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Are You Buying Supplement Plants or Building Moats?

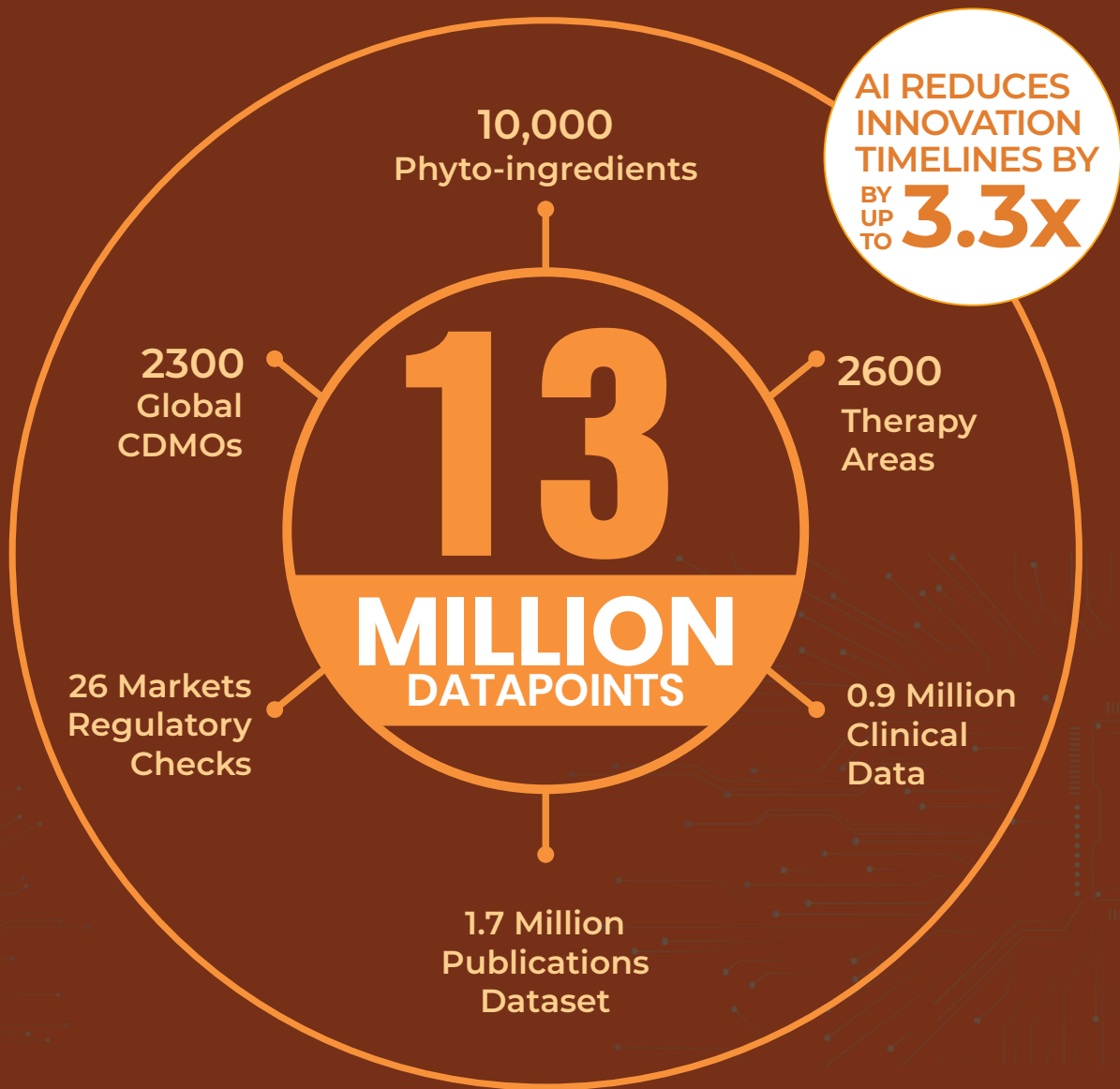




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FROM THE DESK OF CHAIRPERSON, NUTRIFYTODAY

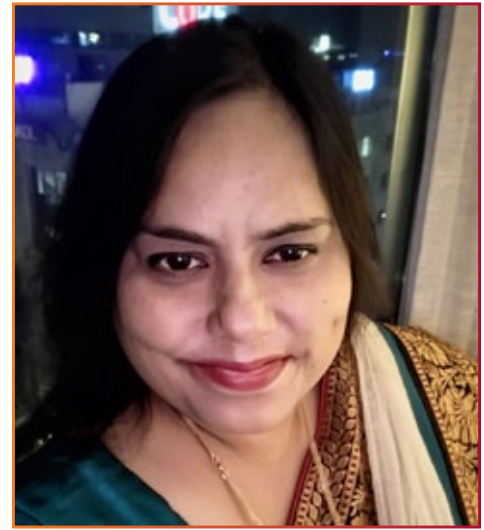
From Conference to Deal Architecture: What NutriflyToday SumFlex 2026 Signals for the Nutrition Economy

For years, nutraceutical industry events followed a predictable formula: panels, booths, networking dinners, and a few polite conversations about “collaboration.” NutriflyToday C-Suite SumFlex 2026 suggested a different model. It was less a conference than a business operating system: part policy forum, part investment table, part market-access engine, and part live laboratory for the future of responsible nutrition.

