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<http://health.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/the-scientific-credentials-of-ayurveda-are-well-established-and-this-drives-the-market-says-dr-m-majeed-founder-sami-group/52984023>

# 'The scientific credentials of Ayurveda are well established and this drives the market,' says Dr. M Majeed, Founder, Sami Group

*Nearly 80% of the global population still relies on traditional herbal therapies for primary healthcare according to the WHO.*

Shahid Akhter | ETHealthWorld | Jun 30, 2016, 10.12 AM IST



With over 100 international patents awarded and over 200 scientists involved in phytochemistry and plant biotechnology, Dr. Muhammed Majeed, Founder and Managing Director, Sami Group is committed to 'make in India' belief of transforming the country into a global hub for nutraceutical and cosmeceutical products. In conversation with ETHealthworld, he shares his pharma passion and entrepreneurial vision about holistic healing that drives his global brand.

## **1. Tell us about your transition from a researcher in pharmacology to an entrepreneur?**

After obtaining a degree in Pharmacy from Kerala University in 1975, I had the opportunity to move to the United States and work as a pharmacist. I eventually pursued my passion

for knowledge and did a Masters in Industrial Pharmacy from Long Island University, New York. Post that, upon completion of doctorate from St. John's University, I got the opportunity to work for top pharmaceutical companies, like, Pfizer Inc., Carter Wallace and Paco Research.

Always wanting to introduce Indian Ayurveda to Americans as a therapeutic adjuvant to various ailments, I started Sabinsa Corporation in 1988 in the state of New Jersey, USA, where we marketed more than 30 standardised botanical extracts, most of which were derived from Indian herbs. Witnessing a growing demand from our products, I established Sami Labs in Bangalore that houses a large research and development facility today. The objective was to develop nutraceuticals and fine chemicals to various marketing organisations. Eventually all the Sabinsa's around the world became the business to business marketing arm of Sami Labs. In 2010, we started Sami Direct, which is the direct marketing entity of finished nutraceutical and cosmeceutical products from Sami Labs.

Today Sami Labs has emerged as a globally known brand with nearly 100 international patents and string of alliances in the US, Japan, Korea, Europe, Australia, Middle East, South Africa, China, etc.

## **2. How do you rate the role of Ayurvedic herbs in promoting wellness today ?**

Ayurveda is a comprehensive traditional and natural health care system that originated in India more than 5,000 years ago. It is still widely used in India as a system of primary health care, with interest in it growing worldwide as well.

Though a lot of modern allopathic treatments are available for curbing diseases, they only address the symptom without deeply addressing the cause. Unfortunately, there are a significant number of side effects that are disadvantageous, with no long-term solution. Moreover, there are some of the ailments that allopathic medicine fails to address. This has led to growing interest and acceptance of Ayurvedic medicine whose principle lies in eradicating the root of the health issue and cleansing the system with lesser side effects on the individual. The term Ayurveda stands for the 'science of life' and it helps in healing the body with natural herbs, while also healing the mind.

The recent decade has witnessed many landmark observations, which have added to the scientific credentials of Ayurveda. It is widely recognized for their holistic approach to health and capability for meeting emerging health challenges.

## **3. Where is wellness market placed in healthcare?**

Research reveals consumer healthcare industry will grow exponentially over the next five

years. This phenomenal growth will be primarily driven by health and wellness products that include fortified foods and beverages, nutrition and dietary supplements, vitamins and other weight management formula. People in general are aware of and accepting the concept of keeping fit and healthy and one of the solutions they see merit in is by consuming nutritional supplements, without compromising on their present lifestyle. Despite a slowdown in economic growth, the wellness industry continues to be resilient to wellness products and services with companies fine-tuning their products following deeper research.

According to EXIM Bank Report, the global market for such supplements currently estimated to be around a US\$80 billion with an annual growth of 7% and expected to reach around US\$6 trillion by 2050. The Indian market alone is about Rs. 4205 crores and is likely to be double the revenue by 2020. It is an industry that is setting its firm foothold and is witnessing rigorous growth and popularity.

Traditional herbal wellness and dietary supplements are constantly being subjected to R & D and product innovation to match customer needs. Moreover, companies are focussing on exploring new distribution pattern to increase their market share. Today, many countries are strengthening regulations in order to improve the credibility of the wellness sector.

#### **4. Supplements and nutraceuticals are widely used in the US, now trending in India too? How is this market taking shape in India?**

The Indian supplements and nutraceuticals' industry, although in its infant stage is growing rather exponentially with the increase in demand from adult consumers across age-categories, triggered by the benefits of such products.

Although the Indian nutraceutical market is at a nascent stage, it accounts for around 1.5% of the global market that is expected to grow exponentially owing to the country's large population base. The current level of US\$ 2.8 billion nutraceutical market in India is growing at compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 17 percent, according to a new study jointly conducted by Assocham and RNCOS, a market research firm.

