

## Our First Objective is to Provide Value to Customers



**Saugata Gupta**, MD of Marico, spoke to **Suman Layak** on how the FMCG company is handling the lockdown and the opening up. Edited excerpts:

### **H**ow has the lockdown affected your operations in terms of demand and distribution?

As far as demand goes, the premium part of our portfolio is a little stressed. But this is not all about demand. There are issues with our distributors and their ability to service. We are operating at 50-60% capacity. Because of restrictions, there were problems in distributing our products in rural areas. Now a lot of rural areas are in green zones and things will be opening up there.

### **What kind of changes did you have to make in the flow of products and people?**

Our first priority is safety. Obviously, we are operating at reduced capacity, but most of our plants are operational. We have provided transport where needed and made arrangements for workers to stay on the premises if necessary. We have also supported our channels, our third-party providers; we gave insurance cover and even financial support to some of them.

**"We have launched a sanitiser for fruits and vegetables. We may go in for a couple of more launches in that category"**

### **Marico is looking at launching new products in the health and hygiene categories.**

A lot of companies have made a tactical move to making sanitisers. We want to be a little more strategic, because when things settle down, only big brands with differentiations will work. We have launched a sanitiser for fruits and vegetables. We may go in for a couple of more launches in that category.

### **How are you handling the cost reduction issue?**

Our first objective is to provide value to our customers and also protect all jobs. These are paramount. In order to do both we have to look at the entire value chain and ensure that we can question everything. What was considered critical in normal circumstances, we will have to take a re-look at it now. ■