The significance of the 2026 edition lies in its architecture. SumFlex moved across two countries in a compressed sequence: NutriflyToday Eurasia SumFlex was held in Tashkent from May 20–22, followed by the Global C-Suite SumFlex in Mumbai on June 4–5. The Tashkent edition brought together nearly 3,000 participants across nutraceuticals, pharmaceuticals, med-tech, investors, policymakers, distributors, and healthcare leaders, positioning Uzbekistan as a corridor into CIS markets. Mumbai then converted that corridor logic into a C-suite platform, bringing together leaders from pharma, regulation, venture capital, ingredient science, and technology.

The lesson is important: the future of high-value industry gatherings is not scale of attendance. It is precision of intent.

Mumbai 2026 was built around three tracks: Stage, Studio, and closed-door Economic Alliance rooms. The public stage created the narrative. The studio converted science, formulation, and market challenges into sharper executive conversations. The Economic Alliance rooms moved the event closer to diplomacy, bringing together industry leaders, investors, international government representatives from the Middle East and CIS markets, and the Government of Maharashtra around outcome-led discussions. More than USD 200 million in investment opportunities were discussed between the Middle East, India, and a CIS nation.



PRIYANKA SRIVASTAVA

Chairperson, NutriflyToday

Whether all of those opportunities materialize remains to be seen, but the direction is unmistakable: SumFlex is evolving from a thought-leadership platform into a deal-origination ecosystem.

This is where the Maharashtra angle becomes strategically interesting. The platform was used for direct investment facilitation, including bilateral discussions with Uzbekistan on technology transfer, regulatory alignment, joint manufacturing, market access, and institutional partnerships in pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals. The same platform also hosted conversations around algae-based carbon capture, logistics infrastructure, and circular industrial models. In effect, a nutraceutical summit became a state-level economic diplomacy room.

That represents a meaningful shift. Nutraceuticals are no longer merely a consumer wellness category. They are increasingly becoming part of industrial strategy, healthcare policy, manufacturing competitiveness, food security, preventive medicine, and export diplomacy.

One of the most distinctive features of SumFlex 2026 was its use of live business formats. The Master Formulator Show placed formulation science at the centre of the room, highlighting scientists who translate botanicals into scalable, evidence-backed products. The “Fake Nutra” live simulation staged the problem of counterfeit nutrition as a crime scene involving regulators, police authorities, technology providers, industry leaders, and affected businesses.

These were not entertainment devices. They were executive learning mechanisms. By turning complex industry failures into live case simulations, SumFlex made abstract risks visible: counterfeit ingredients, weak sourcing systems, poor formulation discipline, regulatory vulnerabilities, and fragile supply chains.

The deeper insight is that nutraceutical leadership is moving from marketing-led growth to evidence-led scale. That shift has significant implications for nutraceutical CDMOs. The global nutraceutical CDMO market is projected to expand substantially over the remainder of the decade. Yet in a market growing at high-single-digit rates, manufacturing capacity alone will not create enduring value.

The future winners will be organizations that own difficult formulation challenges, stability expertise, regulatory readiness, validated ingredients, scientific substantiation, and trusted customer relationships.

That theme echoed across the SumFlex agenda: GLP-1 therapies and metabolic health, counterfeit nutrition, women-led wellness brands, AI-enabled commercialization, formulation science, and responsible nutrition at scale. These are not isolated topics. They are signals of where the industry is heading.

Metabolic health is bringing nutrition closer to pharmaceuticals. Counterfeit nutrition is forcing the sector to professionalize supply chains. Women's health is creating new clinical and consumer opportunities.

Artificial intelligence is compressing the journey from insight to formulation to commercialization. CDMOs are increasingly expected not only to manufacture products but also to help brands de-risk innovation.

SumFlex 2026 therefore established the foundation for what the platform can become: not merely an annual conference, but a distributed market-access infrastructure. Tashkent can serve as a CIS corridor. Mumbai can operate as the global boardroom. Future editions can emerge as regional nodes where science, capital, regulation, manufacturing, and market access converge.

The conclusion is straightforward.

SumFlex 2026 was not important because it appeared larger. It was important because it behaved differently. It demonstrated that the next phase of nutraceutical growth will not be built by brands, CDMOs, investors, regulators, or governments acting independently. It will be built through structured alliances where evidence, capital, policy, and execution sit at the same table.

The old industry event asked, "Who attended?"

SumFlex 2026 asked the more important question:

"What moved?"



EVERYONE IS BUYING SUPPLEMENT PLANTS. FEW ARE BUILDING MOATS.

Private equity is betting heavily on supplement CDMOs. But the winners will not be the platforms with the longest format catalogues. They will be the ones with proprietary capability, embedded customers, and assets that brands cannot easily walk away from.

Private equity has fallen in love with the supplement contract development and manufacturing organization, or CDMO, platform. The playbook is now familiar: buy a gummy specialist in one market, acquire a softgel facility in another, add powders, tablets, stick packs, liquids, or sachets elsewhere, consolidate the businesses under one brand, and call the result a global nutraceutical CDMO platform.

It is an attractive story. The wellness economy is expanding. Consumers are spending more on vitamins, minerals, supplements, functional foods, active nutrition, healthy aging, women's health, gut health, metabolic health, and personalized nutrition.

Supplement brands increasingly want asset-light models, faster launches, regulatory support, quality assurance, formulation expertise, and access to multiple dosage formats without owning factories themselves.

The demand is real. Industry estimates suggest that the nutraceutical CDMO market is moving toward more than \$55 billion by 2030, with high-single-digit annual growth.

A significant majority of supplement brands outsource some or all of their manufacturing. The category is fragmented, innovation is frequent, and many founder-led or family-owned manufacturers remain sub-scale. For private equity, that combination is tempting: fragmented supply, growing demand, operational improvement potential, and multiple arbitrage.

Across Europe and North America, several sponsor-backed roll-ups are pursuing this logic. Biofarma Group, Naturacare, and other nutraceutical manufacturing platforms have assembled capabilities across geographies, formats, and customer segments.

