

SWALLOWING HEALTH!: Indian health ingredients and nutraceutical market is on an upward trend.

Indian health ingredients and nutraceutical market is on an upswing. Growing awareness on prevention of diseases is the key factor which is driving the market. From vitamins, antioxidants, minerals, proteins and fibres are now available as herbs, botanical extracts and powder formulations.



The key drivers are elderly population, changing lifestyles, higher medical expenses being incurred, disposable incomes, awareness of disease prevention and increasing incidence of malnutrition in the rural-urban population.

The nutraceutical market has grown multifold both in the developed and developing countries. The people are becoming more conscious about their well being and are shifting to nutraceutical products to prevent the onset of any chronic diseases like diabetes, heart ailments, hypertension and weight gain. So, the market for nutraceutical products would grow rapidly in the coming years, stated V S Reddy, managing director, British Biologicals.

The convergence of food pharma nutrition strategies adopted by many pharma companies like Avesthagen has given a boost to the sector. Realising the importance and indispensability of nutraceuticals across disease segments, companies in the drug manufacturing space are looking at garnering maximum sales this sector. "It is thus becoming a logical progression for many food companies to enter into nutraceuticals market," according to Cygnus Business Consulting & Research.

Many companies have dedicated consumer health division into marketing the nutraceutical products. These include Glaxo SmithKline Consumer Healthcare known for its range like Horlicks (Junior, Mother, Horlicks Lite, Horlicks Biscuits, Maltova , Boost and Viva. Dabur India Consumer division offers Honitus, Nature Care and Shankpushpi, Parry Nutraceuticals is a leading supplier of microalgal health supplements like organic Spirulina, natural Betacarotene and Astaxanthin.

According to Cygnus estimates, nutraceuticals market in 2007 was Rs 18.75 billion and expected to grow at 20 per cent CAGR (compounded annual growth rate) to achieve a market size of Rs 27 billion in 2009. Global nutraceuticals market is estimated at \$120 billion in 2007 growing at 7 per cent CAGR. The US has been the major market for nutraceuticals with India and China becoming fastest growing markets. Nutraceuticals are gaining acceptance for their ability to address several diseases. Vitamins, minerals

and nutrients constitute about 85 per cent of the market while antioxidants and anti-agents account for 10 per cent, other segments such as herbal extracts occupy 5 per cent of the market, globally. Cygnus has considered nutraceuticals along with functional foods to estimate the total market of nutraceuticals, both global and Indian market.

Current dominant players in the segment of health ingredients are Phytotech Extracts, Sami Labs, Avesthagen and Pristine. In the nutraceutical sector British Biologicals takes the leadership status with GlaxoSmithKline, Novartis, Wockhardt, Alchem, Alembic, Abbott and Elder Pharma also coming out with a range of nutritious supplements.

Himalaya Healthcare offers a range of seven teas to rejuvenate and refresh the tired neves. These are Diges Tea, Green Tea, Kof Tea, Laxa Tea, Lean Tea, Stress tea and Sleep Tea. The multi-level marketing major Amway's is the world's leading brand of vitamin, mineral, and dietary supplements in tablet and powder form.

Even the global economic slowdown and recessionary trend has not seen India much affected as the nutraceutical market is still in its infant stage in the country. With the increasing awareness of health we expect the market size to increase substantially in the coming years, stated Reddy.

What could give a knock to the nutraceutical range is the stiff competition in the market, the affordability of the product, growth of the dairy sector offering a range of nutritional drinks, points out Gayathri Kumaraswamy, pharma consultant.

According to Dr Kamal G Nath, professor and head, department of food science and nutrition, the growth of health ingredients and nutraceuticals segment holds immense potential. This is why the University of Agricultural Sciences has now proposed for a Winter School to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). The topic for the 3-week seminar which is a refresher course is Opportunities and Challenges in the 21st century in nutraceuticals. This will cover the recent advances through a guest faculty which can include experts from the Defence Food Research Laboratory and Central Food Technological Research Institute at Mysore.

The challenge in the health ingredients is the ability to identify as many phyto chemicals present in the green leafy vegetables, root & tubers, cereals, pulses. However, in this segment, manpower is not an issue because of the availability of scores of graduates and post-graduates who are undertaking doctoral and Post-doctoral research initiatives, added Dr Nath.