

To cash in on Clean India campaign, HUL enters low-cost toilet cleaner market

New product in powder form priced at ₹10/sachet; launched on a pilot basis

PRIYANKA PANI

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Fast moving consumer goods major Hindustan Unilever (HUL) has entered the low-cost toilet cleaner market in an effort to cash in on the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan which aims to make India “open defecation-free” by 2019 by building 100 million toilets in rural India.

However, unlike the liquid cleaners sold by the company under brand Domex and its arch rival Reckitt Benckiser's Harpic, the new product has been launched in powdered form at ₹10 per sachet. This is more than 50 per cent lower than the current average price of ₹24-30 for cleaning products. The new product is aimed especially at the rural markets to have a first mover advantage in a market where people still use acid, bleaching powder and detergents among other things to clean

their toilets. “We are seeing an increase in number of toilets being built in India, however, there is still a void when it comes to affordable toilet cleaning solutions. Liquid toilet cleaners are found to be expensive and hence a barrier to use,” Priya Nair, Executive Director, Home Care at HUL, told *BusinessLine*.

Rural markets

With this product, HUL expects consumers in the rural markets to shift to branded products.

“HUL has had a history of getting to market consumer-relevant and affordable innovations. With the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan we are seeing an increase in number of toilets being built in India. However there is still a void when it comes to affordable toilet cleaning solutions,” Nair said adding that the company is currently piloting



the product in parts of Andhra Pradesh and would soon take it to other parts of the country.

Lately, FMCG companies making sanitation products have been investing heavily in spreading awareness about better hygiene practices.

For instance, HUL has built a water, hygiene and sanitation community centre in Mumbai last year, linking the move to the government's Swachh Bharat campaign through its global sustainability agenda. The company, through its Domex Toilet Academy, are also trying to make toilets accessible and affordable, while promoting the benefits of clean toilets and good hygiene. Reckitt

Benckiser has roped in Amitabh Bachchan as ambassador to cover villages in nearly a dozen states, pledging ₹100 crore for its cleanliness drive.

According to Euromonitor International's data, 46 per cent of households had toilet facilities in 2016, which is very low.

The toilet cleaners segment, which was growing at 3-6 per cent in the past few years, has seen a sudden surge of 10-12 per cent growth since the Modi government launched the sanitation programme about three years ago.