The strategic pitch is clear: build scale, broaden the offering, cross-sell across the customer base, professionalize quality and operations, improve procurement, and exit at a premium multiple as a scaled CDMO platform.

But the investment thesis has a weakness. In supplement manufacturing, breadth is not the same as defensibility.

A platform that can make capsules, tablets, powders, gummies, softgels, and liquids is useful. It may be more convenient for customers. It may reduce procurement complexity for brand owners. It may improve plant utilization and provide better resilience across product categories. But a broader catalogue of formats is not automatically a moat.

In finished-form nutraceuticals, many formats eventually commoditize. Capsules and basic tablets are already highly competitive. Powders and sachets can be differentiated by formulation and service, but the manufacturing process itself is often replicable. Gummies were once a specialty format; today, gummy capability is increasingly common across supplement CDMO portfolios.

Softgels are technically more demanding, but even softgel capacity alone is not enough to create a durable competitive advantage.

The real value lies in the difficult formats and the difficult problems: high-load clean-label gummies that maintain taste, texture, and stability; probiotic formats that protect live-count through shelf life; taste-masked powders and sticks for challenging botanicals, minerals, or amino acids; lipid delivery systems that improve absorption; sustained-release technologies; oxidation-sensitive actives; and clinical-grade formulations where process discipline, stability data, and regulatory credibility matter.

That distinction is critical. A commodity format gives a manufacturer capacity. A hard-to-replicate formulation and process gives it leverage.

Private equity platforms often sell the story of cross-selling: once a customer buys gummies from one facility, the group can sell softgels, tablets, powders, and stick packs from other facilities. In theory, that makes sense. In practice, cross-sell is harder than the slide deck suggests.

Supplement brands do not usually buy "a platform." They buy a reliable solution for a specific product. The buying decision remains format-by-format and SKU-by-SKU.

A brand may use one manufacturer for gummies, another for powders, and a third for softgels because each has been qualified for a specific product, price point, quality standard, retailer requirement, or speed-to-market need.

This is where the real stickiness in the category sits. Once a manufacturer is validated for a product, switching is painful. A brand may need new stability data, new specifications, new quality documentation, fresh production trials, updated retailer approvals, and in some cases fresh GMP audits. A brand does not typically move a validated SKU because another manufacturer is 3% cheaper. It moves when there is a service failure, quality issue, capacity constraint, innovation gap, or strategic need.

That stickiness is valuable, but it does not automatically accrue to the owner of the broadest platform. It accrues to the manufacturer that is already designed into the customer's products. The deeper the manufacturer is embedded in formulation, stability, regulatory support, packaging, testing, and SKU lifecycle management, the harder it becomes for the customer to leave.

This has major implications for private equity. Buying plants is not the same as building a platform. A true platform is not five factories under one logo. It is one quality system, one technical-transfer backbone, one commercial engine, one regulatory and stability architecture, one customer view, and one operating model that allows knowledge to move across the group.

Without that integration, a roll-up remains a collection of assets. It may have scale on paper, but not in the customer's experience. It may claim synergies, but the synergies may be mostly procurement savings and overhead rationalization. Those can improve EBITDA. They do not necessarily create defensibility.

This matters because the financial logic of many CDMO roll-ups depends on multiple expansion. Sponsors may acquire smaller manufacturing assets at lower EBITDA multiples and seek to exit the combined platform at the higher multiples associated with scaled, specialized CDMOs. That re-rating is not automatic. Strategic buyers and sophisticated financial buyers will diligence realized EBITDA, customer retention, revenue quality, capex requirements, site-level margins, quality history, audit performance, customer concentration, integration progress, and technical differentiation.

They will not pay a premium simply because the business owns many formats. They will pay a premium if the business owns capabilities customers cannot easily replace.

The bull case for supplement CDMO consolidation is still strong. Scale can lower unit costs. Procurement leverage on actives, excipients, capsules, packaging, and testing services is real. Larger groups can invest more effectively in automation, analytical labs, compliance teams, quality systems, pilot-scale development, and regulatory support. In moments of capacity shortage, owning qualified plants matters. For fast-growing brands, a larger CDMO can provide reliability that smaller facilities may struggle to match.

But these benefits primarily improve the profit and loss statement. They make the business more efficient. They do not automatically make it defensible. Cost-out is valuable, but cost-out alone rarely earns a premium strategic exit. Defensibility does.

So the private equity question needs to change. Instead of asking, "How many formats can we acquire?" investors should ask, "What can we own that the customer cannot easily walk away from?"

The answer will usually fall into three categories. First, proprietary or scarce technical capability. This may include advanced delivery systems, lipid technologies, stability-sensitive formulations, difficult gums, taste-masking, sustained release, probiotic protection, or clinically validated formulation platforms. Second, embedded customer relationships. The most valuable CDMOs are not merely vendors; they are development partners. They help brands move from concept to formulation, testing, documentation, scale-up, packaging, and commercial production. The more SKUs a manufacturer supports, and the earlier it participates in product development, the more durable the relationship becomes.

Third, integrated operating infrastructure. A real platform must make the whole greater than the sum of the parts. That requires common quality standards, shared technical knowledge, harmonized systems, transparent capacity planning, unified account management, and disciplined post-merger integration. KD Pharma Group offers an instructive example of what a more defensible model can look like.

Its positioning is not simply "we make softgels." It combines lipid expertise, ingredient knowledge, softgel manufacturing, finished-dose capability, and pharmaceutical-grade technical credibility. That is a more powerful proposition than owning a plant. It is a capability stack.

