

Emami gears up for winter with a slew of products

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Emami, the makers of Boroplus, Mentho Plus and Zandu balm, will nationally roll out a new soap and skin creams within a month to strengthen its portfolio ahead of winter, a crucial period for the personal care and healthcare major.

The soap, Malai Kesar, was a variant of its cold cream with the same name, said Aditya Agarwal, director, Emami. The product was test marketed during April and May in West Bengal. "The national roll-out will happen now," said Agarwal. The ₹1,006-crore company would launch the new skin creams by November.

Priced at ₹22 for 75 grams, Malai Kesar will be Emami's second product in the ₹8,500-crore Indian soaps market. The first one, a glycerin soap, was launched last year. Agarwal said the company would launch a smaller stock keeping unit (SKU) of Malai Kesar in the coming months. The SKU, mostly a 25-gram soap, will be introduced rural markets.

Emami derives close to 40 per cent of its sales from rural areas, higher than the industry average of about 30 per cent. It has smaller packs of all key brands, including Navratna Oil, Boroplus, Fair & Handsome, Fast Relief, Mentho Plus, etc.

Emami is also looking to expand its hair care portfolio. The company recently launched a range of hair colours under Hair Life brand. Agarwal said the company would roll out shampoos and hair oils in the second phase. This will happen in the next few months, with the products positioned on the herbal platform. "Having been in skin-care, the next logical step for us was hair care," said Agarwal. "Navratna hair oil is a cooling oil. We needed to do more. Hair colours, shampoos, more hair oils should help us drive penetration in the category."

In hair colours, for instance, the company has both powder hair dyes and cream-based products, targeted at lower and higher socio-economic classes.

The over ₹1,000-crore hair colour market in India has been growing at a steady clip of 25 per cent year-on-year, led by companies such as Godrej Consumer, LÓreal, Revlon and Procter & Gamble (P&G).

P&G recently announced that it would take its Wella hair colours, sold widely in beauty parlours and salons in India, into retail outlets, indicating a shift from a niche channel of distribution to a mass one. The idea, according analysts, is to grab a bite of the growing hair colour market. But the road to success in the fiercely competitive ₹4,000-crore shampoo market and the ₹3,000-hair oil market may not be easy for the firm, believe experts. Besides Dabur, present in both hair oils and shampoos, using the herbal proposition to sell its products, there are a number of regional players too in the space.