THE NUTRA ECONOMIST

nutrify today

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FROM THE DESK OF CHAIRPERSON, NUTRIFYTODAY

2026: Scale Up Nutra: A Responsible Acceleration

2026 has opened with the kind of momentum our sector thrives on....optimistic, action-oriented, and backed by real market signals. With Vitafoods India concluding recently on a strong note, the message from the show floor was clear: nutraceuticals are moving from a "wellness add-on" to a mainstream health priority. Briefs were sharper, conversations were more technical, and the demand for evidence-led differentiation was louder than ever.

This momentum matters because the months ahead are packed. India and the wider region are entering a season of nutra summits, scientific forums, trade platforms, and regulatory dialogues. Each convening adds a layer, new science, new formats, new partnerships, and new routes to market. Together, they point to one big inflection: 2026 is shaping up as a scale-up year for both the formulation business and the ingredient ecosystem.

Just four months from now, we head into a multi-venue Nutrify Today C-Suite SumFlex, our decision-making platform where global leaders converge to turn intent into execution. This year's agenda: "Scale Up Nutra"; is not a slogan. It reflects a category that is maturing quickly. Brands are raising the bar on clean labels and consumer experience. Healthcare professionals are engaging more seriously, with higher expectations of substantiation. Competitive intensity is rising, and so is the need for disciplined execution across science,

PRIYANKA SRIVASTAVA

Chairperson, NutrifyToday

So what does "scaling up" mean in 2026?

It starts with scaling formulation intelligence. The market is moving beyond generic blends toward purposeful design; bioavailability, stability, sensory acceptance, and user compliance. Formulators are increasingly expected to operate like product engineers: selecting the right delivery system, validating dose-to-benefit logic, and ensuring shelf-life performance without compromising label integrity.

Next is scaling ingredient differentiation. The ingredient business is shifting from commodity trade to value creation clinically backed actives, consistent specifications, traceability, and stronger documentation. In an era of informed consumers and data-driven procurement, "good enough" is being replaced by "proven and predictable." Innovation in extraction, standardization, fermentation, and delivery technologies is becoming the basis of competitive advantage.

Third, scale-up requires scaling quality and compliance as a strategic asset. As brands expand across channels and borders, quality systems can no longer be treated as back-end hygiene. Robust GMP, validated methods, contaminant control, stability programs, and claims discipline are now growth enablers. The companies that win will be those that build export-ready systems even for domestic products because the next consumer question is increasingly the same everywhere: Can I trust this?

Finally, scale-up is speed with substance. Product cycles are compressing and trends are faster, but speed must be matched with proof. Enduring brands will be those that can move quickly while staying anchored to substantiation—through credible evidence, transparent sourcing, and science-led communication.

2026 is also being powered by external tailwinds. Major trade developments and deeper trade engagement between India and Europe, and India and the USA, are reshaping how businesses think about collaboration, sourcing, and market access. Trade policy is no longer a distant headline; it is becoming an operating variable for ingredient availability, pricing, partnerships, and cross-border commercialization. In this edition, we examine these shifts through the lens of our industry and feature that analysis as our cover story.

For Indian businesses, the opportunity is significant but so is the responsibility. Global alignment can open doors only for those prepared to walk through them with credible dossiers, disciplined documentation, manufacturing consistency, and a predictable compliance posture. For global players, India's manufacturing depth, scientific talent, and innovation ecosystem offer a platform to co-create products not only for India, but for wider export markets. The winners will be those who treat partnerships as long-term capability building, not short-term transactions.

This is precisely why we continue to advocate for a Responsible Nutra industry. Responsibility is not a constraint; it is a growth lever. Responsible science builds repeat purchase. Responsible labeling protects consumer trust. Responsible sourcing de-risks long-term supply. Responsible marketing safeguards category credibility. If nutraceuticals are to earn deeper acceptance among clinicians, policymakers, and families, responsibility must be embedded in every layer; from R&D and regulatory strategy to manufacturing, communication, and post-market vigilance. This is the moment to invest in clinical, regulatory, and manufacturing capabilities that can sustain scale without compromising trust.

As always, this edition brings strong articles from industry leaders across ingredients, formulation, clinical validation, regulatory affairs, and commercialization. We also continue our practice of decoding high-potential markets. In the last two editions, we completed the Philippines as a market deep-dive. Starting with this edition, and continuing into the next, we begin a deeper journey into the Vietnam nutraceutical market; a compelling landscape with a young, digitally engaged population, fast-evolving retail, and rising interest in preventive health.

Interesting times are ahead, and we at Nutrify Today, together with the Responsible Nutra ecosystem look forward to an ambitious journey through 2026. Happy reading, and here's to experiencing this year together with great energy.

