



## Indian market for lab chemicals remains strong

Tell us a little bit about **Robinson Brothers Ltd.**

The company was started in 1869 by the Robinson Family. At its inception, coal tar distillation was the major activity which produced a wide variety of coal tar and ammonia products. In the 1930s, a transition to rubber vulcanization was made. This became the benchmark for organo-sulphur chemistry and is still a part of our core offering today. Throughout the development of the chemical industry in the UK, Robinson Brothers has had to constantly adapt to the demands of new markets and customers. This led us into the development and manufacture of chemical intermediates for pharmaceutical, agrochemical, flavour and fragrance, rubber, food and beverage, personal care, gas odorant and veterinary industries.

We employ a number of technologies such as hydrogenation, dehydrogenation, Thiolation, Reductive Amination,

Established in 1869, Robinson Brothers Ltd is one of the UK's largest independent manufacturers of speciality organic chemicals. They are currently doing significant business in India. **ADRIAN HANRAHAN**, CEO of Robinson Brothers who was in Mumbai at the recent CPhI India expo, in an interview with **AD PRADEEP KUMAR**, dwells on the prospects of lab chemicals market in India as well as the industry in general.



Cyclisation, Decarboxylation and Alkylation. We also offer contract manufacturing or contract research services with facilities that are capable of production ranging from grams to hundreds of tonnes.

For Robinson Brothers' sister company, Endeavour Speciality Chemicals, the majority of the product range is focused on aiding chemists working in research and development laboratories across the globe. At present, demand for Endeavour's research chemicals is higher than ever before. This demand is mainly due to the fact that most of Endeavour's range of products and services is unavailable from other manufacturers.

**What are some of your major products relating to the pharma sector and some of your notable customers in India?**

Many of our major products are applicable in the Indian pharma sector. In India, the demand is highest for:

- 1,3 Cyclohexane Dione
- A range of amines with Piperidine being one of the largest
- Several varieties of dithiocarbamates
- Various thioglycolates
- 4-(p-Chlorophenyl)-1-cyclohexanecarboxylic acid
- 4-Hydroxycarbazole
- Mercaptoacetic acid methyl ester

Our customers have a large

range of business focuses which allow our chemicals to be used for a wide variety of applications. Some of our best customers in India are:

- **NPIL**: offers development and manufacturing services for APIs and finished products in India.
- **Shasun**: one of the largest producers of Ibuprofen worldwide to countries across North America, Europe, Asia and Latin America.
- **Hetero**: a research based global pharmaceutical company focused on development, manufacturing and marketing of APIs, intermediate chemicals and finished dosages.
- **Glenmark**: a leading player in the discovery of new molecules for both NCEs (new chemical entity) and NBEs (new biological entity).
- **Ranbaxy**: India's largest pharmaceutical company, is an integrated, research based, international pharmaceutical company, producing a wide range of quality, affordable generic medicines, trusted by healthcare professionals and patients across geographies.
- **Dr Reddy's**: a fully integrated pharmaceutical company for pharmaceutical services, global generics and proprietary products,

downfall in the last few years, 2011 looks much better. However, we are not yet back to pre-recession levels of investment or consumer confidence. We are at a point where we can begin to determine whether the trend will continue upward or if it will begin to stagnate.

There is also a recent spotlight on green chemistry. This chemical philosophy encourages the design of products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use and generation of hazardous substances. While this is sometimes more expensive for the lab chemicals producers, we believe the future benefits make the initial cost more than worth the expense. Emerging data shows that the long-term financial picture will those companies who choose to invest now in green chemistry. The results are showing that making this transition can help cut costs, reduce waste and improve process efficiency over time.

**What according to you are the strengths and weakness of lab chemical industry in India?**

Overall, the Indian market for laboratory chemicals remains strong, with the largest demand for Robinson Brothers' and Endeavour's products coming from the seemingly ever expanding chemical research organisation (CRO) sector. CRO's make up the largest proportion of our Indian customer base for lab chemicals and it is because these companies are at the forefront of research, principally in the pharma sector, that causes them to seek out manufacturers of novel starting materials like us.

One of the strengths of the Indian lab chemicals market is that there are a significant number of well-respected, high technology companies operating on the sub-continent and this ensures a healthy return for those companies that are also willing to make the investment in researching and developing new products to support their activities. India's remarkable economic growth, combined with the fact that it is the second most populated country in the world, with an increasing per

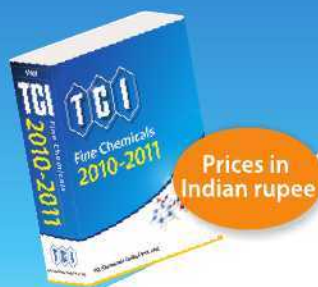
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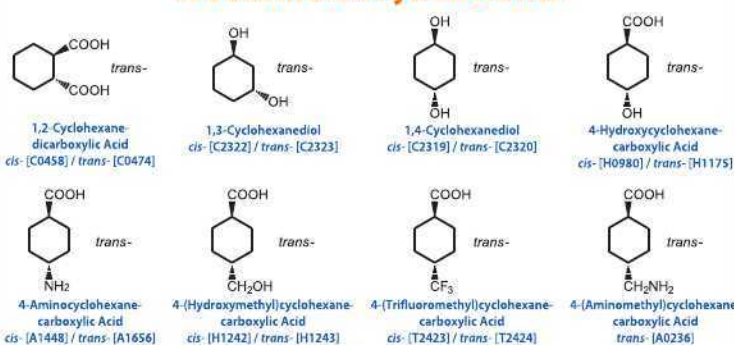
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**What are your views on the lab chemical industry in general?**

Financially, the lab chemicals industry is in a similar position as most global markets. Economic recovery is a major concern for the industry. We envision it being at least two years before the market is back on track. When compared to the

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## Indian industry flourished despite global meltdown

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capita disposable income, continues to drive the growth of pharmaceutical consumption within the domestic market.

Indian CROs are seeing extraordinary growth in the number of strategic alliances with many major western pharmaceutical companies, all of whom continue to expand their operations in India. These partnerships serve to capitalise on the comparatively low costs of manufacturing and innovation that India can offer, within facilities that are cGMP compliant.

Despite the global economic downturn, the Indian pharma industry has continued to flourish and is increasingly renowned as not only a base for API and formulation manufacture but as an emerging hub for contract research, biotech, clinical trials and clinical data management.

One of the most notable strengths of the Indian pharma machinery industry is the lower cost of operations compared to developed regions such as the United States and Europe. Indian pharma machinery manufacturers have played a key role in the growth of the Indian pharma sector, facilitating the capture of a sizeable portion of the global pharma market. Moreover, Indian pharmaceutical machinery has gained more importance in international markets which has again supported the growth of Indian pharma.

From an Indian perspective, the market's major weakness is that the overwhelming majority of lab

chemicals need to be imported, due to a lack of domestic manufacturers and this is particularly true for more specialist materials.

From our point of view this need to import of materials is not a problem, but an

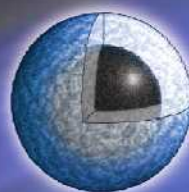
opportunity, however, the lack of domestic lab chemical manufacturers is an issue that will have to be addressed at some point by the Indian chemical industry. It is clear that those companies willing to make

investment in research and development, in order to 'keep pace' with the advances made in the CRO sector, will always provide a product which is difficult for Indian companies to obtain domestically.

**Is your company working on any new projects?**

We are working on multiple contract manufacturing projects with the leading brand names in each of the markets mentioned above. ♦

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