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Paranjpe elevation shines light on Indians rising up Unilever's ranks

With former HUL head Nitin Paranjpe's elevation as Unilever COO, the spotlight is on a growing league of Indians, who have worked at HUL and later played a larger role at the parent. See Page 7

Spotlight on Indian talent with Unilever's new hires

Among EMs, India is among the largest contributors of top executives to Unilever

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ast week, Unilever Plo named Nitin Paranipe as chief operating officer. reaffirming its trust in the vast talent ecosystem the Anglo-Dutch consumer goods giant has cultivated and nourished in India over decades

Paranipe, a former head of Unilever's India unit Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) and till now the global head of its foods and refreshments business, is among the growing league of Indians who have worked at HUL and have later played a larger role at the parent.

Currently, 200 employees of HUL are working on global assignments within Unilever, making India one of the largest contributors of top talent among all emerging markets for the company.

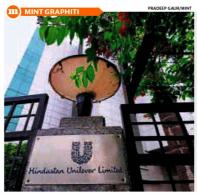
Some of them are Rohit Jawa, currently executive vice-president (EVP), North Asia; Hemant Bakshi, EVP Unilever Indonesia; J.V. Raman, EVP, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus; Kedar Lele, chief executive officer (CEO) and managing director (MD), Unilever Bangla desh; and Sanjiv Kakkar, EVP Middle East North Africa, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus,

That apart, over the years, 400 HUL executives have moved on to become CEOs across the world and across industries. These include Sudhanshu Vats, group CEO, Viacom18

among others.

Media; Mohit Anand, Kellogg's MD for South Asia; Vineet Taneja, currently MD, Dyson India; Gopal Vittal, MD and CEO (India and South Asia) of Bharti Airtel, among others, HUL is rightfully known as a leadership factory, "exporting talent to Unilever and to the industry at large", a company spokesperson said over email.

Additionally, three Indians are now part of Unilever Leadership



In the top rung

Three Indians are now part of Unilever Leadership Executive, an 11-member body that includes the company's top C-Suite executives across key functions

Hindustan Unilever
Unilever



- NITIN PARANIPE Chief executive officer,
- 2008-2013 Chief operating officer



Executive director (human

- resources) 2007-2013 Chief HR officer



SANIEEV MEHTA Chairman and

- managing director

President South Asia

global leaders, B.P. Biddappa, executive director, human resources, HUL, said in a phone interview.

Additionally, since India has gained ground as an important market for Unilever-in 2018, India's contribution was 9% of Unilever's global turnover-talent from India has become visible within the global parent as well. HUL, which reported sales of ₹34,619 crore in fiscal year (FY) 2018, is India's largest consumer eral management perspective." said Biddappa.

"HUL has always been a magnet for good talent, starting right from the campus recruits that join the company. The initial training at HUL is fantastic as it grounds you into the reality of the business. Gives you very good exposure to all the functions and to hinterland India. It truly is unrivalled in the industry," said Sandeep Kataria, current CEO of Bata India, who

worked both at HUL, and then Unilever till 2010. Also, given India's complexity as a market, it gives you that exposure to handle other markets, he added.

It also helps that over the last decade, more Indians have become open to over-

seas postings, quite early in their

"What's happening is that increasingly, people are looking for international experiences even earlier on. Twenty years ago, people might have gone out a little later in their careers; now they are happy to go out in the first eight to 10 years and that shapes a very different perspective and skill set," Biddappa

A BREEDING GROUND FOR TALENT

CURRENTLY 200 employees of HUL are working on OVFR the years 400 HUL executives have become CEOs across the world and across industries.

AS India became an Unilever, talent from India also became

IN 2018 India unit Hindustan Unilever's contribution was 9% of Unilever's global visible within the firm.

Ashok Ganguly and Keki Dadiseth, all former chairmen of HUL who went on to play larger roles within Unilever back in the 1990s and early 2000s, to more recent appointments such as Paranjpe, Mehta and Nair.

Executive (ULE)-an 11-member

body that includes Unilever's

C-Suite executives across key func-

tions-after it elevated Sanjiv

Mehta, current chairman and MD

of HUL to the ULE. Leena Nair, a

former HUL hand, and now Uni-

lever's chief human resources offi-

India, where HUL dominates the

fast moving consumer goods mar-

ket, continues to be an exporter of

talent, starting with T. Thomas,

cer, is also part of the ULE.

The company's practice of making employees work across functions and navigate the volatile sales channel that relies heavily on local mom-pop stores has helped create goods firm. Since FY10, its sales have nearly doubled. "The fact that we give early big

jobs from HUL-they work in operations, and in factories; sales and in the field, and we have people who do careers across functions... so, a human resources person will do both corporate and factory HR. They are given very strong, big jobs early on and that builds a strong sense of leadership and a good gen-