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How the U.S. Tariff Reset and Europe's Liberalization Are Reconfiguring the Global Supplement Supply Chain

NutrifyToday Market Research Bureau

The global nutraceutical industry has entered a structural transition. What began as a volatile tariff escalation cycle has, in the past week, evolved into a legal and economic reset with far-reaching implications for ingredient supply chains.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision to invalidate the tariff framework imposed under emergency powers has reshaped the trade landscape overnight. In response, Washington has pivoted to a temporary global import surcharge of 10% under Section 122 of the Trade Act + +5% MFN; a measure capped in duration and scope.

For Indian nutraceutical ingredient companies, this is not merely a rate adjustment. It is a strategic window.

At the same time, Europe remains comparatively stable on tariff structures, with the EU–India Free Trade Agreement and India-EFTA TEPA reinforcing liberalization momentum. Yet in Europe, tariff relief is only the first gate. Regulatory admissibility remains decisive.

This moment demands clarity.

The U.S. Reset: From Escalation to Structured Volatility

The invalidation of the earlier reciprocal tariff architecture has three immediate consequences for nutraceutical trade:

1. The tariff ceiling has normalized at 15% globally, replacing a patchwork of higher, stacked measures.
2. The mechanism is temporary, limited by statute unless extended.
3. Future tariff actions are likely to become more targeted, potentially through sector-specific trade tools.

For Indian exporters, the strategic insight is simple: 15% is a headline number, not a uniform economic outcome.

In nutraceuticals, tariff impact varies dramatically by product form:

- A high-potency standardized extract used at 250 mg per serving may absorb a 15% duty with marginal bottle-level cost impact.
- A commodity botanical powder competing on narrow margins may experience significant compression.

The implication is that differentiation now absorbs tariff shock.

India-U.S. Negotiations: The 10–12% Effective Band

Diplomatic negotiations between India and the United States were already underway prior to the judicial reset. With the global surcharge now at 15%, the probability of sector-specific adjustments or effective reductions through negotiated carve-outs increases.

An eventual 10–12% effective band for priority Indian exports is plausible through:

- Targeted product exclusions
- Classification adjustments
- Bilateral sector agreements
- Regulatory equivalence frameworks

In nutraceuticals, however, the most powerful lever is neither diplomacy nor politics. It is customs engineering.

The Decisive Variable: HS Classification

Under U.S. tariff administration, multiple nutraceutical-relevant inputs sit at classification crossroads:

- Turmeric powder may qualify under spice lines.
- Curcuminoid extract may fall under chemical preparations.
- Psyllium husk can be treated differently than processed fiber derivatives.
- Boswellia resin differs from standardized extract under customs logic.

The landed cost outcome depends on declaration precision.

Companies that treat HS coding as a compliance afterthought will lose margin.

Companies that treat classification as a strategic discipline will win contracts.

This is now a board-level issue.

Europe: Liberalized Tariffs, Intensified Scrutiny

While the United States navigates legal recalibration, Europe advances structured liberalization through the EU–India FTA and the India–EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement.

Tariff elimination across the majority of lines strengthens India's price competitiveness in:

- Spices and raw botanicals
- Chemical intermediates
- Select nutraceutical actives

Yet Europe remains regulation-driven.

Botanical extracts must clear:

- Novel food pathways (where applicable)
- Member-state specific safety interpretations
- Pesticide, heavy metal, and contaminant thresholds
- Claim substantiation constraints

Tariff advantage without regulatory admissibility is commercially irrelevant.

Europe is not a single market in practice. It is a regulatory mosaic.

Four Ingredient Realities in the New Trade Architecture

1. Food-Form Botanicals
Turmeric powder, ginger powder, psyllium husk. Advantaged in both U.S. and EU contexts if correctly classified and documented.

2. Standardized Extracts
Curcuminoids, boswellia extract, ashwagandha derivatives.
Higher scrutiny; commercially resilient if clinically supported.

3. Nutraceutical Chemicals
Vitamins, amino acid derivatives.
Tariff liberalization in Europe is beneficial, but compliance complexity rises.

4. System Inputs
Excipients, packaging, encapsulation materials. Often overlooked, yet materially influential in landed-cost modeling.

Each category experiences the new trade architecture differently. Portfolio strategy must reflect this segmentation.

Why India's Structural Position Is Strengthening

Three structural advantages amplify India's moment:

1. Botanical biodiversity and cultivation scale
2. Advancing GMP and analytical sophistication
3. Policy alignment toward global trade integration

In a tariff-fragmented world, relative stability becomes competitive capital.

Europe is deepening trade integration.
The United States is recalibrating rather than retreating.
India stands at the intersection of both.

