



ADITYA BIRLA NUVO LIMITED

ANNUAL REPORT  
2014 - 2015

# BIG IN YOUR LIFE





## Mr. Aditya Vikram Birla

Our legendary leader. His ideals guide us.  
Integrity, Commitment, Passion, Seamlessness and Speed.





## Dr. Sarala Birla

was an iconic humanitarian.

A highly progressive person, she was way ahead of the times.

An educationist, a philanthropist, a patron of the arts,  
Dr. Sarala Birla was an exemplar of all that is best in mankind.  
Her legacy of values will be cherished forever.

Dear Shareholder,

### **The global scenario**

The year 2014-15 continued to be a challenging year. The global economy growth was 3.4%, unchanged over the previous year. The world's largest economy, the US saw better growth, while the countries in the Euro zone registered marginal growth. There was a marked slowdown in China, and Japan witnessed near stagnation.

The key factors that affected the global economy included a steep decline in oil and commodity prices, and monetary easing by central banks in the US, EU and Japan. The global financial markets experienced heightened volatility, largely due to expectations of a tightening of monetary policy by the US Federal Reserve. The impasse on resolving the debt crisis in Greece added to the uncertainty. Geopolitical risks compounded the situation.

The IMF has projected economic growth at 3.3% in 2015, marginally lower than the growth recorded in 2014.

### **The domestic scenario**

Among all the developing economies, India was a notable exception, with growth increasing to 7.3% in 2014. Agriculture recorded a growth of only 0.2%, given the subnormal monsoon. This was



compensated by a more vigorous manufacturing sector, which grew at 7.1% in FY2014-15, compared to 5.3% in FY2013-14. Headline inflation fell sharply to 5%.

On the external front, India's vulnerability has reduced with the current account deficit contained at below 2% of GDP and a relatively stable currency. The monetary policy through the year was largely accommodative.

A slew of initiatives reinforced the positive macro factors. One must particularly mention the deregulation of diesel prices, reforms in the coal and mineral sectors, measures to boost FDI, and faster environmental clearances. The buoyant investor sentiment was manifest in capital inflows of \$73 billion. As infrastructure projects get off the ground, the prospects for a revival of the capital investment cycle seem very strong.

### **Your Company's performance**

Your Company attained a consolidated turnover of \$ 4.4 billion (₹ 26,516 Crore) and an EBITDA of \$ 966 million (₹ 5,798 Crore) a surge of 18%.

I am pleased to inform you that your Company enjoys the edge in practically all of its businesses.

### **Financial Services**

Today, with a diversified portfolio of 10 businesses, our Aditya Birla Financial Services Group (ABFSG) is truly a significant non-bank financial services player. It is among the top 5 fund managers in India (excluding LIC) and one of the largest participants in the debt market. Financial Services have delivered solid results across businesses.

Its Assets Under Management grew to \$ 27.5 billion (₹ 165,000 Crore), representing a year-on-year growth of 35%. Its lending book extended year-on-year by 52% and closed at \$ 3 billion approximately (₹ 17,550 Crore). Its revenues stand at \$ 1.3 billion (₹ 7,926 Crore), representing a year-on-year growth of 19%, while EBITDA recorded a growth of 17%, to reach USD 141 million (₹ 849 Crore).

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A slew of initiatives launched focus on –

- Commencing the housing finance business
- Entering the Health insurance and Wellness business towards which the business has signed a definitive Joint Venture agreement with MMI Holdings Ltd., a leading South African insurance based financial services group
- Obtaining PFRDA approval for managing pension assets under the NPS scheme
- Roping in IFC, Washington as its strategic investment partner in MyUniverse
- Completing the acquisition of the mutual fund schemes and portfolio accounts of ING investment management.

### **Fashion & Lifestyle**

Our Company's apparel retail businesses – Madura Fashion & Lifestyle (MFL), and Pantaloons Fashion & Retail Ltd. (PFRL) together have catapulted your Company to the number one branded apparel retail player in the country.

A major development was our corporate restructuring plan merging Madura with Pantaloons. This has spawned India's single largest pure play fashion apparel entity – Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited.

Moving on to the business performance, MFL stayed well ahead of the industry in terms of revenue growth of 16% to USD 622 million (₹ 3,735 Crore) with EBITDA up by 19% to USD 77 million (₹ 463 Crore). MFL's largest brand, Louis Philippe crossed the ₹ 10 billion revenue mark, the first apparel brand in the country to reach this level.

The business transformation begun at Pantaloons, after it came into our fold, has been completed. Pantaloons attained revenues of USD 308 million (₹ 1,851 Crore), up by 11% and its EBITDA soared by 96% on a year-on-year basis. The launch of six new brands bolstered Pantaloons portfolio of own brands. Collectively these account for 52% of the overall revenue and helped drive margin improvement. The setting-up of 25 new stores accelerated its customer access, with the store count now at 104.

## Telecom

In the telecom sector, Idea continues to make waves. It has maintained its enviable track record as the fastest growing Indian mobile operator. Its performance has been splendid. It delivered a 19% revenue growth at \$ 5.3 billion (₹ 31,527 Crore) with a 32% rise in EBIDTA at \$ 1.9 billion (₹ 11,281 Crore).

As many of you know, India is on the cusp of a digital revolution. Internet is expected to pervade the lives of a billion Indians in the next decade from a current low penetration of 20% online. From commerce to banking to entertainment to health everything will go online. I believe, the mobile industry has the onerous task to build the Indian Internet infrastructure backbone. Idea is well poised to take advantage of this megatrend to further accelerate its profitable growth. During the last two spectrum auctions, Idea committed \$ 6.8 billion (₹ 41,000 Crore) increasing its spectrum portfolio to 270.7 MHz. Today, Idea has the ability to offer 3G services to 80% of its own subscribers and 4G services to 60% of its 161 million subscribers base, besides offering Pan India 2G services.

