INTERVIEWS | INTERVIEW

’Demands for healthy and functional food is expected to grow’

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Started in 1981 in Technical Support department of Shimadzu Corporation, Japan, Yoshiyuki Fujino took over as ManagingDirector of Shimadzu Analytical India last year. With over 30 years of working forShimadzu Corporation and setting up regional headquarters at Istanbul for Middle East Asian region and South African region, Yoshiyuki Fujino has worked as Deputy GM, International Business (Japan) before taking over asMD of India operations. In an email interaction with NuFFooDS Spectrm, **Yoshiyuki Fujino** shared his thoughts, his experience of working in both developed and developing markets and plans to reachout to more customers in India.

You have worked in both developed and developing markets of the world. What are your observations on food and beverage industry in these countries?

Indeveloped markets the concept of food safety is regulated and stringently followed. It is a well-established market where the mechanism is set for all channels and all stages of the food chain handling by everyone concerned, right from farm to fork. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) are followed and further handling, testing of various safety parameters and storage protocols are properly regulated so that the spoilages and contaminants are under control. All the food safety regulations are strictly followed.

Whereas indeveloping market, food safety is stringent mostly forthe export market. Due to lack of understanding and proper training to farmers, GAP is not strictly implemented/ monitored. Indiscriminate use of pesticides and lack of proper storage and handling, possible infection with contaminants is likely to be present in the food supply in domestic market. There ischange and awareness amongst the middle class. The Government of India is strengthening FSSAI and regulations are being set for domestic market. It should be strictly followed and enforced with stringent laws. However, we have a long way to go with lots of work still to be done with regards to enforcing and implementationof regulatory aspects, technical capabilities, marketing initiatives, technology updates, infrastructure development etc.

You have been in India for close to a year. What is your take on the food and beverage industry in the country?

I hopefood safety issues will be cleared at the earliest for the domestic consumer market and should not be restricted to export market. Demands for healthy and functional food is expected to grow as India has more middle class educated consumers, who are concerned about their health and the awareness is also spreading across rapidly…Thanks to government, PPP (Public Private Partnership) and NGO's initiatives.

India has been promoting 'Make in India' in a big way. In what way Shimadzu can contribute to this initiative? We have been contributing to 'Make in India' indirectly from the beginning. Our major customers are from segments like pharmaceuticals, automobiles, petrochemical industries, etc. In fact, all manufacturers do have quality control, where we provide our instruments and solutions with the latest technologies to help our customers' product be of the same quality as developed countries. This is how we contribute 'Make in India' to become global quality. To support our customers, we have set up the Customer Support Centres in Mumbai and Delhi, that house the most sophisticated range of instruments and showcase the latest technology supported by a team of experts capable of demonstrating the applicable solutions to our customers. These labs develop applications for analysis of food contaminants and also provide the training to users to help them monitor and maintain quality in any food processing industry and nutraceutical industry.

How will the Union Budget help Shimadzu grow its business focused on food and beverage areas?

With the presentation of this year's Union Budget inParliament just a few days back, the food processing industry in the country, which has been identified by the government as a priority sector under its 'Make in India' initiative.

We feel this government, led by a strong leader, believes in implementation rather than only making policies for the benefit of society and in this direction, we expect encouragement for all

the multinationals toset upindustries including food sector that will require to be supported with cutting edge technology, technical expertise and talent, so definitely we look forward to many explorations in this segment by Shimadzu.

This initiative would provide more direct opportunities in food industry and indirectly in food testing laboratories by which Shimadzu has scope for its business opportunity to grow. We have a wide range of analytical and scientific instruments to cater to this industry, right from testing packaging material, checking quality offinished product and to analysing the toxic compounds and contaminants in food products.

Strategically Shimadzu had built its business through partners in the last three decades. Do you feel that with changing requirements, the company can do business on its own now in India?

We haveestablished wide market coverage and close customer relationship with our partners in this large country, so I don’t feel we would change this structure for now. We are always discussing how we can improve our customer satisfaction with our partners, which is always the top priority and this is how Shimadzu Corporation has come to 140years anniversary this year. We are regularly conducting food safety seminars all over India for last several years and in many of these seminars, we had collaboration with various government agencies and institutes working in different aspects of food safety. (On April 16 and 17 we will be organising a workshop).

What are your plans for reaching out to more customers in India?

Our company’s corporate philosophy “Contributing to Society through Science and Technology” aims to reach more customers. We continue doing food safety seminars and workshops as we believeawareness is there and hope to contribute to improve people’s health. We have a wide experience not only in Japan but in all countries worldwide.

As a manufacturer, we believe that collaborating with researchers is the best way to develop new solutions that will deliver true contributions to the world. Therefore, we always look forward to work closely in such collaborative research projects and share the latest information and results with our customers. We aim to be a good partner for our customers. We strive to meet their analytical needs with the highest technological capabilities and valuable platforms and solutions that can be used with confidence.

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