Strategic Recommendations for Indian Ingredient Companies

1. Build a Tariff Exposure Map
Every SKU should have a live dossier including:
- HS code rationale
- U.S. and EU duty status
- Origin documentation
- Broker alignment notes
- Scenario-based landed-cost models

2. Engineer Products for Resilience
Where legally appropriate, align product formats to stable classifications.

3. Invest in Regulatory Intelligence
Especially for EU botanicals under scrutiny.

4. Contract for Volatility
Embed tariff-adjustment clauses and multi-SKU flexibility in commercial agreements.

5. Use Switzerland as a Premium Anchor
Leverage TEPA advantages to build validation partnerships in EFTA markets, enhancing EU-wide credibility.

For U.S. and European Brands: Strategic-Origin Sourcing

The supplement industry is moving beyond lowest-cost sourcing toward strategic-origin sourcing.

India offers:

- Scalable botanical supply
- Competitive cost structures
- Expanding tariff advantage
- Growing regulatory alignment

But procurement must evolve:

- Precise HS code management
- Transparent origin documentation
- Dual-source contingency frameworks
- Elevated due diligence

Brands that treat India as a co-development ecosystem ; not merely a vendor base , will outperform.

The Larger Shift: From Commodity Trade to Supply Architecture

Tariffs are no longer static fiscal tools. They are geopolitical instruments embedded in legal frameworks and negotiated outcomes.

The Supreme Court ruling in the U.S. has introduced a structural recalibration. Europe's trade agreements are embedding long-term liberalization. India's negotiating leverage has expanded.

For nutraceutical ingredients - where authenticity, traceability, and regulatory nuance already shape value - this convergence magnifies opportunity.

India is not simply benefiting from a tariff shift.
It is gaining structural relevance in a rebalanced global trade order.

The tariff maze is complex.
But complexity, properly managed, becomes competitive advantage.

For Indian nutraceutical companies prepared to operationalize classification strategy, regulatory foresight, and commercial agility, this is not a period of uncertainty.

It is a moment of acceleration.

Vietnam's Wellness Boom: Demography, Digital Culture, and the Rise of the Supplement Economy-PART 1

By 2025, Vietnam is no longer an emerging wellness market. It is a structurally rising one.

With a population crossing 100 million, accelerating urbanization, rising incomes, and one of Southeast Asia's most digitally penetrated consumer bases, Vietnam is reshaping how preventive health, beauty, and supplements are consumed—and sold.

This is not a short-term post-pandemic spike. It is a demographic and cultural shift with long-term commercial implications.

The Demographic Engine Behind the Boom

Vietnam's population stands at approximately 101 million, with a median age of about 33 years. The country remains young, but it is aging faster than many ASEAN peers. Roughly:

- ~40% live in urban areas (rapidly increasing)
- ~9–10% are already 65+
- A large working-age cohort (25–44) forms the core consumer base
- Gen Z represents roughly one-fifth to one-quarter of the population

This dual structure—young consumers plus a steadily expanding elderly segment—creates two simultaneous wellness growth curves:

1. **Daily preventive health & beauty for urban youth**
2. **Healthy aging & caregiver-driven purchasing for older adults**

Vietnam is entering a demographic phase where supplements are not aspirational—they are becoming routine.

Income Trends: Why Wellness Is Becoming Spendable

Vietnam's average monthly employee income reached approximately VND 7.7 million in 2024, reflecting steady growth. Minimum wages are scheduled to increase again in 2026.

While Vietnam is not yet a high-income economy, two patterns matter:

- Urban middle-class expansion is accelerating.
- Discretionary spending on health is rising faster than general consumption.

As incomes rise, the market bifurcates:

Mass Tier

- Affordable vitamins
- Immunity products
- Beauty supplements
- Online-discounted SKUs

Premium Tier

- Imported brands
- Clinical positioning
- Collagen shots
- Pharmacy-led endorsements

Vietnam is developing a layered supplement market—not a single-price economy.

Cultural DNA: Why Supplements Fit Vietnam Naturally

Vietnam has a deep-rooted tradition of herbal and traditional medicine use. The idea of taking something daily "for health support" is culturally normalized.

Supplements are often framed

- "Nourishing" (bồi bổ)
- "Supporting resistance" (tăng sức đề kháng)
- "Good for digestion"
- "Good for bones"
- "Beauty from within"

This linguistic framing matters. In Vietnam, supplements are not positioned as pharmaceuticals; they are part of a broader functional food ecosystem.

Modern nutraceuticals effectively sit on a cultural bridge:

Traditional wellness logic + modern packaging + digital retail mechanics.

How Much Vietnam Spends on Wellness

Vietnam's total wellness economy is estimated at approximately US$22–23 billion, representing around 5% of GDP.