## Divisions: Agri, Rayon, Linen and Insulators

The divisions of your Company, comprising of the Agri, Rayon, Linen and Insulators businesses, have done well. These clocked a collective revenue of \$ 901 million (₹ 5,405 Crore) and an EBIDTA at \$ 102 million (₹ 615 Crore), a year-on-year growth of 9% and 11% respectively.

In a year when the country was highly rain deficient in most regions, your Company's Agri business registered a healthy growth of 90% over the last financial year, which is indeed applaudable. The business is now a 'Total Agri Solutions Provider', offering a bouquet of products from fertilisers to seeds to agrochemicals to specialities that fulfil every need of the farmer, from sowing to harvesting.

The VFY business performed in the face of poor demand from the textile sector, reaping the benefits from incremental revenue through the ENKA acquisition. It is today the largest player in the premium superfine denier market in India.

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In the Textiles sector, the linen business continues to be on top of the league. It has created its own line of linen apparel and launched these under the brand name of 'Linen Club'. In the four Southern states where it has set-up flagship stores, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. We will soon be doubling its linen yarn capacity to reach 6,200 tpa from current 3,400 tpa.

On the Insulator business' radar is an unrelenting focus on yield improvement and increasing its export sales.

### **Outlook**

All of your Company's businesses are poised for higher growth, given the upturn in the economy. Your Company's balance sheet is strong. It will continue to play the role of a business incubator, nurture new businesses in sectors that offer promise, and alongside leverage opportunities across its current portfolio.

### **To our teams**

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our teams in India and across the world. I believe, it is our people, who underpin everything else. They are the ultimate reason why we meet with success, in the face of all odds, year after year. Their commitment and dedication is beyond words.

### **The Aditya Birla Group: In perspective**

We have had a good year at the Group level. Our Group's consolidated revenue crossed the ₹ 2.5 trillion mark, setting a new milestone. We are up 9% over the last year. In dollar terms as well, regardless of the ups and downs in foreign currency, we reported revenues of \$ 41 billion, an 8% rise. Over 50% of our Group's revenues flow in from our global operations.

I believe, that the bottom line and the cash in the till is a greater parameter to gauge performance rather than simply revenues. On this score too, we have done well.

Our EBIDTA in Rupee terms is an impressive ₹ 322 billion, again over 9% vis-à-vis FY14. In dollar terms, we achieved an EBIDTA of \$ 5.25 billion, reflecting an 8% rise over that of the last year.



I deeply believe that building our future can only be possible by building more leaders and through people development processes. Towards this, our endeavours continue to deliver results. Two of our programmes deserve a special mention. “**Cutting Edge**” – our leadership programme targeted at developing P&L leaders and “**Turning Point**” – aimed at building cost centre leaders and unit heads, have proved very promising. Over 70 talented managers have graduated from these programmes and have taken on leadership roles at senior levels.

At the same time our senior leaders are being actively encouraged to take on cross business roles to gain multi-sectoral experience.

We have a bench strength of over 250 youngsters who joined us 5 years ago as Group Management Trainees, and Leadership Associate Programme (Lead) and Leadership Programme for Experienced (Leap) members have demonstrated great potential and grown significantly. Some of them are already in key positions. I hope to see many of them occupy positions of critical importance in our businesses in the near future. As part of our globalisation agenda, we have also been recruiting both interns and Lead and Leap participants from renowned International Business Schools.

Similarly, our **GMLP** – Global Manufacturing Leadership Programme, aimed at reinforcing our technical and manufacturing strength, is paying a rich dividend. The Aditya Birla Group is being increasingly viewed as the most aspirational place for manufacturing professionals in India.

Our focus on gender diversity and creating enabling policies and programmes to ensure that we provide a conducive, encouraging and an equitable place for women to thrive and excel is gaining momentum. We have launched “**Spring Board**”, the accelerated women’s leadership development programme, designed for high calibre women managers. Currently, we have more than 150 women positioned at middle management and senior management levels.

**Gyanodaya**, our in-house world-class university, has aligned with the best-in-class global business schools, professors and consultants among others. Many of our best talent is

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also enlisted for short-term courses at these institutions. Such a cross pollination and stoking of the intellect enables us move with the times and are continuously learning.

#### **Ranked No. 1 in the Nielsen Corporate Image Monitor**

We are humbled that for the third year running, our Group has been ranked No.1 in the Nielsen Corporate Image Monitor 2014-15. We have emerged as 'Best in Class' across most of the pillars. This is a remarkable vote of confidence by the stakeholder constituency in our leadership teams. It is a testament to our "Group brand, governance standards, transparency, customer primacy and CSR engagement. The six pillars of Corporate Image, on which organisations are engaged, comprise of Vision and Leadership, Product & Service quality, Workplace Management, Financial Performance, Operating style and Social responsibility".

Nielsen's Corporate Image Monitor measures the reputation of the 42 leading companies in India across sectors (based on the Bombay Stock Exchange list and the Economic Times Ranked Top 50 Companies) and "the findings serve as an important indicator of the strength of the corporate brand".

#### **In sum**

We are gearing to ensure that we have the right talent at the right time and at the right place for each of our businesses. Additionally, enhancing customer centricity and excellence capability by developing customer value propositions that are unmatched, stepping up the focus on R&D to increase the share of value-added products across businesses are our focus areas. The thrust on digitisation across our business processes and using analytics and big data continue. These are our steps towards accelerating top-line and bottom-line growth and enhancing stakeholder value.

Yours sincerely,



Kumar Mangalam Birla