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“We are constantly re-inventing ourselves with new designs and innovation excellence”

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Part of the USD 1.6 billion Indian industrial conglomerate CK Birla Group, Orient Electric is the largest exporter of fans from India with every second fan exported from the country being labeled under the Orient brand. Established in 1954, the company has become a consumer electronics and lighting brand with a range of modern kitchen and home appliances, smart lighting systems, expanding to switch gears. The company already has a notable presence in the Nepali market which it aims to expand by introducing its entire range of products. Showcasing its aggressive new approach, Orient Electric unveiled its new range of ceiling fans, lighting systems and other products at the Neek Electro Tech 2016. Durgesh Buxy, Head- International Sales and Anshuman Chakravarty, Head Brand and Corporate Communication were in Nepal for the Expo. In an interview with New Business Age, Buxy and Chakravarty shared details about the company's market expansion plans for Nepal, its new range of products, among other issues.



Durgesh Buxy
Head- International Sales
Orient Electric

Anshuman Chakravarty
Head Brand and Corporate Communication
Orient Electric

Excerpts:

How is Orient Electric presenting itself in the Neek Electro Tech 2016?

Durgesh: We have been in Nepal for the last five years and we are the largest company here selling fans. Over and above, Orient Electric is offering a range of products apart from fans. We are coming up with a variety of lighting products, electrical appliances and switch gears. We are looking to launch our entire range of Orient Electric products at the Neek Electro Tech 2016. Similarly, we are launching our new Aero series of aerodynamic fans, for the first time in the international market from Nepal.

How do you assess the Nepali electrical market?

Durgesh: The growth of the market here is very promising. Traditionally, it has been a conventional market, but for over the last few years we are seeing Nepalis becoming more aware about quality. Consumers here are buying brands that are lifestyle oriented. A lot of modern thinking and acceptability regarding product innovation and design customisation are changing the trends in the mindset of Nepali customers.

Anshuman: The consumer electronics market in Nepal has grown by more than 100 percent in the last year. People are increasingly buying branded products, and, secondly, the Terai belt of Nepal has witnessed rising temperatures over the past few years leading to the increased demand for fans. Now our complete range of products from fans to home appliances and switch gears is helping us to reach out to the smaller towns and districts of Nepal.

How is the segment wise presence of Orient Electric in the Nepali market?

Durgesh: Fans have always been our biggest undertaking and we are also getting a very good response for our entire range of home appliances. We are offering the entire range of Orient Electric products such as mixers, juicers, grinders, blenders, dry irons, geezers and coolers. So, Orient Electric is widely acclaimed and accepted in the Nepali market. We are no longer just a fan supplier but a complete lifestyle brand for customers here.

Anshuman: The price range of our fans starts from Rs 1,200 to Rs 16,000. We are catering to every strata of society from the lower income class to the middle and upper class. The fans that we have launched in the Expo are the premium Aeroquiet series ceiling fans priced at around Rs 7,000. In fans, we are the leader with over 50 percent of the market share here. But we still see scope to grow in other segments too.

How is Orient Electric's area wise coverage?

Durgesh: We are not only present in the big cities like Kathmandu or Birgunj, we are also present across emerging towns. We have a very good presence in the hilly areas while also having a notable presence in the Terai area. We endeavour to reach the maximum number of customers. With the countrywide network of our authorised dealer Premier Overseas, we are reaching all the nooks and corners of the country.

How is the brand positioned in India and elsewhere?

Durgesh: It's an aspirational family-owned brand from the house of Birlas which is one of the most trusted industrial conglomerates in India. We received the Superbrand status for all our products last year.

Anshuman: We have been known in India for a while for being a Birla group company. However, the aggression in the market in terms of marketing started three years ago. We have changed our brand identity and positioning in a bid to connect with new age customers who want to try new products. We are in association with Indian cricket team Captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni for all our advertising. In terms of positioning, we are trying to position our products in the premium segment of customers to make our brand a value-led brand. We are perhaps the largest manufacturers of fans in South and South East Asia. Similarly, we are the largest exporter of fans in India exporting to more than 35 countries.

How many products are there in your portfolio at present?

Anshuman: We have the widest range of fans in the largest range of colours with 350 SKUs. We have a huge range of geezers, coolers along with kitchen and other home appliances. We are the third largest lamp manufacturer in India and in Nepal also we have launched lighting products.

How do you see the changing demand in lighting products and consumer appliances?

Anshuman: The world is changing from GLS and CFLs to LEDs bulbs. In the last year and a half, there has been a significant shift in demand for lighting products. We are producing all types of LED lighting products at our manufacturing units in Noida and Faridabad (India). Orient Electric can safely say that it will be a leading manufacturer and seller of these products in Nepal. Similarly, in the appliances segment, the demand for our coolers and geezers has risen over the last few quarters and I believe in the coming seasons we will grow further.

What are the USPs of Orient products?

Durgesh: Quality, trust and innovation are our biggest strengths. We are very consistent with the quality and are strong with the in-house manufacturing units. We are constantly re-inventing ourselves with new designs and innovation excellence.

Anshuman: 'Switch to Smart' has been our positioning line in terms of our brand. We ensure our products are not only smart in looks but also in terms of energy consumption and the overall performance. These are the key factors that we keep in mind while planning our products. Secondly, we want this brand to be a one-stop-shop for all home electrical requirements. Today we have expanded our range not only to fans and home appliances, but also to MCB's, RCB's, isolators and distribution panels.

Any expansion plans in Nepal?

Durgesh: We do have a very aggressive expansion plan. We are coming up with organised retailing here. We have successfully launched our retail format Orient Smart Shop which is doing exceedingly well in India.

When will they open here?

Anshuman: That is also one of the reasons why we are here. We had a couple of proposals coming from different cities so we are evaluating those proposals. I am sure within the next two to three months our shops will open and these will be exclusive Orient outlets.

What are your plans for product promotion in Nepal?

Durgesh: We are already doing regular promotions, apart from participating in trade fairs like the Neek Electro Tech Expo and reaching out to customers through a 360 degree promotion campaign in Nepal. You will be seeing us not only in newspapers but also in all types of media platforms in the upcoming months.