Per capita wellness spending is modest compared to developed markets—roughly US$230 annually—but growth velocity is strong.

This is not saturation. It is early-stage scaling.

Where Vietnamese Consumers Buy Wellness

Vietnam's wellness retail structure is hybrid but increasingly digital-first.

1. Social Commerce & E-Commerce

Shopee and TikTok Shop now dominate platform retail share. TikTok Shop, in particular, has transformed product discovery into livestream commerce.

Social proof is critical:

- Reviews drive decisions.
- Influencers drive awareness.
- Live selling drives urgency.

2. Online Pharmacies

A large portion of online supplement purchases occur through pharmacy-linked platforms, reinforcing trust.

3. Offline Pharmacies (Still Powerful)

Despite digital growth, traditional pharmacy chains remain the credibility anchor—especially for prenatal, bone health, and elderly-targeted SKUs.

Winning brands operate omnichannel: digital scale + pharmacy legitimacy.

Who Spends the Most?

Urban Working Adults

The largest spend engine. Focused on:

- Immunity
- Energy
- Digestive support
- Beauty supplements

Women (Beauty & Collagen Dominance)

Women drive a significant share of collagen consumption. "Beauty-from-within" is one of the most monetizable verticals in Vietnam's supplement sector.

Young Families

Prenatal and infant nutrition segments show strong resilience and growth. Trust and physician/pharmacist endorsement are critical.

Aging Consumers & Caregivers

With Vietnam's elderly share rising, adult children increasingly purchase:

- Calcium
- Glucosamine
- Collagen Type II
- Cardio-support products

Family-driven purchasing remains culturally strong.

What Are the Best-Selling Supplement Categories?

1. Vitamins & Immunity
High volume, repeat purchase.
Post-pandemic preventive behavior remains sticky.

2. Collagen & Nutricosmetics
High margin, influencer-driven.
Social validation accelerates sales.

3. Probiotics & Gut Health
Digestive health resonates strongly. Urban dietary shifts amplify demand.

4. Bone & Joint Support
Aging + family support structure sustains growth.

5. Prenatal & Pediatric Supplements
Trust-driven, pharmacy-heavy category.

Notably, format innovation—gummies, drinkable shots, sachets—gains traction among younger consumers.

The Counterfeit & Trust Factor

Vietnam has intensified efforts to combat counterfeit goods, including in supplements. This introduces two parallel dynamics:

1. Increased regulatory scrutiny
2. Heightened consumer skepticism

Brands that over-invest in:

- Visible compliance
- Clear ingredient transparency
- Anti-counterfeit mechanisms
- Pharmacist partnerships

will disproportionately win long term.
In Vietnam, **trust is commercial leverage.**

Gen Z: The Decisive Cohort

Gen Z (approximately ages 13–28) represents roughly 20–23 million consumers. They are:

- Mobile-first
- Social commerce-native
- Review-driven
- Visually influenced

What Gen Z Buys

- Vitamin gummies
- Collagen drinks
- Gut-health products
- Fitness-related supplements
- Skincare-linked ingestibles

How They Decide

- Reviews matter more than brand heritage.
- Influencers matter more than traditional advertising.
- Convenience and aesthetics matter as much as efficacy.

Strategic Implication

Vietnam is transitioning from a pharmacist-led recommendation model to a hybrid authority model:

Influencer + platform credibility + pharmacy endorsement.

Brands that understand this triangle will dominate Gen Z.

Structural Outlook: Why This Market Is Durable

Vietnam's wellness trajectory is supported by:

- Population scale (100M+)
- Rising wages
- Accelerating digital penetration
- Aging demographics
- Deep-rooted preventive health culture
- Social-commerce retail infrastructure

This is not a cyclical category expansion. It is a structural evolution.

Strategic Takeaways for Global Wellness Brands

1. Localize Benefit Language
Frame claims around "support" and daily wellness—not disease treatment.
2. Design for Social Commerce
TikTok-first storytelling is not optional.
3. Build Pharmacy Trust
Especially for prenatal and aging segments.
4. Differentiate on Authenticity
Anti-counterfeit positioning is a competitive moat.
5. Segment by Life Stage
Urban Gen Z ≠ young mothers ≠ caregivers for aging parents.

Vietnam is no longer a peripheral ASEAN opportunity.
It is emerging as a high-velocity, digitally accelerated wellness economy; where culture, demography, and commerce align.

For supplement brands looking east, Vietnam may be one of the most strategically balanced growth markets in Asia today.

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The Omega-3 Knowledge Crisis: Why India's Fast-Growing Supplement Market Needs a Scientific Reset

When I entered the nutraceutical industry more than a decade ago, omega-3 supplementation in India was largely confined to cardiology clinics. It was prescribed selectively—often for high-risk cardiovascular patients—and positioned as a therapeutic adjunct rather than a daily wellness essential.

