

Sitting pretty on a port-a-toilet biz

BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATION
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SOCIAL SERVICE People doing their 'private business' on roadsides, beside railway tracks and behind bushes is a common sight in India. But one man saw a social need as well as an untapped business opportunity in providing portable toilets. Read on.

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NEW DELHI: The year was 1997 and Rajeev Kher, a business graduate from Symbiosis, Pune had just arrived in Canada for his first job as a marketing executive. It was here that Kher first came across portable restrooms – a concept which he felt was "socially impactful, and had a high untapped business opportunity in India.

Kher soon returned to India with a business proposal in mind that could help provide adequate sanitation to millions.

In 1999, he set up Saraplast, India's first portable sanitation solutions company. The company provides end-to-end portable sanitation products and services; it manufactures, services/cleans and sells 'portable toilet cabins' under the brand name 3S – which stands for Sanitation Solutions Simplified.

A for-profit social enterprise,

Saraplast is the largest professional company in the country and provides mains free (unconnected to water and sewage system) portable sanitation facilities as per international standards and waste regulation norms. Headquartered in Pune, it has operations in Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Goa, Pondicherry and Delhi.

The initial years, Kher said, were a big struggle. On returning to India, Kher decided to get in touch with companies abroad that were manufacturing portable restrooms (PR) but none was ready to help without a fee. Finally, a German company offered two PR's for free, which were modified for Indian use. That was how Kher started.

The PR's, to start with, were used in wedding and community functions. "We grew slowly and steadily. From importing PRs from Germany we started manufacturing them locally in 2006, but funding remained a major problem as banks were not willing to invest," Kher said.

In 2009, he got his first investment from a venture capital fund. The second came just last year, from ResponsAbility, an investment firm. "We see a major need in India in terms of sanitation, which affects many aspects of development. Saraplast is able to address this pressing need, while focusing on building a scalable business," said Anand Chandani, regional director, south and south-East Asia, ResponsAbility.

Today, 3S reaches almost all of India and many parts of the globe. "We annually manage 155 million litres of liquid waste and help save over 104 million litres of fresh water," Kher told HT.

3S manufactures Indian and western toilets as well as toilets specially designed for the physically challenged; they also make urinals, washstands, security cabins and shower cabins. Restrooms are made from recyclable materials and the company provides total sanitation and waste management services. "Right from installing



Rajeev Kher poses with his portable toilet cabins

restrooms to cleaning and treating sewage, we do it all," said Kher.

He said the company's research found that more than half of India's population defecated in the open. "By and large, people who did not have an access to restrooms were doing their personal business out on the roads, pavements, fields, into the rivers and all across the city. This had many adverse effects leading to major health issues and even causing a rise in infant mortality due to the spread of diseases," Kher said.

3S provides toilet cabins on a lease-service basis, and 90% of the company's revenue is generated through servicing the units that require daily waste evacuation and maintenance. Cleaning and evacuation trucks travel daily to each of location where toilets are deployed to evacuate, clean and dis-

cash&carry

\$2.2 mn or ₹13.64 crore
Saraplast's revenue in 2011-12

- 3S has been profitable 2 years since its inception; Saraplast has been profitable since 2007
- 80% revenue from construction industry, 11% from events

sewage treatment plants.

One restroom unit's waste tank has a per day capacity of 200 litres. Average life of a unit is around 10 years.

As they give their products on lease, the company owns the product and hence takes responsibility for its maintenance – including refurbishing it at the end of its life cycle. Providing cleaning services keeps their product relevant to the customer while also ensuring that the hygiene levels are maintained.

Servicing also provides them a steady stream of revenue that a product-only approach may not have generated. This combined approach means the customers get a complete solution for their sanitation needs from a single provider, and do not need to search for post-installation service agents.

OPEN SECRET

1.1 billion World population that practises open defecation; 626 mn of these are in India

2 million No of children that die each year from pneumonia and diarrhoea arising from lack of hygienic toilet facilities

HT MIND & BODY WINTER COLD

Guard your baby against the cold



Experts suggest that the baby should be exposed to the winter cold, with adequate protection, for 20-30 minutes daily to help strengthen her immunity.

WINTER CARE Experts claim Kangaroo care, breastfeeding best way to guard infants against dipping temperature

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NEW DELHI: As the temperature plummets in the city, it is not only the adults who need to cover up and guard against the biting cold. Children, especially newborns, need special care during the winter season and need to be kept adequately warm to prevent them from falling sick, experts suggest.

HOLD THE BABY CLOSE TO YOU

Experts claim 'Kangaroo care' is one of the best ways to protect your newborns from the chill. Kangaroo care is a technique practiced on newborns, usually pre-term infants, where the infant is held, skin-to-skin, with an adult (preferably the mother). This form of care seeks to provide restored closeness of the newborn with his/her mother by placing the infant in direct contact with her. It also ensures physiological and psychological warmth and bonding.

