INTERVIEWS | INTERVIEW

“Consumers are demanding clinically proven products with verifiable safety of products"

What new strategies would you bring to the table at Arjuna Natural?

By **Manbeena Chawla** | April 27, 2022



consumers-are-demanding-clinically-proven-products-with-verifiable-safety-of-products

> WordPress post #22738

For thirty years, Kochi-based Arjuna Natural has been India’s leading manufacturer of standardised spice and botanical extracts for food supplement industries,

dedicated to eco-friendly and sustainable practices. To take this legacy forward, Anup Krishnan has stepped in as the company's new Chief Executive Officer. Anup Krishnan speaks with nuFFooDS Spectrum to reveal his vision for the company's growth.

What new strategies would you bring to the table at Arjuna Natural?

Arjuna Natural has been at the forefront of innovative products for the Nutraceutical industry. Our products are driven by innovation as well as a strong manufacturing infrastructure. This combination has brought unique value to customers worldwide which has been widely appreciated. I hope to build upon these solid foundations to create a quantum leap in growth at Arjuna Natural.

What are the major plans in store for 2022? Are you launching any new products or making new announcements for the Indian market?

Arjuna has always been focused on the world market while wedded to our roots in India. India has seen a quantum jump in terms of both recognition of the need of quality Nutraceuticals as well as the need for focusing on health. However, the Indian market has been awash with ingredients, many of which are neither proven nor having consistent quality credentials. However, with the maturing of this market, we hope to address the quality conscious market in India and partner with brands to build strong international grade portfolios for them. In the Nutraceutical space, we would look to re-introduce our international range of clinically studied branded ingredients to the Indian brands. Our most recent launch, Rhuleave-K which was one of the finalists in the Fi Hi 2021 Innovation Awards would be part of this range and so will BCM-95, the world's most researched and leading Turmeric extract and Shoden, the world's most potent Ashwagandha extract.

In the Indian market, we have also been a major and the true end-to-end player in the fish oil supplies. Most of the time, demand has outstripped supply and customers have time and again come back to us looking for quality supply which they can take to consumers with confidence. This year we have taken steps to ensure higher supply to be made available so that our

customers can service the demand without gaps..

Moving to food ingredients specifically, a key product line where we believe we can bring unique value to the table is in our EXTENFO line of natural food preservation ingredients. Consumers, including in India, are looking for 100 per cent natural products and are conscious of the concerns around synthetic food preservatives which are added to otherwise ‘natural’ products to enhance shelf life. Brands are conscious of this change in consumer sentiment and are increasingly seeking natural ingredients which can do the job of these synthetic ingredients but without the risks. These clean label products add not only value to their current offerings, but also help open up a whole new market of health conscious customers, both in India and abroad. The EXTENGO line has successfully been deployed to extend the shelf life of various common food ingredients like breads, cake, beverages, meats etc..

How many people are employed at Arjuna, in India and globally? Are you planning to hire more?

Arjuna is an innovation-led company which also manufactures the products that it delivers. We also operate in multiple locations. To this end we have a multi-talented workforce across geographies. We would, of course, be dipping into the untapped potential of this available talent pool and augmenting the same as we expand to new horizons.

What are the key challenges facing the food ingredients market in India, and how can those be resolved?

Arjuna is well known the world over for quality nature-based Nutraceutical ingredients. As I mentioned before, a clear challenge in the Indian Nutraceutical market has been quality, safety and efficacy assured ingredients. Arjuna’s ingredients are validated to international standards and norms and the activities and their limits are assured.

There are two aspects to improvement, the primary is customer demand and awareness and the other is regulation. The first is more apt and we have seen that with the recent pandemic,

consumers have upped their awareness and are more sensitive to what they take. However, this is a slow process. The other is for regulatory frameworks to adapt to international norms faster, especially with respect to potency, source and quality of ingredients.

How do you view the role of technology/automation in enhancing the food ingredient industry?

Technology and Automation has always gone hand-in-hand with progress. To be able to address larger markets efficiently, cost efficiently and sustainably, adoption of technology and automation becomes important. At Arjuna we focus on technology to find new ingredients and innovate new products. We develop new technologies which can enhance effectiveness. Our Award winning product Rhuleave-K, is powered by our SPEEDTECH technology and can manage musculoskeletal pain in just 3 hours. Multiple product launches across the world are happening with many brands releasing products incorporating this ingredient.

We also employ automation and sensors to ensure consistent quality and enhance delivery efficiencies. Going forward, as we focus to bring more value to our customers, the reliance on the right tools including automation and technology is bound to increase.

How can we improve the scientific understanding of natural food ingredients/herbs to develop therapeutic foods, medicines etc.?

Pharmaceutical and nutritional sciences have witnessed a boom in scientific information in recent times. It has geared up higher use of food plants for diversified health benefits and potential clinical applications. A synergism of nature-based bioactive intake and nutrition stands the possibility to confer better outcomes for a healthier lifestyle. Natural products are marketed in the form of botanical drugs, Nutraceutical or even cosmeceuticals for wellbeing and to improve the efficacy and safety. Consumers are increasingly aware and demanding clinically proven products as well as verifiable safety of products. Brands are increasingly aware of this and can only ignore these demands at their own peril. This is where ingredient manufacturers like Arjuna, whose products are clinically studied and safety verified and assured scientifically

become more valuable to brands and consumers alike. Brands also take advantage of this, by focusing their message on branded ingredients like BCM-95, Shoden, Rhuleave-K etc, which gives their brands more credibility and reliability in the hands of the consumer.

Dr Manbeena Chawla

(manbeena.chawla@mmactiv.com)

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