

# R&D Driving Growth of Pharma Sector

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Foreseeing huge potential in the healthcare sector across the globe, Sami Group continues to draw its strength from R&D, launching innovative nutraceutical and cosmeceutical products that meet global standards. **Shaheen Majeed**, Marketing Director of Sami-Sabinsa Group, highlights the impact of ICT on the group's growth in conversation with **Elets News Network (ENN)**.

Research laboratories at Sami-Sabinsa Group endeavour to bring out products with the goal of "Design to Delivery". To achieve this goal, several independent divisions work in synergy to make products that meet international standards.

For the past seven years, Sami Direct, a subsidiary of Sami Labs, has been marketing across India a range of nutraceutical and cosmeceutical products, covering weight management, bone strength, liver strength, detox supplements, skin and beauty care etc.

The company's nutraceutical product range includes Bioprotectant, Calci D Max and Cran DM Plus, to name a few. Johara cosmeceuticals, the beauty brand of Sami Direct, uses hand-picked 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 standardised botanical extracts and be clinically relevant. From the cultivation to the standardisation, 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,” explains Shaheen Majeed, Director, Sami-Sabinsa Group. To facilitate the increased demand for innovative application-based products, Sami Labs Limited (formerly Sami Chemicals & Extracts Ltd) was set up in 1991 in Bengaluru as a R&D facility. Today, the main focus of Sami is on new product development and market oriented research.

## **R&D Division Providing a Solid Foundation for Business Development**

Research is a broad term that includes basic research and applied research. Many companies, especially in India, focus on applied research which is the practical application of research. However, the need of the hour is basic research which the world over has gained more importance, says Majeed.

R&D has been pushing breakthrough innovations and acting as a catalyst for speeding up the pace of growth of the company through

large scale production. Sami Labs invests 6-7 per cent of its annual turnover in R&D alone, he adds.

While other companies allocate less than 10 per cent of space for research, Sami Labs has dedicated almost an entire facility to research. “The number of patented products of Sami Labs/Sabinsa Group is the proof that the research here is result-oriented. At present, we have over 130 International patents to our credit,” says Majeed.

Unlike other organisations in the space, Sami Labs houses a research facility with over 120 scientists involved in specialised work in areas of phytochemistry, organic chemistry, tissue culture, plant biotechnology, biochemical pharmacology and clinical research.

The recent patents are comprised of ingredients such as stilbenoids, peptides, 3-hydroxypterostilbene and boswellic acids in countries like China, New Zealand, the US, Canada and Mexico.

The products help in hypercholesterolemia, weight management, skin aging treatments, inhibiting and preventing adipogenesis, protecting articular cartilage and even a hepatoprotectant molecule.

The current R&D impetus of the Sami-Sabinsa Group focuses strongly on immunological basis of disease management based on 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 recognised by the intellectual property systems across the globe, according to Majeed.

## **Manufacturing Facilities**

On the manufacturing front, Sami Labs has a contract manufacturing unit located at Payson city in Utah County of the US. This facility is a state-of-the-art finished goods manufacturing centre, producing capsules, tablets and bi-layer tablets with ingredients from Sabinsa and others for its customers worldwide.

In India, Sami Labs have six ingredient manufacturing facilities, one located in Hyderabad and the rest near Bengaluru.

## ICT ENHANCING OFFERINGS

- ICT, better known as Information Communications Technology, concerns itself with storage, retrieval, manipulation, transmission and receipt of digital data.
- This data is communicated electronically to the people by different means such as emails, social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc. Integration and execution of ICT has reinforced and enhanced our skills which has developed our researches, promotions, offerings, etc.
- All the research, new promotions, latest news are circulated through social media outlets like Facebook, Research Gate, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts. Hence, the latest offerings and research we have on our products reach the intended audience group much faster — bringing to them solutions they can use right away to affect their lives.

While several of these facilities are suited for herbal extraction, one facility is only dedicated to probiotic production through fermentation technology.

“The probiotic we produce requires no refrigeration and, therefore, can be used in several delivery formats, it’s a great seller world-wide,” he says.

“One of our units is the first in Asia using indigenous super critical fluid extract technology. This is an alcohol free set-up for extracting natural extracts. In terms of meeting world demand for ingredients such as Curcumin and coleus forskolhii, we have a continuous extraction plant in place, and a second one is being built as we speak,” Majeed says.

“Continuous extraction technology helps to scale up from vessel based input of about 1 or 2 tonnes to nearly 20-25 tonnes of material, thereby increasing our output to meet and exceed world demand,” he adds.

## Growth of IT in Pharmaceutical Industry

Digital marketing has considerably impacted the growth of pharma industry in a good way. The commercial promotion of strategies for public health can be done effectively by digital marketing.

“At present, most digital marketing efforts focus on specialists and patients, and not on general practitioners. Mobile networking is still in its infancy but mobile phone is the most engaging personal screen for any physician. Hence, efforts in this area could prove worthwhile for brands looking to connect,” says Majeed.

## **Role of Technology and Data in Shaping Digital Marketing in Healthcare**

The main goal of technology and digital marketing in healthcare is to provide information at any time, in any place. The continuously rising cost of healthcare services is a problem and burdens the whole economy. Digital health technologies can reduce the price by centralising the care, according to the Director of Sami-Sabinsa Group.

For example, ECG data can be fed in the system/mobile phone of the medical centre and a physician can access within a short period of time and provide the treatment without any delay to the patient.

“Most people actively check online for healthcare solutions. Digital marketing includes mobile marketing, search engine marketing, social media marketing, etc. These techniques are inexpensive and more powerful than the traditional marketing. This kind of information, which is considered dynamic and not static, will reach consumers in a short period of time and can be updated more frequently than traditional methods. This can increase the patient’s satisfaction, improve care and lower costs,” he opines.

Also, social media has gained prominence among professionals from different industry verticals for networking and is serving the customers with customised solutions.