This is the difference between a catalogue and a moat. A catalogue says, "We can make many things." A moat says, "We can make something important that others cannot easily replicate, and our customers are deeply embedded with us because of it."

The supplement CDMO market will continue to attract capital. The sector has growth, fragmentation, outsourcing momentum, and operational improvement potential. Private equity is not wrong to be interested. But the next phase of value creation will be more demanding than the first.

The easy strategy is to buy capacity. The harder strategy is to build indispensability. The visible bet is format and geography. The durable value is proprietary capability and designed-in customer stickiness. The platforms that win will not be those with the longest list of dosage forms. They will be those with the deepest technical edge, the strongest quality spine, and the customer relationships most expensive to unwind. Everyone is buying supplement plants. Very few are building moats.

FAKE NUTRACEUTICALS: PROTECTING CONSUMER TRUST IN A RAPIDLY GROWING MARKET

NutrifyToday Market Research Bureau

India's nutraceutical industry is experiencing unprecedented growth, driven by rising consumer interest in preventive healthcare and wellness. However, alongside this growth comes a significant challenge: the proliferation of counterfeit, misleading, and non-compliant products.

At the Nutrify C-Suite Sumflex 2026, industry leaders, regulators, and law enforcement experts came together to discuss the growing threat of fake nutraceuticals and the actions required to protect consumers and preserve industry credibility.

Moderated by Chandramouli, CEO of TRA Research, the panel featured the Mr Asit Mohan, IPS Former Director General of Police (Karnataka), Dr. Shobhit Jain (Sports Authority of India and former FSSAI official), Dr. Methekar from FSSAI (West) and Dr. Prabodh Halde (Global Regulatory Affairs, Marico).

Beyond Compliance: A Matter of Trust

The panel agreed that counterfeit nutraceuticals are far more than a regulatory concern. Fake products undermine consumer confidence, damage brand reputation, and create an uneven playing field for companies investing in quality, safety, and scientific validation.

Mr Asit Mohan, IPS emphasized that counterfeiting should be viewed not only as a compliance violation but also as a criminal act that deceives consumers and harms legitimate businesses. Stronger enforcement and meaningful deterrence, he argued, are necessary to prevent repeat offences and discourage illegal operators.

Why Counterfeiters Target Nutraceuticals

According to Dr. Prabodh Halde, nutraceuticals have become attractive targets because of their premium pricing, strong consumer demand, and healthy profit margins.

Counterfeiters are becoming increasingly sophisticated, often replicating packaging and branding with remarkable accuracy. As a result, consumers may find it difficult to distinguish genuine products from fake ones, particularly when purchasing through unverified channels.

While technologies such as barcodes and authentication systems help, the panel noted that counterfeiters are evolving quickly, making continuous vigilance essential.

A Call for Coordinated Enforcement

One of the strongest themes to emerge from the discussion was the need for greater collaboration among enforcement agencies.

Dr. Shobhit Jain highlighted that multiple departments—including FSSAI, police, customs, consumer affairs authorities, and local administration—play a role in tackling counterfeit products. However, these efforts often operate independently.

He advocated a “One Government Approach,” where the nearest and most capable authority can act immediately rather than waiting for jurisdictional clarity. Speed is critical, as counterfeit operators can rapidly move products, relocate operations, or destroy evidence.

The panel agreed that coordinated action and intelligence sharing will be far more effective than isolated enforcement efforts.

FSSAI's Evolving Regulatory Framework

Dr. Methekar outlined the mechanisms available to address misleading and counterfeit products within the existing regulatory framework.

These include licensing and registration systems, Food Safety Officers conducting inspections, advertisement monitoring, consumer complaint platforms, and digital reporting tools such as the Food Safety Connect App.

He emphasized that regulatory oversight increasingly focuses on misleading claims, unsupported scientific assertions, and inaccurate labeling. However, given the scale of India's marketplace, consumer participation remains essential in identifying violations and supporting enforcement actions.

Consumers as the First Line of Defence

The panel also discussed the growing role of consumers in combating counterfeit products.

Consumers are encouraged to purchase products from authorized retailers, verify product authenticity wherever possible, and report suspicious products through available regulatory channels.

Panelists acknowledged that while regulators and brands have a significant responsibility, informed consumers can provide valuable intelligence that helps identify and disrupt counterfeit supply chains.

Key Takeaways for the Industry

The discussion highlighted five priorities for strengthening trust within the nutraceutical ecosystem:

1. Treat Counterfeiting Seriously

Fake nutraceuticals represent both a public health concern and a threat to industry credibility.

2. Strengthen Inter-Agency Collaboration

Closer coordination between regulators, law enforcement agencies, customs authorities, and consumer protection bodies is essential.

3. Increase the Cost of Illegal Operations

Disrupting supply chains and creating stronger deterrents can reduce the attractiveness of counterfeit activity.

4. Empower Consumers

Awareness, education, and easy reporting mechanisms can significantly strengthen market surveillance.

