



Hindustan Unilever and the Prenatal Care Market

“Giving birth should be your greatest achievement not your greatest fear.”¹

—Jane Fraser

Aarti, a graduate from a leading business school in India, was in the first trimester of her first pregnancy. She was abreast of the latest developments in the prenatal care market through health-related articles and blogs. She noticed that the number of Indian women drawn toward maternity care products had swelled in 2014. She wanted to buy skin care products during her pregnancy, but she found scant and scattered product lines with poorly defined brand strength in the market. She wondered if Hindustan Unilever were to enter the prenatal care segment with its brand Dove if it would succeed because no other brand had a strong identity as a “woman’s brand.”

As more and more women began working, had higher disposable incomes, and became health conscious with the desire to stay fit and beautiful during and after pregnancy, the number of Indian women looking for maternity products had increased. Expectant mothers bought over-the-counter (OTC) products for pregnancy-related hair and skin problems. With a fertility rate of 2.47 births per woman worldwide and 2.51 births per woman in India,² along with evolving customer preferences, the maternity care market in India appeared as a lucrative venture. There was no dearth of pharmaceutical products for pregnancy care. Several private labels in the cosmetic category were available, but no cosmetic company had yet established a unique prenatal brand that offered focused products to address each of the personal care needs of expectant mothers.

Dove, a master brand from Unilever, had developed a worldwide reputation as a nourishing and caring brand for women. Dove’s success was driven by brand extensions and product innovations. Aarti wondered if Hindustan Unilever were to enter the maternity care cosmetic segment as part of its brand expansion plan for Dove, would it benefit from a first-mover advantage by catering to the growing demand for maternity care cosmetic products among Indian women?



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