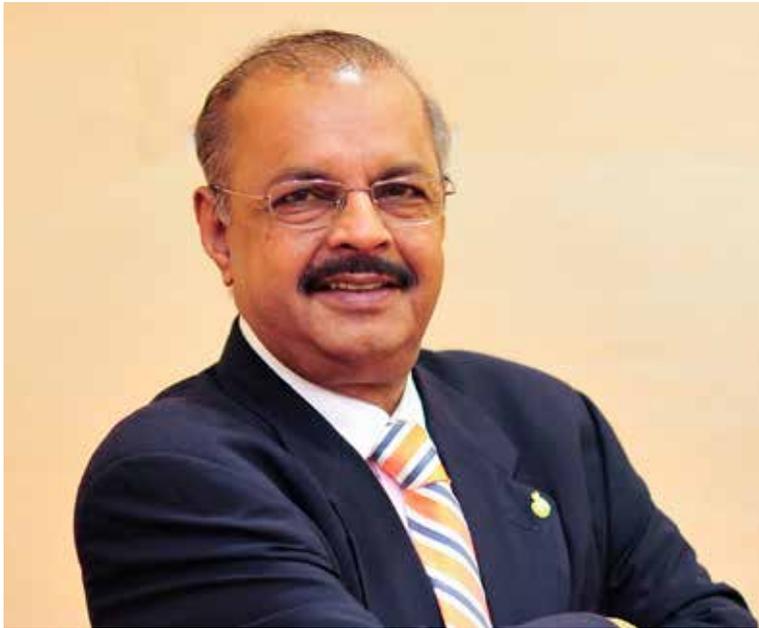


MELDING AYURVEDA WITH MODERN MEDICINE

Dr Muhammed Majeed has unlocked the mystery of herbs and offered it to the world. A research scientist and a passionate entrepreneur, Dr Majeed's vision has taken social and commercial expressions in the field of health sciences, through the Bengaluru-based company Sami Labs and the US based Sabinsa Corporation, with subsidiaries across the globe.



▲ Sami has seven state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities across the globe, equipped with a continuous extraction plant with 30-40 tones extraction capacity of herbal raw material per day. The closed solvent recovery system ensures that the environmental pollution due to the release of solvent vapors is diminished. It is the first company which installed a Supercritical Fluid Extraction facility in collaboration with IIT Bombay with Indian technology. In this technology, only liquid carbon dioxide is used in its supercritical stage as an extraction solvent.

Delving deep into the science of herbs and using cutting-edge technology to convert them into modern drug form, Sami Labs holds 200 US and international patents, with 100 more in the pipeline.

Founded by Dr Muhammed Majeed in 1991, an internationally acclaimed scientist and entrepreneur in the area of Alternative Medicine, Sami Labs is a research-oriented multinational health science company and a leading producer of nutraceuticals, cosmeceuticals, standardised herbal extracts, fine chemicals, specialty chemicals and probiotics.

Dr Majeed emigrated to the US from India in 1975, with \$8 in his pocket, a bachelor's degree in pharmacy, and a head filled with dreams. While working for Pharma giants such as Pfizer and Carter Wallace, he acquired an MS in Industrial Pharmacy from Long Island University and a Ph D. from St. John's University in the same field. "I wanted to start a generic company, but the US generic pharmaceutical industry was going through a turbulent time. So I turned my attention to natural products; I was always aware that Ayurveda had the answers to the ailments plaguing us," Dr Majeed says.

Using his knowledge of Industrial Pharmacy to convert herbs into modern drug form, he began by first standardising natural products with the clinical documentation required for the US market. "Though it did not actually come under the stringent regulations stipulated by the US for FDA approval, we believed maintaining comprehensive documentation helps us in the long run," Dr Majeed says.

But the transformation from a research-oriented health sciences company to a leading producer of nutraceuticals, cosmeceuticals, standardised herbal extracts and probiotics wasn't an easy one. While he was sufficiently armed to innovate and create a genre of 'alternative medicine', the concept had not yet caught on in the US then.