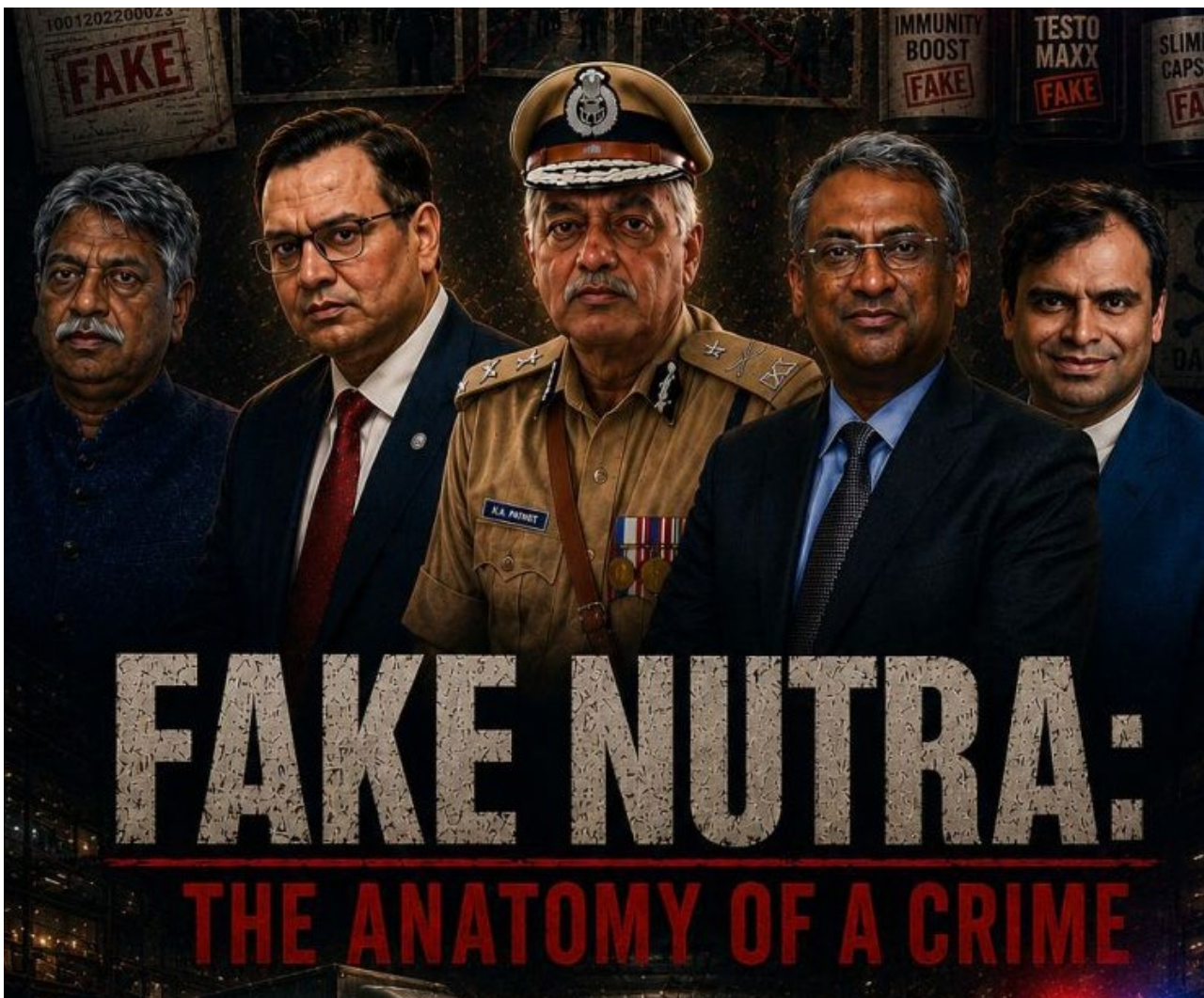
5. Leverage Technology and Data Intelligence

Digital monitoring tools, marketplace surveillance, and information-sharing platforms can improve detection and enforcement.

The Road Ahead

As nutraceuticals become increasingly important to preventive healthcare, trust will be the industry's most valuable asset.

Protecting that trust requires a collective effort from regulators, manufacturers, marketplaces, law enforcement agencies, and consumers. The panel's message was clear: combating fake nutraceuticals is not simply about regulatory compliance—it is about safeguarding consumer confidence and ensuring the long-term credibility and growth of the sector.



CAN INDIA MOVE UP THE NUTRACEUTICAL VALUE LADDER?



NutrifyToday Market Research Bureau

For decades, India has been recognized as one of the world's largest sources of botanical raw materials, herbal extracts, and traditional wellness knowledge. Yet as the global nutraceutical market matures, the question facing the industry is no longer whether India can manufacture at scale—it is whether India can lead through innovation.

This important question formed the basis of a compelling discussion at Nutrify C-Suite Sumflex 2026. Moderated by David Foreman, renowned nutraceutical industry educator, author, broadcaster, and global advocate for evidence-based natural health solutions, the panel brought together the panel brought together experts from ingredient innovation, scientific research, formulation technology, and global business development.

Together, they explored how India can move beyond commodities and establish itself as a global powerhouse for science-backed ingredients, intellectual property, clinical research, and advanced nutraceutical technologies.

Beyond Raw Materials: The Next Phase of Growth

The discussion began with an important observation: while India has built a strong reputation as a supplier of botanicals and extracts, much of the industry's future value will be created further up the chain.

The nutraceutical value ladder today extends from raw botanicals and basic extracts to standardized actives, branded ingredients, clinical validation, regulatory dossiers, proprietary technologies, and intellectual property.

The consensus among panelists was clear: India's next phase of growth will not come from exporting more commodities. It will come from creating differentiated, science-backed solutions that command premium value in global markets.

What Makes Innovation Valuable?

One of the most compelling perspectives came from Vivek Parachur, Founder & Managing Director of Maiya Life Sciences, who challenged the industry to rethink how it defines innovation.

According to him, intellectual property is not simply about patents, trademarks, or technical claims. True innovation exists at the intersection of science, customer need, commercial relevance, and defensibility.

The most successful ingredients are those that solve a clear problem for customers and communicate that value effectively.

As global competition intensifies, companies that focus on meaningful differentiation rather than incremental modifications will be better positioned to create lasting competitive advantages.