MAKE A COZY ENVIRONMENT AT HOME

In order to provide a cozy environment to your baby at home, choose a warm flannel-fitted sheet for the baby's crib. Warm the bed by keeping a hot water

bottle or a heating pad and keep him/her away from cold water.

It is extremely important to maintain the room temperature. "Thermostat is not well-developed in a new born baby. Hence, they have to be protected adequately. The room where the baby is kept should be warm enough. The ideal temperature should be somewhere around 24-25 degrees Celsius," said Dr Nitin Verma, senior consultant, paediatric at Max Super-Specialty Hospital, Saket.

DON'T MAKE YOUR BABY LOOK LIKE AN ESKIMO! Make sure that baby is covered well and has at least three layers of clothing/woolens on. Don't wrap him/her in a bulky sweater or jacket. Use cotton vest as the first layer; then wrap him/her in a thermal or a body suit and lastly cover him up with a sweater or jacket.

Also, too many warm clothes can result in sweating that could lead to cold, cough and rashes. So it is necessary to be careful that the child is not sweating excessively.

"Babies can't regulate their own body temperature and tend to lose their body heat rapidly through their hands, feet and head. Hence, it's very important to keep these parts covered. Use socks/booties for feet, mittens for hands and a cap for the head and ears," said Dr Verma.

Giving a massage to a baby with soft hands, preferably with olive oil, is also advisable. Also, a baby should not be covered up always and instead be exposed to the winter cold with adequate protection on for around 20-30 minutes in the morning. This will strengthen immunity in him/her.

THINGS TO DO

- Heat the bathroom before taking baby for a bath.
- Use soft winter clothes for your baby. A warm wool, cap and gloves are helpful to protect the delicate skin on hands, face and head.
- Use skin care products which are rich in Vitamin A, Vitamin D and Vitamin E.
- Use cold creams in place of baby powders. Creams form a protective layer that protects against roughness, moisture and uneasiness.

LIVER DISEASES LIKE JAUNDICE MIGHT ALSO SHOW UP

For 29-year-old Sumedha Parikh who gave birth to her first child on December 29, the joy of motherhood was shadowed by the news that her baby was diagnosed with jaundice. "I can never forget that phase. Before the feeling of becoming a mother could sink in, my baby was diagnosed with jaundice. Although, the doctors told us that it is common in newborns we couldn't stop worrying," said Parikh, who was admitted at Max Super-Specialty Hospital in Saket.

Due to low immunity, newborns are prone to various other diseases such as cold, cough, throat and chest infection and diarrhoea. According to the doctors, the baby should be fed adequately and at the right time to make her strong enough to fight these infections.

HT VALUE+ CONSUMER INSIGHTS AND TRENDS

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STRATEGY

Snacking on Indian flavours

TASTY TREATS Multinational and Indian brands offering Western salty snacks are adding an increasing range of Indian flavours to strengthen their appeal with consumers

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MUMBAI: Last year, when Italian-Dutch confectionery major, Perfetti Van Melle, entered the salted snacks category for the first time ever, it chose India for its foray. Remarkably, across its three chips variants of Stop Not Go!, Diskets and Stixz, its flavours are strongly Indian – Wow Masala, Pudina Passion, Tomato Tadka, Tomato Chutney and Mad Masala.

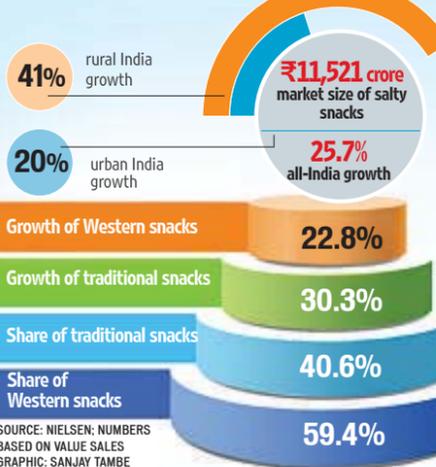
Even as major companies enter the traditional salty snacks category to give the likes of Haldiram's keen competition, they are also adding Indian flavours to their Western salty snack ranges.

"We have selected flavours to be in the heart of the market. Our core target is teenagers and our products and flavors tested well across age groups. The actual consumption might happen within a broader age band," said Samit Srivastava, head – snacks business, Perfetti Van Melle India.

With India's branded salty snacks market growing at a healthy clip, multinational and Indian snack brands are going all out offer variety and flavours. Even as branded traditional snacks are growing more than branded Western snacks, Western snacks still dominate the salty snacks category.

At a shop in Mumbai, Sangeeta Ghosh picks up a packet of Haldiram's Bikaneri Bhujia to serve guests coming in the evening. Her son, 10, picks up

SALTY SNACKS IN NUMBERS (JAN-NOV 2013)



SOURCE: NIELSEN; NUMBERS BASED ON VALUE SALES GRAPHIC: SANJAY TAMBE

a Lay's Magic Masala pack.