Today, omega-3 capsules occupy prime retail space across pharmacies, modern trade shelves, e-commerce platforms, and wellness boutiques. The category has posted sustained double-digit growth, fueled by rising preventive health awareness, expanding middle-class consumption, and aggressive marketing.

Yet beneath this expansion lies a structural weakness: most consumers do not know why they are taking omega-3s, how much they actually need, whether the product they chose is effective, or if it is working.

That gap between consumption and comprehension is not merely academic. It represents a public health risk, a market distortion, and a credibility challenge for the Indian nutraceutical ecosystem.

The Word-of-Mouth Economy

Across India—metros, Tier-2 cities, and emerging towns—the pattern is remarkably consistent:

- "It's good for the heart."
- "My doctor mentioned it."
- "Someone said everyone should take it."

The intent is positive. The follow-through is not.
Ask about baseline omega-3 status. Silence.

Ask whether they have measured response after supplementation. Confusion.

Ask how dosage was determined. "It says one capsule daily."

This is not evidence-based supplementation. It is faith-based supplementation.

MANEESH SINGH

Category Lead: 1MG

How Global Markets Approach Omega-3

In the United States, parts of Europe, and advanced Asian markets, omega-3 supplementation is increasingly guided by the Omega-3 Index—a blood biomarker that measures EPA and DHA levels in red blood cell membranes.

The model is straightforward:

1. Measure baseline Omega-3 Index.
2. Identify target (typically ≥8% for cardiovascular protection).
3. Prescribe dose based on deficit.
4. Re-test after 8–12 weeks.
5. Adjust dosage as needed.

This is precision nutrition—measurable, accountable, outcome-driven.
In India, omega-3 supplementation remains largely non-quantified. There is no routine testing, no feedback loop, and limited personalization.

India's Unique Risk Profile

India's need for structured omega-3 implementation is arguably greater than many Western countries.

1. Dietary Patterns

Large sections of the population consume minimal fatty fish, particularly in landlocked regions. While plant sources like flaxseed provide ALA (alpha-linolenic acid), human conversion of ALA to EPA and DHA is inefficient—often below 5%.

Most consumers are unaware that EPA and DHA are the therapeutically active forms.

2. Cardiometabolic Burden

India faces a disproportionate burden of:
- Cardiovascular disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Chronic low-grade inflammation

These are precisely the conditions where EPA and DHA show strong evidence for triglyceride reduction, anti-inflammatory modulation, endothelial support, and cardioprotection.

We should be a global leader in omega-3 research and implementation. Instead, we are an under-measured, over-marketed market.

3. Price Sensitivity Without Quality Literacy

Indian consumers are rightly price-conscious. However, without understanding quality parameters, cost comparison becomes superficial.

A ₹300 product and a ₹1,200 product may appear interchangeable—but they may differ dramatically in oxidation status, bioavailability, concentration, and purity.

The Hidden Cost of Underdosing

Clinical literature typically supports therapeutic dosing between 1,000–3,000 mg EPA+DHA daily depending on indication. Yet most Indian consumers take 250–500 mg combined EPA+DHA—often insufficient for meaningful biomarker shifts.

Consequences include:
- No measurable triglyceride reduction
- No visible symptom change
- Discontinuation due to perceived ineffectiveness
- Erosion of trust in supplements

The category grows, but consumer confidence stagnates.

What "Quality" Actually Means

Few consumers understand that omega-3 supplements vary dramatically in composition and integrity.

Oxidation

Omega-3 fatty acids are highly prone to oxidation. Oxidized oils may lose efficacy and potentially generate harmful lipid peroxides. Quality manufacturers measure TOTOX (Total Oxidation Value)—ideally below 26.

How many buyers check this parameter?

Molecular Form

Omega-3s are available as:
- Triglycerides (natural form)
- Ethyl esters (concentrated but variable absorption)
- Re-esterified triglycerides (concentrated with improved bioavailability)

Most labels do not clearly educate consumers on the difference.

Purity

Marine oils can accumulate heavy metals, dioxins, and PCBs. Third-party certifications such as IFOS (International Fish Oil Standards) provide transparency—but remain rarely discussed at point of sale in India.

Concentration

A 1,000 mg fish oil capsule may contain only 300 mg of EPA+DHA. Without label literacy, consumers assume potency that does not exist.

These are not technicalities. They determine clinical impact.

The Testing Infrastructure Deficit

The most critical missing element in India is accessible Omega-3 Index testing.

Because testing is rare:
- Consumers do not know baseline status.
- Doctors lack measurement familiarity.
- Labs see limited demand.
- Brands avoid outcome accountability.