Trust: The Foundation of Global Success

For Indian companies aspiring to expand globally, trust remains a critical differentiator.

Saif Mehkri, Managing Director of Biogen Extracts, shared how the industry's journey has evolved from being viewed primarily as a manufacturing base to becoming a source of trusted, high-quality ingredients.

Building that trust required significant investment in quality systems, traceability, transparency, customer audits, safety documentation, and clinical validation. Global buyers today expect far more than certifications.

They seek confidence that ingredients are scientifically supported, consistently manufactured, and backed by comprehensive documentation. The discussion reinforced a simple but powerful principle: trust is earned through evidence, not claims.

Science Is No Longer Optional

If there was one theme that resonated throughout the session, it was the growing importance of science as a business strategy. Dr. Benny Antony, Joint Managing Director of Arjuna Naturals, highlighted how scientific validation has been central to building globally recognized ingredient brands.

Clinical studies, published research, patents, and continuous innovation have helped Indian companies compete successfully on the international stage.

The panel agreed that scientific credibility is increasingly becoming the currency of global nutraceutical markets. As buyers become more sophisticated and regulatory scrutiny increases, evidence-based ingredients will continue to outperform products supported primarily by marketing narratives.

For Indian companies seeking international growth, investment in research is no longer a supporting activity—it is a strategic necessity.

The Evolution of Ayurveda

A particularly interesting discussion centered on Ayurveda's role in the future of nutraceutical innovation.

Shafiulla Hirehal Nuruddin, Founder & Managing Director - Greenspace Herbs, shared perspectives on how traditional Ayurvedic knowledge can be combined with modern scientific methodologies to create differentiated nutraceutical solutions.

The panel rejected the notion that Ayurveda should be viewed merely as a marketing story. Instead, it was positioned as one of India's most valuable intellectual assets.

Many of today's successful nutraceutical ingredients trace their origins to traditional Ayurvedic knowledge. However, panelists emphasized that modern markets demand more than historical use.

The future lies in combining traditional wisdom with scientific validation, reproducible manufacturing processes, safety studies, and clinical evidence. This convergence of heritage and science may represent India's most distinctive competitive advantage in the global nutraceutical industry.

From Bioavailability to Bioefficacy

Another major shift highlighted during the discussion was the industry's evolving understanding of ingredient performance.

Historically, nutraceutical innovation has focused heavily on bioavailability—the ability of an ingredient to be absorbed by the body. While absorption remains important, the panel argued that the conversation is increasingly moving toward bioefficacy.

The critical question is no longer simply how much of an ingredient is absorbed, but whether it delivers meaningful biological outcomes and measurable health benefits.

As Dr. Benny Antony pointed out, clinical outcomes, pharmacokinetic understanding, dosage optimization, and demonstrated efficacy are becoming more important than absorption claims alone. This shift is expected to influence product development, clinical research priorities, and marketing strategies across the industry.

India's Emerging Innovation Advantage

The discussion also highlighted an area where India is making rapid progress: advanced delivery technologies.

According to Dr. Sreeraj Gopi, Chief Executive Officer of Nura Ingredients, India has already moved well beyond its traditional role as a manufacturing hub.

Growing expertise in liposomal systems, encapsulation technologies, stability enhancement, taste masking, and controlled-release platforms is creating new opportunities for Indian companies to compete globally.

Increasingly, international companies are looking to India not only for ingredients but also for technology, formulation expertise, and licensing opportunities. This signals an important transition in how the global industry perceives India's role.

Key Takeaways for the Industry

1. Move Beyond Commodities

Future growth will come from branded ingredients, proprietary technologies, and science-backed innovations rather than raw material exports.

2. Invest in Scientific Validation

Clinical research, published studies, patents, and regulatory dossiers are becoming essential tools for global competitiveness.

3. Build Trust Through Transparency

Traceability, quality systems, safety documentation, and compliance remain critical for winning international customers.

4. Focus on Bioefficacy, Not Just Bioavailability

The market is increasingly rewarding ingredients that demonstrate measurable health outcomes and consumer benefits.

5. Leverage Ayurveda as a Strategic Asset

Combining traditional knowledge with modern science offers India a unique and defensible global advantage.

The Road Ahead

India's nutraceutical industry stands at an inflection point. The country already possesses many of the building blocks required for global leadership—rich biodiversity, deep traditional knowledge, world-class manufacturing capabilities, and a growing scientific ecosystem.

The next challenge is creating greater value through innovation, intellectual property, clinical research, and advanced technologies.

The message from the panel was unmistakable: India has already proven it can supply the world. The opportunity now is to lead it.

The companies that successfully combine science, trust, technology, and evidence-backed Ayurveda will be the ones that define the next chapter of global nutraceutical innovation.



TRUST BEFORE SCALE: LESSONS FROM INDIA'S NEXT WAVE OF HEALTH BRANDS

NutrifyToday Market Research Bureau

India's health and nutraceutical sector is entering a defining decade. Rising health awareness, growing disposable incomes, digital access, and a preventive healthcare mindset are creating unprecedented opportunities for brands. Yet while launching a product has never been easier, building a brand that achieves sustainable scale remains one of the industry's biggest challenges.

At Nutrifly C-Suite Sumflex 2026, healthcare and nutrition industry leader Rajaram Sankaran sat down with Rehan Khan, investor, entrepreneur, and former global healthcare executive, for a candid conversation on what separates enduring health brands from those that struggle to move beyond their initial growth phase.

Drawing on leadership experiences spanning Abbott Nutrition, MSD, and multiple healthcare ventures, Rehan shared a perspective that challenged many of the assumptions founders hold about growth. His central message was simple: successful brands build trust before they pursue scale.