Sami Direct is catering to the Indian nutraceuticals industry which is estimated to grow at 20% to US\$ 6.1 billion by 2019-20, as there is an increasing demand for these products in the market.

#### **5. Most of the Ayurvedic herbs are becoming extinct. How do you source your raw materials?**

Fortunately, India has varied agro-climatic zones across many regions that can contribute to better land use patterns and is home to over 15,000 medicinal plants, of which approximately 7,000 plus are used for Ayurveda. The most important herbs grown in India for the global market include aloe-vera, amla, ashwagandha, brahmi, curcuma, garlic, henna, neem, lemon grass, poppy, saffron, sandalwood, and tulsi.

The challenges, however are ancient methods of commercial farming, collecting, processing, storing and marketing of medicinal herbs are still being practiced. The country continues to rely on very fundamental and unsophisticated technology to a large extent. The solution lies in encouraging sustainable harvesting of plants through cultivation that provides a holistic approach. This new method should involve integrated nutrient and pest management contributing to soil health, resulting in high quality produce besides positively contributing to the society in the long run.

However, we have expressed our concerns to the Government about preserving Ayurvedic plants, out of 460 plants used in Ayurveda, 400 are in the endangered list. We need a Herbal Security Bill, like the Food Security Bill to pursue this system of medicine in times to come.

## **6. Tell us about SAMI and the most driving product in India and the US?**

Sami Direct, the marketing entity of SAMI Labs, is one of the fastest growing direct sellers of nutraceutical and cosmeceutical products in India. Sami Direct products are sold through 3,00,000+ Independent Business Owners in India, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and coming soon to the Middle East, and Indonesia.

Sami Direct offers exceptional and life changing products, in the categories of nutraceutical product range such as Bioprotectant, Calci D Max and Cran DM Plusto name a few. Johara®; Cosmeceuticals, the Beauty Brand of SamiDirect has hand-picked from the secrets of time-tested botanical ingredients that have evolved from pure science and scripted in many ancient texts across the world. Our skin care formulae will always be free of Parabens, Sulfate, Synthetic Dye or Formaldehyde and will always have standardized botanical extracts and be clinically relevant.

One of the most researched ingredients of the group is turmeric, more specifically Curcumin. From the cultivation to the standardization, our group holds several international patents and accolades on this ingredient, branded as Curcumin C3 Complex. This brand finds a place in many of the Sami Direct products today.

## **7. Tell us about the 100 plus patents that you have filed?**

Sami Labs, was honored with the NIB Global Innovation & Excellence Award at a ceremony organized by the Public Relations Council of India (PRCI and the Press Club of India for the annual title, 2016. The award was largely in recognition of the Intellectual Property portfolio attained by the Sami-Sabinsa Group, now encompassing over 113 US & international patents. Unlike other organisations in the space, Sami Labs of which Sami Direct is the subsidiary, houses a research facility with over 200 scientists involved in specialised work in areas of phytochemistry, organic chemistry, tissue culture and plant biotechnology.

The recent patents comprised of ingredients such as stilbenoids; peptides; 3-hydroxypterostilbene; boswellic acids; and garcinol along with several others in countries ranging from China and New Zealand to the US, Canada and Mexico. The categories ranged from hypercholesterolemia, weight management, treating skin aging, inhibiting and preventing adipogenesis, protecting articular cartilage and even a hepatoprotectant molecule. Many of these will find a place in Sami-Sabinsa's Nutraceutical, Cosmeceutical, Functional Food and Natural Drug divisions for commercialization and licensing.

The current R&D impetus of the Sami-Sabinsa group focuses strongly on immunological basis of disease management by natural principles. With precise scientific evidence generation at the basic, pre-clinical, and clinical research stages, the group believes in creating reliable and responsible science. This objective has been recognized by the intellectual property systems across the globe.

## **8. How do you find 'Make in India' impacting and facilitating your venture?**

Established in 2010, Sami Direct, a subsidiary of Indian Multinational Health Science Company Sami Labs Ltd, wherein the latter for the past 26 years, has been committed to the 'Make in India' belief of transforming India into a global hub in the area of research in preventive health care. With its 200 strong Research & Development team, over 6000 acres of contract farming and commitment to sustainable development, Sami Labs Ltd. continues to develop innovative patented nutraceutical and cosmeceutical products for the world over.

With over 113 patents awarded and several more in process, all products of Sami Direct are formulated in accordance with the global standards.

## **9. Your future plans?**

Sami Direct is one of the fastest growing direct sellers of nutraceutical and cosmeceutical products in India. Sami Direct products are sold through 3,00,000 plus Independent Business Owners in India, Malaysia, and Bangladesh. We plan to expand our market reach to Indonesia, Philippines and Dubai within the next two years. Our product portfolio will also expand to include more award-winning ingredients with the finest research.