This creates a self-reinforcing cycle of non-measurement.

A Strategic Reset for the Industry

If the Indian nutraceutical sector seeks long-term credibility and global leadership, omega-3 must transition from a volume-driven category to an evidence-driven one.

1. Integrate Testing with Product Strategy
Manufacturers should partner with diagnostic labs to co-develop affordable Omega-3 Index testing programs. Testing vouchers bundled with premium products could normalize measurement.

2. Educate Healthcare Professionals
Continuing medical education (CME) modules focused on nutritional biomarker testing, lipid science, and EPA/DHA pharmacodynamics could meaningfully elevate prescription quality.

3. Train Retail and Pharmacy Channels
Frontline advisors must understand dosing ranges, form differences, oxidation, and quality standards.

4. Transparent Science-Based Marketing
Move from generic claims ("supports heart health") to mechanism-based communication:

- Triglyceride reduction
- Inflammatory cytokine modulation
- Endothelial nitric oxide balance
- Membrane fluidity and signal transduction

Consumers deserve mechanistic clarity.

5. Establish Industry Benchmarks
Associations should define voluntary quality standards for oxidation, purity, and labeling transparency.

The Strategic Opportunity
India is uniquely positioned:

- A young demographic
- Rising preventive health consciousness
- Growing disposable income
- Expanding diagnostic networks

Omega-3 supplementation could serve as a flagship model for precision nutraceutical adoption.

But only if the industry embraces measurement, education, and transparency.

A Professional Imperative

As someone who has spent years in formulation, commercialization, and consumer education, I find it difficult to recommend omega-3 supplementation without knowing whether:

- The product is potent
- The dose is therapeutic
- The consumer's baseline is deficient
- The intervention is measurable

Growth without accountability is not progress.

The omega-3 market in India will continue expanding. The real question is whether it will mature.

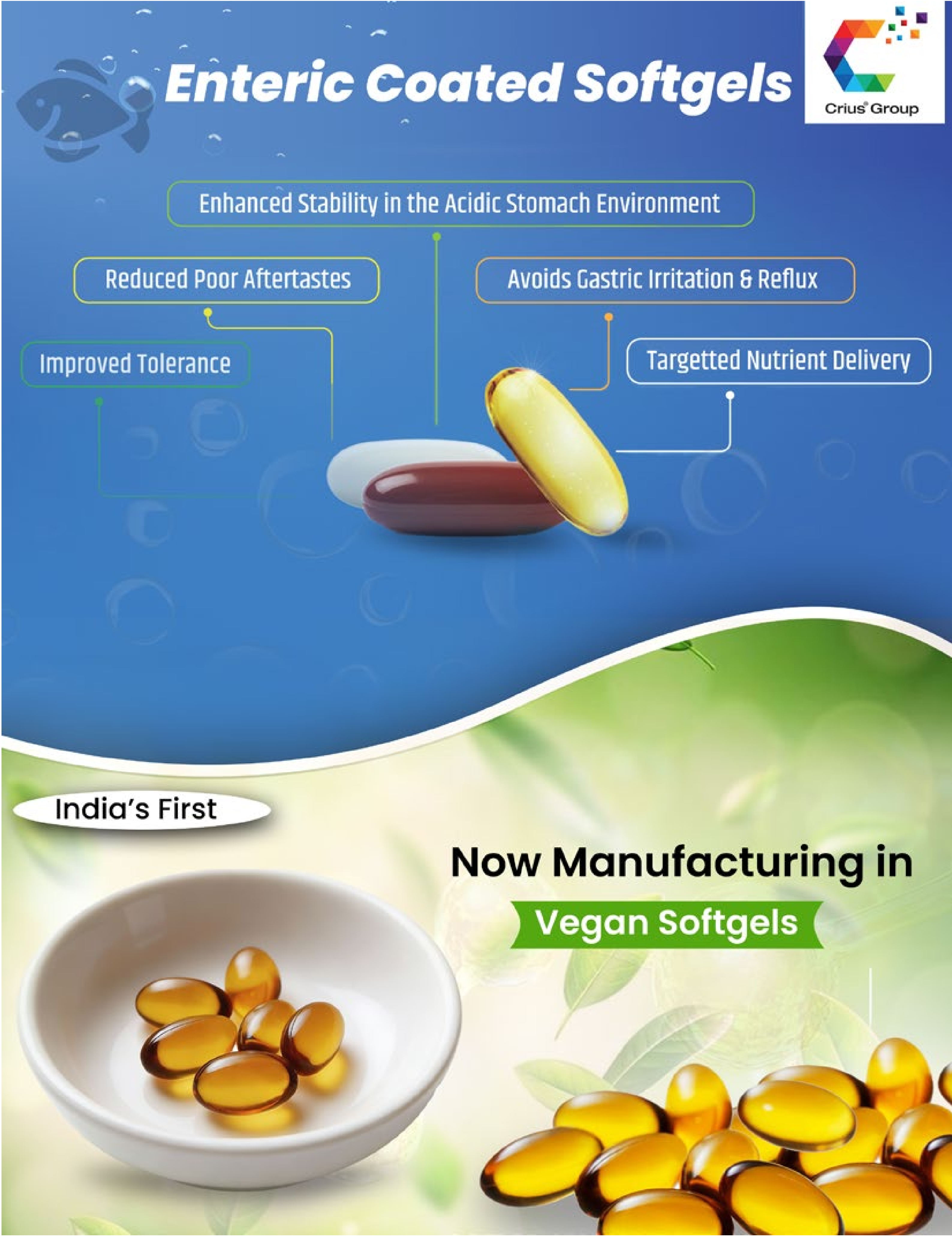
Will we remain a high-volume, low-literacy category?