One of the most common mistakes founders make, according to Rehan, is confusing visibility with progress. Young companies often invest heavily in creating the appearance of success through offices, sponsorships, events, and branding exercises while underinvesting in the fundamentals that drive long-term growth. Sustainable businesses, he argued, are built on category understanding, strong brand positioning, and exceptional talent.

The conversation repeatedly returned to the importance of understanding consumers beyond the data. Rehan recalled an experience from his time building nutrition brands in India, where visits to lower-income communities revealed families spending a meaningful share of their household income on nutritional products for their children. The insight challenged conventional assumptions about affordability and led to innovations in pack sizes and accessibility.

The lesson was clear: market reports can provide direction, but breakthrough growth often comes from observing how consumers actually live, spend, and make decisions.

The discussion also explored the delicate balance between science and marketing—a challenge faced by nearly every nutraceutical brand. Rehan argued that when a product's differentiation is rooted in clinical evidence, physician trust, or scientific validation, credibility must be established before aggressive consumer promotion begins.

He cited the growth journey of nutrition brands such as Ensure, where healthcare professional engagement preceded mass-market awareness campaigns. In these cases, scientific credibility becomes the foundation upon which consumer trust is built.

At the same time, some categories require active consumer education to unlock demand. Rehan pointed to the HPV vaccine category as an example where awareness campaigns, advocacy initiatives, and public engagement played a critical role in driving adoption. The objective was not merely to market a product but to create informed consumers who would actively seek solutions.

This distinction is becoming increasingly relevant in today's digital-first world. Consumers now discover health solutions through social media, online communities, influencers, and content platforms long before they engage with healthcare professionals. As a result, successful brands must build both scientific authority and consumer relevance.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking part of the discussion focused on how founders define growth. Many equate expansion with wider distribution, larger retail footprints, and more points of sale. Rehan challenged this view, arguing that distribution without demand is simply inventory movement.

True growth comes when consumers repeatedly choose a product. Repeat purchases, customer satisfaction, and retailer confidence are often stronger indicators of long-term success than distribution metrics alone. Brands that generate genuine consumer demand create a far more durable foundation for scale.

The conversation also challenged the industry's growing obsession with international expansion. While global markets remain attractive, Rehan suggested that one of the largest opportunities for health and nutrition companies still exists within India itself.

Millions of emerging middle-class consumers are becoming increasingly health conscious, yet many remain underserved by existing healthcare and nutrition offerings. For brands willing to understand these consumers and create accessible, relevant solutions, the opportunity is enormous.

Importantly, he cautioned against viewing India as a single market. Consumer behaviour varies dramatically across cities, neighbourhoods, and demographic groups. The most successful founders often win one micro-market before attempting to scale nationally. By the end of the session, a consistent theme had emerged. Sustainable scale is not created by spending more, distributing faster, or expanding wider. It is created by building trust, understanding consumers deeply, and delivering products that solve real problems.

For an industry entering its next phase of growth, the lesson is particularly relevant. The brands that ultimately define India's healthcare and nutraceutical future will not necessarily be those with the biggest marketing budgets. They will be the ones that earn consumer trust, build scientific credibility, and create value that people return to repeatedly.

Key Takeaways for Brand Builders

Build Trust Before Scale

Scientific credibility, consumer confidence, and product relevance must be established before aggressive expansion.

Consumer Insight Is a Competitive Advantage

The most successful brands are built on a deep understanding of real consumer behaviour, not assumptions.

Education Creates Demand

Many healthcare and nutrition categories grow only when consumers understand the problem and actively seek solutions.

Repeat Purchase Matters More Than Distribution

Sustainable growth comes from adoption and loyalty, not simply wider availability.

India Remains the Biggest Opportunity

The country's growing middle-income and aspirational consumers represent one of the most significant opportunities in global health and nutrition.

The Road Ahead

As India's nutraceutical ecosystem matures, founders will face increasing pressure to scale quickly. Yet the conversation with Rehan Khan offered an important reminder: enduring brands are rarely built overnight. They are built through trust, scientific credibility, consumer understanding, and disciplined execution. In a market filled with opportunity, those fundamentals may prove to be the strongest competitive advantage of all.



THE NEXT BIG DIFFERENTIATOR IN WOMEN'S WELLNESS: WHY BRANDS NEED THE BEST SHATAVARI EXTRACT FOR WOMEN

Today's women aren't quietly tolerating hormonal shifts — they're demanding solutions that feel modern, natural, and effective. Menopause and perimenopause have moved from whispered conversations to mainstream wellness topics, and savvy brands are listening. If you're launching a women's health line, one ingredient should be on your radar: the best shatavari extract for women.

Why women are rewriting the rules

Women in their 40s and beyond face overlapping pressures: careers, caregiving, 24/7 digital demands, and a changing body. Symptoms are everyday realities — night sweats that interrupt sleep, mood fluctuations that aren't about drama but hormones and exhaustion, and shifts in energy and weight that feel hard to manage. They don't want a shortcut; they want supportive, trustworthy solutions that integrate with their lives.

What modern consumers want from products

- Safe, plant based options that align with a clean-label ethos.
- Predictable, gentle effects rather than dramatic swings.
- Ingredients that feel both traditional and evidence forward.

These preferences create a prime opening for a high quality botanical positioned for women's hormonal resilience.

Why the best shatavari extract for women matters

Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*), long prized in Ayurveda as the "Queen of Herbs," is increasingly relevant to contemporary female health. Its value for brands depends on extract quality and active composition, not just marketing claims. The extract's beneficial profile centers on steroidal saponins, especially Shatavarin IV. A standardized extract rich in Shatavarin IV delivers consistency and stronger, more predictable results for consumers — and clearer claims for brands.



