectancy and an ageing society, the model of healthcare is developing as homecare or "Healthcare at Home". We have inked a pact with one such specialty called Healthcare at Home, promoted by Mr Anand Burman. We have also built a training center at the WTC in Bangalore and have conducted 167 training programs last year.

Q. What are the challenges you face in the Indian market?

There are a lot of obstacles in India. The government of India needs to make the system more open and friendly with a one-

window approach. The government should encourage health care innovation by increasing investments. Currently, we are investing only 2 percent of our GDP. We are ten years behind China in terms of health care. Public private partnerships should be encouraged to foster the biotech industry.
It is also difficult to understand the Indian market as there is no survey that indicates the market potential. There is lot of talent, however, it is a struggle to find the right kind of quality. Along with infrastructure and warehousing, logistics are a major challenge. The country does not have an uniform taxation policy for every state, which adds another obstacle. India is not a business friendly environment.

Q. Any plans to expand in the country?

We have a Rs 100 crore investment planned for India. We are planning to build 50 wound clinics in the next 5 years.

Q. How is the market for medical devices across Asia?

Wonderful! We are growing at a CAGR of 80 percent in China. Markets across the APAC region are emerging and they offer numerous opportunities to grow. We have to be competitive. We invest heavily in R&D and we have a Center of Excellence in the UK. Soon, we plan to add another 200 products to our range. We are also aiming at strategic acquisitions in India. More people are investing on medical devices. Together, we can make the market big. We want to grow with the country.

Q. Please describe the current situation of healthcare in India.

Indian healthcare is evolving. There are high-end treatments available here; however they are not accessible to the people. Our healthcare quality is at par with many advanced countries like the US. The new government must aim at modernizing Indian healthcare. We need AIIMS in every major city.

Q. Medical tourism industry is booming. Will ConvaTec partner with individual countries?

We can partner with countries engaging in medical tourism by providing doctors with world-class products. We can help doctors develop international clientele by helping them provide better healthcare and thereby help nations increase the number of patients and quality of treatment.

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