INTERVIEWS | INTERVIEW

India’s probiotics market faces challenges like low consumer awareness and regulatory gaps

Dr Neetu Kumar Taneja, Food Microbiologist and Nano biotechnologist, NIFTEM, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Kundli, Haryana

By **Shraddha Warde** | April 1, 2025



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Probiotics have emerged as a significant player in the health and wellness sector, offering promising benefits for gut health, immunity, and overall well-being. However, translating these benefits into scientifically validated products requires extensive research and innovation. To delve deeper into the evolving landscape of probiotics, NuFFoodSSpectrum interacted with Dr Neetu Kumar Taneja, Food Microbiologist and Nano biotechnologist, Assistant professor (Microbiology) and Associate Head Centre for Food Research and Analysis (CFRA), National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM), Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India, Kundli, Haryana. In this insightful conversation, she shares her perspectives on the latest advancements in probiotics research, the challenges faced in clinical validation, and the importance of regulatory support. This interview sheds light on how scientific advancements can drive consumer trust and expand the market, ensuring that probiotics become a mainstream solution for preventive healthcare. Edited excerpts:

Could you share insights into ongoing probiotics research at NIFTEM?

NIFTEM has been at the forefront of probiotics research, focusing on isolating, characterising, and applying probiotic strains for various health benefits. The research encompasses multiple aspects, including strain stability, metabolic activity, encapsulation techniques, and their role in disease prevention. One of the significant studies conducted at NIFTEM involves the isolation, characterisation, biotechnological and genomic studies of Lactiplantibacillus plantarum, emphasising its ability to produce riboflavin, enhance gut health, and act as a functional food ingredient. This research has demonstrated that certain probiotic strains can produce vitamin B2, which could help mitigate risks associated with metabolic disorders, including ariboflavinosis and IBD. Additionally, there has been extensive work on developing novel encapsulation techniques using different matrices like maltodextrin, inulin, whey protein and carrageenan to improve the viability of probiotics under adverse storage and gastrointestinal conditions. These studies align with the broader goal of integrating probiotics into functional foods and nutraceuticals for wider consumer acceptance.

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