DR. BENNY ANTONY

Co-Founder &
Managing Director



Product benefits brands can credibly highlight

- Hormonal balance support that complements lifestyle changes.
- Adaptogenic action to help with stress resilience and emotional steadiness.
- Gentle nourishment for sleep, energy, and long term vitality without overstimulation.

These effects make high quality Shatavari an ideal hero ingredient across product formats: capsules, functional beverages, evening blends, and postpartum recovery formulas.

Commercial advantages for using a premium extract

- Differentiation: “Best Shatavari extract for women” is a precise positioning that stands out against generic botanical powders.
- Trust and compliance: Standardized Shatavarin IV profiles enable transparent labeling and reproducible performance.
- Versatility: One validated extract can serve multiple SKUs across menopause support, healthy aging, and daily wellbeing.
- Loyalty potential: When women perceive reliable benefits, they return — and they tell other women.

How to choose an extract for your launch

- Look for standardized Shatavarin IV content and third party testing.
- Prefer extraction methods that preserve the plant's full spectrum, not just single compound isolates.
- Demand documented stability and batch to batch consistency to support claims and shelf life.
- Consider clinical or consumer trial data, or partner with suppliers willing to support targeted studies.

Realistic positioning for marketing

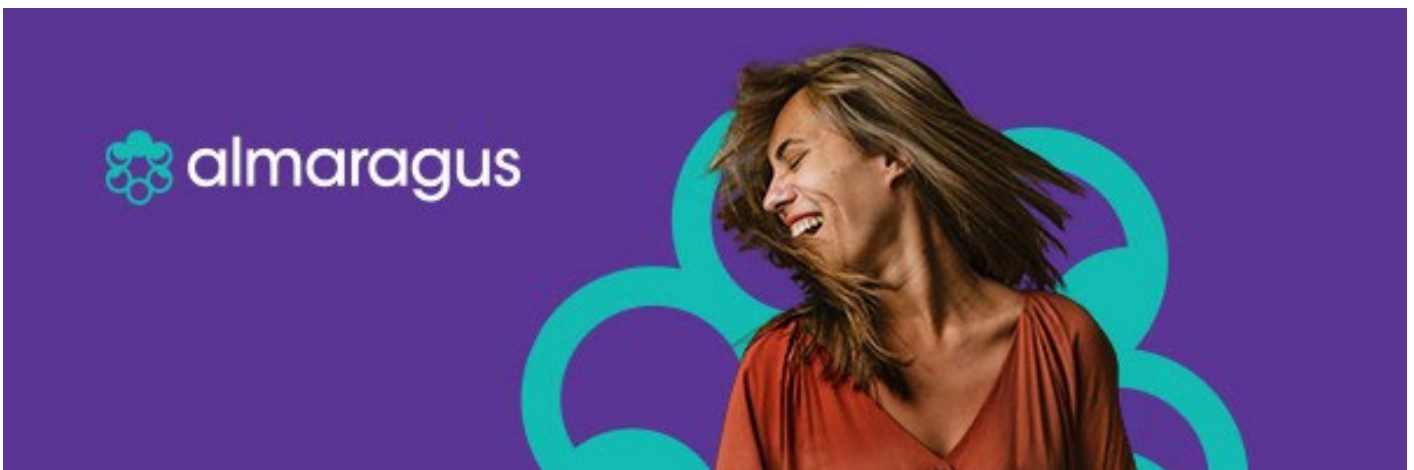
Shatavari shouldn't be sold as a miracle cure. The most credible messaging frames it as a supportive, plant based ally that helps the body adapt and restore balance. For women waking at 3 a.m., feeling drained, or seeking a gentler alternative to synthetic options, the best shatavari extract for women is an appealing, defensible story.

Launch ideas that work

- Nighttime recovery sachets blending standardized Shatavari with calming botanicals.
- Midday adaptogen blends for energy and mood support.
- Menopause support capsules with clearly stated Shatavarin IV levels.
- White label formulations for clinics and wellness platforms seeking a science forward botanical.

Final pitch to product teams

Integrating the best shatavari extract for women gives brands a strategic ingredient that aligns with current consumer values — natural, transparent, and efficacy oriented. It's an opportunity to speak directly to underserved female needs with a single, versatile extract that can anchor multiple product lines.



BERBERINE: THE ANCIENT ALKALOID TRANSFORMING MODERN METABOLIC HEALTH

Berberine is a naturally occurring alkaloid found in plants such as *Berberis aristata* (tree turmeric), barberry, goldenseal, and goldthread. Used for over 3,000 years in Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine, it is now gaining significant attention for its role in metabolic health.

Although berberine has low natural absorption, the body converts it into active metabolites that exert powerful effects, particularly in the liver and intestines. Its interaction with the gut microbiota further enhances its activity, making the gut-liver axis central to its effectiveness.

The most studied mechanism of berberine is its ability to activate AMP-activated protein kinase (AMPK), often called the body's metabolic master switch. Through AMPK activation, berberine helps reduce glucose production in the liver, improve glucose uptake by muscles, support fat metabolism, and enhance insulin sensitivity.

Berberine also slows carbohydrate digestion by inhibiting alpha-glucosidase activity, helping control post-meal blood sugar spikes. Beyond metabolic benefits, it exhibits broad-spectrum antimicrobial activity and promotes the growth of beneficial gut bacteria linked to improved metabolic and immune function. Clinical studies show berberine is generally well tolerated, with mild gastrointestinal discomfort being the most common side effect. With its multi-targeted approach to metabolic health, berberine remains one of the most promising botanicals in modern nutraceutical science.



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