

Emami set to charge up glucose drink market

SHINE JACOB
Kolkata, 24 July

Get ready for a charged up battle in the Indian glucose drink market soon. Kolkata-based Emami Ltd is gearing up for a head-on clash with established players in the sector like Heinz and Dabur. After soft launching its glucose brand called Zandu Gluco Charge early this year, the FMCG major is looking for a phase-wise launch across the country, competing with brands like Glucon D of Heinz and Glucose D by Dabur.

According to analysts, the ₹ 550-600 crore category is growing at a rate of about 16 per cent per annum. The category, however, is dominated by Glucon D, which holds 55 per cent market share, followed by Glucose D a healthy 25 per cent. GSKCH-Boost Glucose and Glaxose D also own a considerable share.

Emami has launched its brand in West Bengal, which has a high per capita consumption, and is on the lookout for new horizons: "The initial consumer and trade response from West Bengal has been quite encouraging. Apart from this, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil



Nadu are also big in the consumption of glucose," says Saroj Chakraborty, chief executive officer, Emami Biotech.

But it may not be an easy ride for Emami, as other new entrants like Glaxo Smithkline and Rasna are also in the race. "Competition is very fierce in the segment with Heinz and Dabur sitting on huge market share. The emphasis still remains to be on distribution-and-push strategy rather than demand-generated pull strategy. The reason: consumer still prefer ready-to-drink over to-be-

made. Above all, it will be a task for Emami, as Glucon-D is already generic in the industry and traditionally it has always been difficult to break the generic product," says Krupal Mehta, vice-president, brand management and corporate communication, Angel Broking.

However, Emami through its products like Himani Sona Chandi Chyawanprash, Boroplus, Navratna, Fair and Handsome and Fast Relief had proved in the past that it is possible to take on generic products and eat into the market share of multination-

als. Analysts say that the ready-to-drink concept could be one way of taking on the giants in a big way. The Emami brand variants "Classic, Orange and Pineapple" are also aggressively priced to beat competition. While Classic 100 gram is priced at ₹21, the other two variants are charged ₹26.

The brand is targeting the consumer mentality to go for value-added energy beverages for health reasons, even through its tag line, "Energy se bharpur, Bimariyon se rakkheydur", highlighting the vitamin C content in its brand.

While accepting that it would be a tough battle ahead, Chakraborty says the focus for a new brand in an old category is to ensure a high degree of trials, for the consumers to feel the difference. As long as this is done well, market-share is a derivative.

Emami expects the category to grow 117 per cent to ₹1,300 crore from the current ₹600 crore in the next five years, where all the brands have space to grow. "With the deep pockets that Emami has, I am sure it will attack the distribution channel of Heinz and Dabur and try to establish a strong brand connection with Gluco charge. Emami's initial test marketing, product positioning and understanding of the segment gives the perception of a very healthy competition in the coming few years in the glucose drink category," Mehta adds.

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