Or will we transition into a globally benchmarked, data-driven, clinically respected model?
The omega-3 knowledge crisis is real. It is also solvable.

What is required now is industry courage—to move beyond marketing momentum and toward measurable impact.

India does not need more capsules.
It needs better-informed consumers, accountable brands, and outcome-based supplementation.

Only then will growth translate into genuine public health advancement.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Crius Group exemplifies excellence and innovation in the pharmaceutical and nutraceutical sectors, operating in strict compliance with international standards such as ISO 9001:22000, HACCP, and HALAL certifications. Its facilities are also registered with WHO-GMP, Health Canada, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), and other regulatory authorities, ensuring all products consistently meet global standards of quality, safety, and efficacy.

Crius Group is renowned for its exceptional expertise in delivering innovative formulations through cutting-edge technologies like "Vege Softgel" and "Oil-Infused Gummies,". Crius Group has further advanced dosage form innovation with pioneering products: liposomal technology-based mouth-dissolvable sachets, chewing gums, chewable softgels, effervescent sachets, and more. Crius is further expanding its innovation pipeline with upcoming platforms including liquid-filled capsules, capsule-in-capsule systems, and beadlet-in-capsule technologies.

With 20+ years of experience and 1,800+ formulations, Crius Group uses scientifically researched ingredients to deliver clinically validated benefits, offering end-to-end solutions for pharmaceutical and nutraceutical product development.

Serving over 700 esteemed clients across India and key global markets—including the USA, the Middle East (Oman, UAE, Kuwait), Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Africa.

Equipped with state-of-the-art machinery, advanced quality control instruments, and stringent environmental control systems. Adhering to rigorous international standards, the company maintains excellence across every aspect—from packaging design and precise dispatch to meticulous documentation and personalized customer support.

Renowned for its visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to excellence, Crius Group has received multiple prestigious accolades, including the Pharma Ratan-2022 award. The company was also featured in Industry Outlook Magazine as one of the Top 10 Best Nutraceutical Manufacturers of the Year 2023–24 and was recognized as the Vitafood New Innovation Zone winner in 2025 for its Oil-Infused Sea Buckthorn Gummies.

As Crius Group continues to empower health and wellness through cutting-edge solutions and unwavering dedication, it stands as a shining example of the power of innovation, quality, and commitment in the ever-evolving world of nutraceuticals and pharmaceuticals.

Crius Group- "Tomorrow's Health, Today's Innovation"

The R&D Grail: Balancing Ingredient Synergy and Complexity in Nutraceuticals

The third episode of The R&D Grail, titled “Ingredient Synergy versus Complexity,” convened on January 29, 2026, to explore the delicate balance between elegant formulation and overcrowded ingredient lists. Hosted by Dr. Muneeb U Rehman and moderated by Dr. Balkumar Marthi, the session brought together industry leaders Dr. Rachana Bhoite of Dr. Reddy’s and Ms. Kanchan Jaiswal of Mankind Pharma to unpack the pharmacology, bioavailability, and real-world evidence required to craft effective functional foods. The discussion highlighted a critical shift in the industry: moving away from “shotgun” formulations packed with dozens of ingredients toward precise, scientifically backed synergies.

The Science of Synergy over Crowded Labels

Dr. Rachana Bhoite opened the technical dialogue by defining nutrient synergy as a concept where combining two or more bioactive agents produces physiological outcomes that surpass the sum of their individual effects. She emphasized that while marketing often pushes for “33 vital nutrients” to attract consumers, this complexity can be counterproductive. For instance, certain nutrients like calcium and iron can inhibit each other if not formulated with care. Conversely, smart synergy such as pairing EPA and DHA with phospholipids rather than triglycerides can significantly enhance cellular absorption, allowing for lower but more effective dosages. This targeted approach ensures that the product delivers on its clinical promises without unnecessary bulk.