While PepsiCo's Frito Lays tops the Western salty snacks segment with Lay's, it recently established Lehar to compete in the traditional salties segment. Retail shops say that Lay's Magic Masala is the most popular in the Lay's range, followed by American Style Cream and Onion, and Classic Salted.

"Targeting the youth, for us, is about the aspiration quotient of the flavour, and not local versus international flavours. Each

needs to tell a story that consumers can relate to. For Lay's Chile Limon, we played with the idea of 'wicked chillies' and 'naughty nimboos' in the communication," said Gaurav Mehta, category director – Western snacks, PepsiCo India Foods. "We look at flavours that the Indian palate would like to try out."

Lay's created the Mango Mastana and Honey Chili flavours three years ago after a consumer contest threw them up as winners. Sweet Chili

and Grilled Cheese will soon be launched. The company uses its acquired Uncle Chips brand to offer Indian flavours – masala, pudina. It straddles salty snacks with Lay's, Uncle Chips, Cheetos, and Lehar including Kurkure.

In aggressive competition with the multinationals in Western salty snacks are Indian brands Bingo! from ITC and Hippo from Parle Agro. Reportedly growing at 30% a year, Bingo! is the second largest Western salty snack brand after Lay's. Its four sub brands – Yumitos, Mad Angles, Tedhe Medhe and Tangles – offer international and Indian flavours ranging across salted, cream and onion, chilli, masala, tomato, pudina, aachaar and chaat.

"Hippo has two variants – Round Round for kids, with regional India flavours, and World Toasties for the youth, with country-specific flavours," said Nadia Chauthan, CMO and joint MD, Parle Agro. Hippo's Indian flavours include Goan Butter Garlic, Shillong Noodle Masala, Desi Chapatta, Gujarati Mango Chutney and Punjab Da Pickle. Vijay Udasi, executive director, Nielsen India, highlighted the appeal of Indian flavours for consumers, saying, "The branded salty snacks category continues to showcase its resilience. It's the impulse nature of the product, increasing distribution and availability, conversion from unbranded snacks to branded, and Indianised flavours that are driving the growth."



market tracker

GRAPHIC NOVEL ON GABBAR SINGH



One of India's most legendary bandits, Gabbar Singh, created 30 years ago in Hindi film *Sholay*, has now been given a past and a life story in a new graphic novel, *Gabbar*, created by Graphic India and Sholay Media and Entertainment. Publishing partner Westland Tata is putting the book – which also includes "Sholay Shorts" telling short stories of *Sholay's* Thakur Baldev Singh, Sooma Bhopali and Sambha – on retail shelves. *Gabbar* will also be extended to motion comic series across mobile devices.

NEW TV RATING RULES

India's TV viewership measurement scenario is set to change with the Union Cabinet approving the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's recommendations. Now, no company can hold more than 10% equity in a TV rating agency, or in a broadcasting or advertising set-up. A minimum panel size of 20,000 homes will need to be covered within six months, to be scaled up by 10,000 homes annually till 50,000 homes are covered. 25% of the panel homes will be rotated every year.

APPS FAVOUR ENTERTAINMENT

Vservomobi's Mobile App Developer Survey 2013 found that while 75% of app developers have been around for less than three years in a sector that's showing huge promise, in the first year, 62% work on the Android platform, embracing other platforms only after that. Indie developers, who make up a majority 47% of app developers, focus more on the entertainment category, multimedia apps and games.

Nagpur to host 'Krishi Vasant' farm expo in February

MUMBAI: A five-day national-level farmers' meet and exhibition titled 'Krishi Vasant' has been organised in Nagpur between February 9 and 13, which is likely to be attended by five lakh farmers from across the country. Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar told this to reporters here on Sunday.

The farm exhibition-cum-meet is dubbed as the 'Mahakumbh' of agriculture. It will be jointly organised by the Joint Agriculture Ministry, the Maharashtra government and the industry lobby Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). "Indian agriculture sector has experienced a turnaround.

It has seen 3.64% growth rate and we now have 260 million tonnes of food grain that is enough to feed the country and export some as well," Pawar said. According to him, last year, India was the largest exporter of rice and second largest exporter of wheat, sugar and cotton in the world. "Hence, this is the perfect

time for 'Krishi Vasant', the largest ever gathering of farmers and everything involved with farming in the country. This event was a long-felt need," Pawar added. The Railways has agreed to subsidise the ticket rates for farmers going to attend the event, by 50%. "Farmers travelling to

attend the event from across the country will get 50% railway subsidy," the minister said. The event will have over half a million visitors and over five million more farmers will benefit from the dedicated webcasting of the event across the nooks and corners of the country, down to the block level.