He set up the Sabinsa Corporation in New Jersey in 1988 to provide alternative and complementary natural products, using innovative approaches to human nutrition and well-being. In 1994-95, he introduced a program in the US, named Sabinsa on Wheels (SOW), inviting a minimum of 25 companies in each centre to a detailed scientific presentation of the products.

Dr Majeed travelled along the American landscape, propagating his products, trying to convince Americans. They eventually started to accept them, thanks to his doctorate from one of America's leading institutions. Since then, the company has expanded its operations in the US, and branched out to

Australia, China, Europe, Indonesia, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Africa, South Korea, UAE and Vietnam.

In 1991, Dr Majeed set up Sami Labs in Bengaluru, India, which does ground-breaking work in unlocking the mystery of herbs, extracting their goodness, and gifting it to the world – in short, marrying ancient Ayurveda and modern medicine.

The success of Sabinsa-Sami Labs is due to its emphasis on Intellectual Property (IP) ownership. "I learnt the hard way that IP ownership and protection of any innovative product is key to a company's success. If you are manufacturing in India and marketing abroad, you need to protect your innovation with an international patent. Otherwise, price competition will come from every corner of the world and you would have lost your edge. Moreover, if I don't own the IP, there is no revenue coming in, which translates to lack of funds for research. I firmly believe that to stay ahead of the curve you have to own the IP first and then step into the market," says Dr Majeed.

To obtain quality raw material, Sami Labs started contract cultivation of medicinal plants since 2001. This enables the company to monitor and make improvements in the medicinal herb crop right from processing of seeds to harvesting. "It is a win-win situation for the company as well as farmers", says Dr Majeed.

New product introductions have always been on the priority list of Sami-Sabinsa Group, and Shaheen Majeed, President, Sabinsa Worldwide and Dr Majeed's son, is spearheading expansion and R&D. The roadmap has new product introductions and higher emphasis on research. Sami Direct, its direct selling subsidiary, which was one of the first to introduce nutraceutical and cosmeceutical products with patented formulations, will also be in expansion mode, aiming at 50 retail brand stores in the Gulf region. Sami Labs will open a new active nutraceutical ingredient (ANI) facility in Hassan district of Karnataka this year.

AWARDS:

For his pioneering work in health sciences, Dr Majeed and his company have been feted by

the governments of India and USA, as well as by institutions in both countries. He was honoured with awards by the President of India during the years 1995, 1997 and 2008 for his pioneering and innovative research and creating export markets for products invented by him and manufactured in India. In 2002, Sami Labs was conferred the prestigious DSIR (Department of Scientific & Industrial Research) award, and in 2018, he was awarded the Shield of Honour by the Government of India.

Dr.Majeed received the Ellis Island Medal of Honour from the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO) authorised by the US Congress in 2004 and the Daniel B. Stateman Award for Distinguished Alumni from Long Island University. More recently, he was chosen as the 2018 NutraChampion in the NutraIngredients Awards in association with VitaFoods Europe. The NutraChampion awards honour the biggest champions of the nutraceuticals sector.



▲ Shaheen Majeed, President, Sabinsa Worldwide, was just 17 when he began working in the warehouse of the company. Over the past 25 years, he has been involved in nearly everything that Sami-Sabinsa Group of Companies does, and has held a variety of positions representing the company's substantial portfolio of proprietary nutritional and cosmeceutical ingredients. He oversees Sabinsa's contract farming program to ensure best agricultural practices and fair pay for farmers, is deeply involved in the cGMP and regulatory compliance at their factories and offices throughout the world, and oversees GRAS status applications. He also oversees an extensive marketing programme, Latin America Business Development, and guides many clinical studies through the publishing process. He credits his father for showing him that "with determination and hard work, nothing is impossible."



▲ Johara is a range of lush cosmetics developed by Sami Labs and is made of botanical extracts.

◀ Sami Labs research facility has over 120 scientists involved in specialised work in areas of phytochemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry, tissue culture, and plant biotechnology.