Ms. Kanchan Jaiswal reinforced this “less is more” philosophy, stating that in nutrition science, “more is not better; what is better is better”. She pointed out that many products currently offer a vast array of nutrients at maintenance (RDA) levels, which often fails to address specific therapeutic needs. A classic example of negative complexity is the combination of iron and zinc; because they share the same absorption transporter, they can counter each other, leaving the consumer with the benefit of neither. Effective formulation requires picking the right ingredients in therapeutic dosages that target the real problem, rather than bombarding the body with a complex mix that it may not be able to process effectively.

MODERATOR

Dr. Balkumar Marthi
President, NutrifyToday Academy
(ex-Unilever R&D; former Dean of Innovation, GITAM University)

PANELISTS

Dr. Rachana Bhoite
Heading Nutrition Science & Clinical Research at Dr. Reddy’s

Dr. Babu. U. V.
Director of R&D at The Himalaya Wellness Company

Kanchan Jaiswal
Head Nutrition Science & Clinical Affairs at MANKIND PHARMA LTD.

Processing, Sustainability, and the "Clean Label" Trend

The panel also addressed the historical complexity of processed foods, using a traditional tomato soup as a case study. Dr. Balkumar Marthi questioned why such products often feature sugar and thickeners like maltodextrin high on the ingredient list. Dr. Rachana explained that in the Indian market, affordability and sensory acceptance are major drivers; sugar often balances the natural tanginess of tomatoes to suit local palates. Ms. Jaiswal added that these ingredients also serve as functional, natural preservatives to sustain a long shelf life in a tropical climate, ensuring the product remains stable for up to a year.

However, the tide is turning toward "clean labels" and environmental responsibility. The experts noted that reducing ingredient complexity is not just a health choice but a sustainability one. Ms. Jaiswal shared that removing a single redundant ingredient in large-scale manufacturing can save millions of tons of water and significantly reduce a company's digital and carbon footprint. Furthermore, new technologies like bio-enzymatic reactions are allowing scientists to increase the intrinsic sweetness of grains like wheat, potentially reducing the need for added sugars and further simplifying the label.

Regulation and the Future of Ethical Innovation

As the nutraceutical market nears a projected $100 billion valuation, the panelists expressed urgent concerns regarding the pace of regulation. With many startups launching products based on single, underpowered research papers, the risk of toxicity is real. Ms. Jaiswal cited Garcinia Cambogia as an example of an ingredient that saw a massive boom before long-term data linked it to potential liver disorders. Both experts urged regulators to move faster, particularly in approving new salts like magnesium bisglycinate and allowing scientifically justified "leeway" beyond 100% RDA for specific therapeutic elements like PCOS or liver disease.

In their closing remarks, the panel emphasized that the future of the industry lies in precision and ethics. Dr. Rachana highlighted the use of AI and in silico modeling to predict clinical success, while Dr. Marthi concluded that success is not about a simple "yes or no" on complexity, but about "horses for courses" understanding exactly what the consumer needs and delivering it through sound science and transparent marketing

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Feverfew is a well-known traditional herb valued for its role in migraine management and neurological comfort. Its benefits are linked to its ability to modulate serotonin (5-HT) receptor activity, a key pathway involved in migraine initiation and pain signaling. Clinical observations show that feverfew supplementation can help reduce the frequency, intensity, and duration of migraine attacks, while also supporting overall well-being, including improved physical performance and reduced anxiety. With a history of traditional use and growing scientific support, feverfew stands out as a natural, well-tolerated botanical for ongoing migraine prevention and head pain support.

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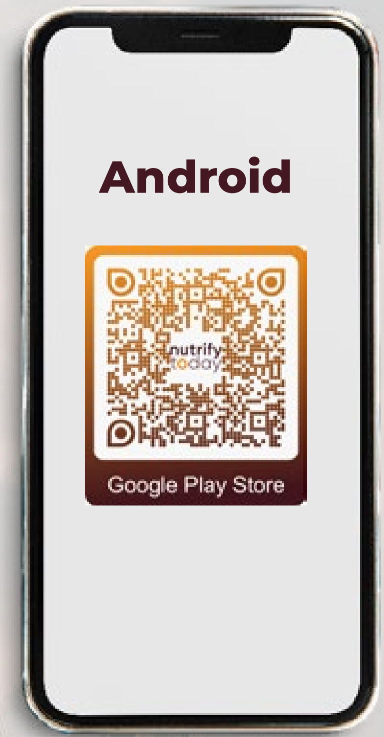

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