Dear Reader,

Nutraceuticals is no more a fancy word shrouded in a mysterious veil. It is a gospel truth and now a well-embaced norm, that ‘positive health’ can only be fostered by nutraceuticals – be it called supplements, ayurceuticals or herbals.

Although advocating and consuming ayurceuticals is an Indian-centric reality, the impetus to embracing nutraceuticals (which is a general term encompassing supplements and biologicals or herbals) by Indians has definitely come from the globally proliferating OTC (Over-The-Counter) market with such products and their overflowing into the Indian subcontinent in the 1990s!

India is a curious country since the spirit of secularism percolates through all walks of life. Amongst the approved ‘drugs’ exist may nutraceutical combinations, and under the domain of permissible nutraceuticals are listed many ayurvedic ingredients. Also, nutraceuticals are being marketed both via doctor promotion (- ethical route), albeit veiled, as well as direct consumer promotion (- digital and OTC).

It would interesting to imbibe certain facts and figures in the global nutraceutical markets. Few relevant Factoids based on overseas sales data include:

- Nutraceutical products is not the only way to healthy living - the market share ratio of Nutraceuticals : Functional Foods : Functional Beverages is 1:1:1
- Nutraceuticals rule - Functional Foods & Beverages : Nutraceuticals : Sports Nutrition : Fat Burners = 50% vs 29.4% vs 17.6% vs 3%
- Vitamins + Minerals dominate Nutraceutical market - Vitamins : Botanicals : Minerals : Amino Acids : Probiotics : Others = 37% vs 18.5% vs 14.8% vs 13% vs 9.3% vs 7.4%
- COVID-19 has turned the Nutraceuticals’ ranking topsy - turvey - Immune Boosters vs Cardiovascular Health vs Digestive Support vs Bone & Joint Fitness vs Mental Health vs Cholesterol Lowering vs Others = 39.3% vs 16.1% vs 14.3% vs 10.7% vs 5.3% vs 3.6% vs 10.7%
- Nutraceuticals equally embraced by all age groups - Adults vs Geriatric vs Pregnant Women vs Children vs Infants Pills vs Infant consumers = 34.7% vs 28.2% vs 20.2% vs 12.9% vs 4%
- Tablets & Capsules preferred - Pills vs Powders vs Gummies vs Liquids vs Others (Effervescent, Chewable, etc) = 54% vs 16% vs 12% vs 11% vs 7%

The Indian scenario:
- Market size: 5.3 bn USD (2022)
- CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate): 15% (39% of Indians consume nutraceuticals)
- Over 1,000 OTC companies in digital space
- Best-sellers are, besides nutrients, nutraceuticals (including ayurceuticals) and probiotics

It would be interesting to compare the global markets in related parameters to fathom how the Indian vertical of nutraceuticals could achieve the possible goal and assure a positive health status.

An ordinary Indian spends Rs 450/- per month on nutraceuticals whilst an American, the highest global buyer, splurges on an average 45 USD per month on health supplements. Bridging the gap by even 50% could kick up the Nutraceuticals market of India from 650 bn USD to 1,000 bn USD – rise of Rs 30 lakh crores! How?
There are over 1000 FBOs (Food Business Operators) marketing nutraceutical products in the digital space in India which could be considered as synonymous for the shelf-space garnered in overseas chemist outlets by OTC products. In fact, the brick and mortar segment accounts for over 70% sales of nutraceuticals in global markets and thus the drug stores and retail pharmacies are the most important outlets for OTC products. Hence, for the Indian nutraceuticals to touch the achievable goals forecasted, there is an urgent need to revamp their availability at Chemist counters with a changeover from the traditional drug-like selling to a super-/hyper-market mode of choose and pick display. Moreover, 30,000 new nutraceuticals are marketed in US and 1,000 more are added each year. To facilitate similar proliferation levels of nutraceuticals in India, the key lies in making available scientifically optimal formulae designed formulations in terms of ingredients incorporated and quantities assured per serving size – if the product is to sell well and the nation’s wellness quotient is to improve further.

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About The Guest Editor

Dr R K Sanghavi is Mumbai-based privately Consulting Physician since 40 years, who has also served in Ramakrishna Mission Hospital (Mumbai) for over one decade. He has expertise of over 200 company-years exposure and experience in Ethical & OTC verticals of Healthcare Industry in domains of Medico-Marketing, Training & Dr-lecturing (near 300 CMEs); Techno-Legal & Regulatory advising are his additional forte. Besides having been a member of the Subject Review Committee of NFI (National Formulary of India) for over a decade, Dr Sanghavi takes credit in pioneering the Nutraceutical vertical of Healthcare in India - being associated since early 1990s. Besides being a Chairman of IDMA’s Medical Committee for 15 years, Dr Sanghavi has an over decade-long tenure as Chairman of IDMA’s Nutraceutical Committee; in these capacities he has successfully, over all six legal recourses, provided respite with respect to unjustifiable banning of irrational FDCs (CDSCO) as well as implementation of an unapplicable Product Approval System for nutraceuticals (FSSAI).

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