

BLUE FOOTPRINT

Innovation, by the bucketful

FMCG major HUL says its 'smart-foam' technology helps cut water consumption

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Fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) major Hindustan Unilever (HUL) has re-launched its largest selling brand in the homecare category, Rin, with a 'smart-foam' technology that helps reduce usage of excess water. The move is part of the company's strategy to grow business by creating products that are sustainable.

Talking about the latest innovation, an HUL spokesperson said that rinsing of clothes consumes about 70 per cent of the water and the patented 'smart-foam' technology cuts the foam during the rinse stage and helps in saving two buckets of



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water in every wash. "The technology was launched in more than 10 States across both Rin bars and powders last year and has been very well received by consumers. We are planning to extend this to more markets in 2018," the spokesperson said, adding the technology was launched in India last year.

"There has been a spike in sales in water-stressed areas of Maharashtra since the launch. Moreover, sales in Maharashtra

and Greater Maharashtra have grown at double the rate of rest of India in 2017," he added.

Feedback from research

The India-focussed innovation was a result of research done in areas that face acute shortage of water. Besides, rising concern over global warming and water crisis also led to the innovation that will help people cut cost and time to procure water for this purpose.

An analysis by Unilever globally shows that around 38 per cent of Unilever's water footprint comes from the laundry process and a significant proportion of this is washing laundry by hand in several developing countries, including India. The FMCG giant wants to reduce the water consumption associated with the consumer use of its products by 2020.

This is not the first time that HUL has innovated based on research and consumer insights. Last year, the company launched its toilet cleaner brand Domex in a powdered form in sachets to tap the rural market. HUL has come up with seven such product innovations in the last few years. Globally, Unilever, HUL's parent, invests around €1 billion in R&D every year and has filed over 20,000 patents and patent applications for innovations in various products and brands.