



# ‘MADE IN INDIA’

*Being Human, the fashion brand from Mandhana Industries, is one of those rare brands that tested the international waters before launching in India. The brand that went by the ‘Made in India’ tagline is now all set to promote the ‘Make in India’ concept, writes* **NIVEDITA JAYARAM PAWAR**



Being Human was launched in Europe and the Middle East in 2012 before launching in India in 2013. Being an apparel brand with a heart where royalties from the clothing line support the twin causes of education and healthcare initiatives of Being Human Foundation helped the brand make a huge impact in international markets.

**B**eing Human is a clothing brand with a heart. In a unique licensing arrangement with The Salman Khan Foundation, Mandhana Industries entered an 18-year deal with an investment of ₹150 crore in 2011. Royalties from the clothing line support education and healthcare initiatives of the foundation.

Mandhana Industries launched the brand in 2012 in Europe, followed by the Middle East and India. Currently, the label is available in 15 countries worldwide including Bahrain, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, France, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Spain, South Africa and UAE. The parent company Mandhana Industries Ltd is a textiles and apparel manufacturing company with a turnover of over ₹1300 crore in FY 14-15 and a market cap of over ₹900 crore.

### Building a Brand

Being Human had to grapple with a few challenges when it launched in 2012.

“The biggest challenge was to change the image of the brand. Before we launched officially the market was flooded with T-shirts that were selling everywhere from the stores to the streets, and worn by everybody across the length and breadth of the country. It was also hugely plagiarised. Turning it into a brand and giving it a new identity was a huge task. Entering the large format retail stores with national brands, finding the right space in malls, to establishing ourselves as a brand so that other people could take us more seriously hasn't been easy. We managed to do it step-by-step. We are growing at about 40-50 per cent and would continue to grow at the same pace for the next three years,” says Manish Mandhana, MD Mandhana Industries.



# WITH A HEART

MANISH MANDHANA, MD-MANDHANA INDUSTRIES







Being Human clothing has over 300 retail and seven online selling points worldwide including 220 retail and six online selling points in India.

According to Mandhana, actor Salman Khan is totally involved in the designing of the merchandise and no product finds a place on the store shelves without his approval. "He looks at everything before selecting a particular line," reveals Mandhana. Targeted at 18-30 year olds, Being Human recently beefed up its offerings which was earlier limited to tees, denims and jeans. The women's casualwear line not just has a wider offering, but is also more feminine now.

Competition from other fast fashion brands doesn't faze the company as they believe that not many brands help you look good and do good themselves at the same time. "We continue to grow at a decent pace despite competition from other brands and omni-channels. The like-to-like growth at our stores is more than 20 per cent. Our USP of fashion, charity and celebrity sets us apart from other brands," says Mandhana. Being Human accounts for 10 per cent of the Group global sales. In 2014-15, Being Human apparel brought in ₹170 crore, up 29.7 per cent from ₹131 crore a year earlier.

### **Made in India with an international edge**

Being Human is a completely homegrown brand from Mandhana Industries which has diversified into related fields like textiles, yarn dyeing and retailing. So how easy or difficult is it to make in India?

"In India, we have advantages like ease of employment and abundance of natural resources for apparel and textiles manufacturing that act as a catalyst to the concept of making in India. This concept allows companies to grow in their own space, paving way for the overall development of not just the respective industries but also overall development of the economy. It levels the Indian standard of manufacturing to that of the manufacturing worldwide, making India a more trusted hub for production and export," believes Mandhana who made a conscious decision to launch the brand in Europe and the Middle East in 2012 before launching the brand in India in 2013.



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It was done to make the brand more appealing to the international market and to make it ready for metrosexual Indians. Numerous factors were kept in mind during the internationalising process like connecting with renowned retailers, managing supply chains, working around the clock to suit various time zones, etc. "It isn't a cakewalk when you have to cater to people outside your geographical and cultural boundaries, but it was easy for us to do so due to Mandhana's 30 years of expertise in the international fashion market. We have a team in India and Israel that understands international trends and adapts them to manufacture final products. However, taking the step of international retail has been an asset to us and pushed us beyond our comfort zones to work harder in making a name for a brand of Indian origin around the world," says Mandhana.

Being an apparel brand with a heart where royalties from the clothing line support the twin causes of education and healthcare initiatives of Being Human Foundation helped the brand make a huge impact in international markets like Europe, the Middle East and South Africa. "The tag 'Made in India' has a good reputation in the apparel sector across the globe considering Indian companies are the biggest exporters for ready-to-wear brands like Gap, Esprit, Zara, Marks & Spencer, H&M, Next, Polo, Abercrombie & Fitch, etc and also for some high-end luxury brands. Considering that, it is not very difficult when it comes to selling the 'Made in India' concept. It is a win-win for Being Human as well as the country that domestic products are sold across the globe at par with huge international giants," believes Mandhana.

## Retail reach

The year gone by has been very fulfilling for the brand which has increased its point of sales by two-folds and also launched in new territories – South Africa through an e-commerce website [zando.co.za](http://zando.co.za), having already being present in Europe and the Middle East.

Being Human clothing has over 300 retail and seven online selling points worldwide including 220 retail and six online selling points in India. In India, the brand is retailed through 34 stores (24 EBOs and 10 franchise stores). "We aim to reach the deepest pockets of India and will soon be opening our EBOs in Lucknow, Vapi, Rajkot, Jodhpur, Nashik, Varanasi, Kota, Pune, Kolkata, Jalandhar and Jammu besides other metro cities," says Mandhana. The company is optimistic despite the recent Salman Khan controversy. "As of now, I don't see any immediate impact on our sales. Our business has grown by leaps and bounds in the last three years and will continue to grow. The goal of Being Human is much more than just being a popular brand. Salman has made it very clear that the philanthropic work through Being Human will continue with or without him," asserts Mandhana.





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A typical Being Human store ranges from 1,000-1,500 square feet and requires an investment of approximately ₹50-80 lakh. Before moving into a new city or country the company does an assessment of the market potential. A decision is made after thorough research on demographic structure, purchasing power, competitor analysis, infrastructure, etc. "We prefer to be present at malls as they provide an entertainment hub for the family and hence draw a larger crowd," says Kunal Mehta, VP-marketing & business development, Mandhana Industries.

E-commerce accounts to only about 12 per cent of the total turnover for Being Human. And though the brand is present across all online platforms which are mainly discounting and couponing sites, the company doesn't encourage discounts outside the discount period. "Online is a reality of today; you have to be a part of it. However, online players have taken a new stand of not discounting heavily. They were earlier discounting from their own earnings. We as brands were not offering any discounts. They were passing on a part of the earnings to the customer. But they soon realised that it's not helping them and they ended up in a financial mess. So they are now renegotiating the terms and refraining from discounting. Currently, they are piled up with stocks of their homegrown brands which they were selling online. So right now their focus is on clearing their own inventory before promoting others."

### Future plans

Being Human is on an expansion spree. Apart from expanding the women's range, they are also looking at adding a boys clothing line to their portfolio this year. The brand is planning to tie up with a retail chain soon. Launching in Sri Lanka and United Kingdom this year and taking the EBO count to 50, franchisee stores to 12 new and SIS to 205 across India by year end 2015 is also on the cards. Growing at a rate of 50 per cent CAGR, the company is targeting ₹325 crore for the 2015-16. "My ultimate dream is to make Being Human a global brand. Every fifth man in the world should be wearing a Being Human product," says Mandhana. 