

Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceutical Corporation

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Rank 18

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Oral polio vaccine pioneer

Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceutical Corporation is credited for developing the first indigenous oral polio vaccine (OPV).

Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceutical Corporation, a fully owned company of the Maharashtra government, is involved in the development and production of a wide range of bacterial and viral vaccines for diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, plague, poliomyelitis and rabies. This is one of the few companies which has been successful in the public sector. It is credited for developing the first indigenous oral polio vaccine (OPV).

Today the corporation is in a sound position as result of strategic planning and sustained efforts resulting in appreciable increase in productivity levels and cost reduction. With continued zeal and confidence of its 600 plus employees and support from the Central government as well as the Maharashtra government, Haffkine has been increasing its profits since 1997-98.

Haffkine has a strong historical background. Dr Waldemar Mordecai Haffkine, the man behind Haffkine, was a Russian and an illustrious disciple of Dr Aleck Metchnikoff and Dr Louis Pasteur. Dr Haffkine came down to Calcutta in 1892 with a mission to tackle the problem of a cholera epidemic. He arranged for clinical trials of his vaccine and successfully helped to combat the dreadful disease from spreading further. It was in 1896 when plague broke out in Mumbai, he was invited to set up a Plague Research Laboratory in the city. The plague vaccine introduced by Dr Haffkine proved to be so effective that it was said that he single handedly conquered the 'Black Death.' Since then the institution he founded has gone from strength to strength with Dr Haffkine continuing to provide the inspiration. The Plague Research Laboratory was later renamed Haffkine Institute in 1925.

In order to expand the production activities and to meet the growing demand for medicines and life saving drugs, Haffkine Institute was bifurcated by the state government in 1975 and the production activities were entrusted to Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceutical Corporation. Haffkine also established a subsidiary company in 1977, viz. Haffkine Ajintha Pharmaceuticals at Jalgaon, in collaboration with Western Maharashtra Development Corporation. This subsidiary company produces tablets, capsules, powders and ointments. The subsidiary also has its manufacturing plant with modern facilities, located at Jalgaon and is engaged in the manufacture of tablets, capsules, ointments, powders and liquids, which are mainly supplied to hospitals/government institutions. In 2002 it obtained WHO-GMP certification for production facility at Pimpri near Pune. Here antitoxins and sera for snake and scorpion venom, tetanus and diphtheria toxins are produced. It also formulates pharmaceutical products, disinfectants, ointments, injectables, syrups and mixtures at its unit at Mumbai. The company has a well-equipped animal house in Mumbai for breeding laboratory animals.