

"This market is new, poised for exponential growth"



iD Fresh Food Pvt. Ltd. is synonymous with idli and dosa batter. The decade-old startup which kicked off operations in 2005 was driven by the acumen of IIM Bangalore alumnus, PC Musthafa and his associates, Shamsudeen TK, Abdul Nazer, Jafar TK and Noushad TA. After a fund infusion of Rs 35 crore from Helion Venture Partners, the company currently has production units in six cities, including two plants in Bengaluru and one each at Chennai, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Mangaluru and Dubai. In India, the ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat foods are poised for exponential growth. **PC MUSTHAFA**, CEO, iD Fresh Food Pvt. Ltd., in an email interaction with **MANDITA VIJAY** offers details. *Excerpts:*

How would you describe the current scene for ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat range in India?

It is a new category in the sense that we are dealing in products which are usually made at home. We are assisting those who find cooking at home cumbersome with a range of ready to use idli and dosa batter and ready-to-heat and eat parotas along with chutneys. This helps a home-maker to prepare Indian home food easily. This market is new and is poised for exponential growth.

What according to you are the visible trends?

The visible trends are consumers faith in Indian product. Another trend is the demand for home-made and natural stuff. There is also the aspect that today people are seen to focus a great deal on health with an awareness to consume wholesome food prepared using high quality traditional edible items.

In the wake of the rising input costs and the prevalence of food inflation how do you handle this situation and have you looked at price increase of your products?

Consumers are always willing to pay for a proven product and we are still far cheaper than having the same food at hotels etc. This is because grinding, kneading, mixing, chopping, are already done by us for the time-strapped home maker.

What are the industry

challenges that you could envisage?

A key challenge is to find out innovative ways to reach our products to consumers, as fresh as always, beating the traffic and logistically issues that we are faced with.

How did you arrive at the conception of iD Fresh Foods?

When I decided to quit job and do something on my own, multiple options were being looked at. During a discussion, a relative mentioned about the gap in the market for dosa batter supply. My cousins were running this grocery store and there was a local batter supplier that packed in a plain pouch whose distribution was limited to being locality-specific on a weekly basis. It was gathered that there were several complaints about stale batter. That's when we

struck at the potential to give a try to this business opportunity. All my years of training were utilised to study this business model extensively before actually entering into this venture. I believe if you plan right, then you plan for success.

We established a 50 sq ft kitchen and invested around Rs 10,000-12,000 to install one grinder and make use of the existing two wheeler to transport the batter. My cousin Nazer used to do grinding and another cousin Shamshu used

to go to the market to sell it. We started with 20 stores for a trial in and around Thippasandra in Bengaluru. The objective was to sell around 100 packets in 6 months in those stores on daily basis.

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