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—Rizwan A Khan, senior sales director, LATAM & APAC, Sheffield Pharma, Kerry BioSciences, US

Sheffield, a part of Kerry Group, has a long history of being a leading manufacturer of media components and excipients for the pharmaceutical, biotech and fermentation industries worldwide. In an exclusive interview with BioSpectrum, Rizwan A Khan, senior sales director, LATAM & APAC, Sheffield Pharma, reveals the company's plan to expand in the Indian market, and the growth prospects offered by the Indian market.

What is the business strategy of Kerry for the Indian market?

In line with our strategic development program, Kerry has devoted considerable attention and resources to expand its presence in Asia Pacific markets. Currently, we have 120 facilities located in 55 countries. We continue to expand our overall presence in Asia Pacific region. Our Asia headquarter is based in Singapore. We have a strong manufacturing and R&D presence throughout Asia, including China, Korea, Japan and Australia.

India represents a strategic part of our growth plans. In 2002, we established a sales and marketing office in Mumbai, and are now looking to expand our presence, to serve local market demands for our cell nutrition and excipients businesses. In Asia, we have a major platform on which we will build our technologies and product offerings to customers in the pharmaceutical and life sciences. We are also expanding our presence in India to serve the demands of our cell nutrition and excipients

business in the local market.

What kind of products does Kerry provide for life science companies?

Sheffield is a leader in innovation and applications of cell nutrition and excipients, serving the pharmaceutical markets worldwide. We provide application expertise and innovative solutions for cell nutrition, human nutrition, vaccines, diagnostics and excipients. We have a strong reputation as a leading anhydrous lactose supplier with decades of experience in the pharmaceutical business; and have been the leading manufacturer of media components and excipients for the pharmaceutical, biotech and fermentation industries for over 60 years.

We offer pharmaceutical ingredients, which are lactose products, emulsifiers and other excipients. Our life sciences division sells animal and non-animal products like peptone and protein lysates. We are the worldwide leader in the peptone segment. Our protein hydrolysates are manufactured using the state-of-the-art manufacturing and automated control processes. Similarly, our lactose excipients are certified to meet all compendial requirements of the NF, EP and JP monographs.

As a part of the Kerry Group, we have the broadest ingredient and flavor technologies, development resources, and backing of a \$6 billion (about Rs 28,848 crore) worth global organization. This allows our pharma application teams to develop innovative new cell nutrition applications and cell nutrition-designated products, including solutions for vaccine-related and diagnostic format products. Overall, we have a very diverse portfolio and deeper application expertise, which is the core strength of our business in helping customers deliver greater yield and productivity.

How do you look at India as a market for Kerry's range of products?

India is leading its way in industrialization, and is an important destination for us. Almost all multinational pharma/biotech players have their presence here, it is important for us to be able to serve their needs locally. By expanding our operations in India, we are responding to our customers, who are looking for local technical expertise, technical and marketing support, and physical inventory. This will enable us to provide products and support more closely to their manufacturing facilities.

Can you tell us more about Kerry's marketing activities in India?

Currently, we have direct sales and marketing capabilities in India that support the pharmaceutical organizations that are based in India, as well as to the customers in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Additionally, we partner with sales distributors as well as many channel partners across Asia. Moving forward, we are exploring various possibilities with regard to our operations in India, which may include adding sales, marketing, R&D, manufacturing, and supply chain capabilities.

What are Kerry's strategies for the Indian market?

We are in the process of finalizing our strategies at this time. Part of this will include: looking for appropriate channel partners and ways to serve our multinational partners directly through a local presence. Part of my role here is to help finalize the strategy, and organizational structure for our operations in India, to ensure that we are continually exceeding our customers' expectations.

What sort of investments are made in India?

Unfortunately, I am unable to comment on this right now. We are still determining the right structure and the exact amount of investment that will be required. But, what I can say is that India is our primary focus, and it will be at the top of our list in terms of what we need to do to continue delivering greater innovation and value to our customers in India.

Do you see India as a strategic location for setting up your R&D center?

We have a global network of 26 technical centers with over 450 R&D personnel with an ingredients portfolio exceeding 9,000 products. We have R&D technical centers located in Europe, the Americas, and Asia. For pharmaceuticals ingredients, we have R&D expertise based in the US and Europe. As we continue to grow our business here, we would like to see India as another strategic location for our R&D expertise.

We have sophisticated global manufacturing capabilities covering several different processing technologies with over 75 manufacturing facilities in 16 countries worldwide. Kerry has production plants for protein specialties in North America and the Netherlands, and a production plant for yeast extracts in Scotland. Our protein hydrolysates have a wide range of applications. In addition to its superior performance in cell and tissue culture and fermentation applications, it is also quite popular as supplements for human performance/nutrition, and as functional food ingredients. Our pharmaceutical excipients are produced at a fully GMP compliant FDA registered drug establishment in Norwich, New York, US.

What is the kind of competition faced by the company? Who are your competitors?

I think it depends on how you define competition. If you say our competitors are the lactose suppliers, then I would say, we are well ahead of them. If you think our competitors as other excipient producers, then I say, I don't think there is another company out there that can offer customers the spectrum of product knowledge, application expertise, and technologies that we have. Sure, there are a few companies that specialize in a couple of sectors, or combinations of them. But not across the whole spectrum in the way that we can.

We have an advantage because of the fact that our application base is so broad, and our expertise extends well beyond one

cellulose or protein hydrolysate. We bring it all together and use our technology for a much wider range of applications to deliver the results for developing the business of our customers.

What according to you is the market trends now?

We have seen a gradual shift in companies establishing manufacturing bases in India and China, with some moving away from the US and Europe. India is also turning into a R&D and formulation hub. It is establishing a market for pharmaceutical ingredients. India has the highest number of PhD holders than any other country, thus providing access to people with technological capabilities to support formulation development and R&D.

From a product perspective, the trend continues to move from animal-free to more defined non-animal protein media. Our animal-derived protein hydrolysates (peptones) were the first step towards serum-free media (SFM), and we were the first to market non-animal-derived protein hydrolysates for both serum replacement and general media/system optimization.

Any challenge that you face while entering the Indian market?

Regulatory is always a challenge, especially, as national and international regulatory regimes increasingly oppose to the use of animal-derived products. Sheffield operates in highly regulated markets, so we have experience in handling regulatory issues. I think, we are positioned well to address the expansion of our operations in India, and also provide regulatory service and products to help our customers make the registration of the drugs easier.

Jahanara Parveen