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# Vitafoods India 2024 brings new vigour to India's nutraceutical market

Our Bureau, Mumbai

**V**ITAFOODS India 2024 held by Informa Markets in India, India's leading B2B exhibition organiser, has brought vigour to India's nutraceutical market uniting the entire nutraceutical supply chain under one roof and addressing

key industry trends, with a dedicated focus on the growing demand for personalised and customised nutraceutical solutions. With great fanfare, the three-day second edition of the expo opened at the Jio World Convention Center in Mumbai on February 13 and drew in a galaxy of prominent figures from the nutraceutical industry.

Vitafoods India to spotlight growth of sustainable nutraceutical products. As an integral part of the globally recognized Vitafoods brand, renowned for its presence in European and Asian markets, Vitafoods India 2024, is poised to set new benchmarks in the wellness industry. Vitafoods India, the only ded-

icated expo to showcase India's fast moving nutraceutical industry, emerged as a pivotal player, strategically designed for the Indian nutraceutical market, seizing the industry's growth, especially post-Covid-19. With a current valuation of approximately Rs. 33000 crore, India's nutraceutical market is

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# Fueling the Future- India's Surging Demand for Sports Nutrition Supplements

Dr. Sanjay Agrawal

INDIA, with its diverse culture and rich history, is witnessing a transformative shift in lifestyle choices, particularly in the realm of fitness and health. The growing awareness of the importance of physical well-being has fueled an unprecedented demand for sports nutrition supplements across the nation. In this detailed article, we explore the factors driving this surge, the evolving fitness culture, and the impact of sports nutrition supplements on India's health and wellness landscape.

In recent times, individuals have become increasingly mindful of their physical well-being, striving for a sculpted physique. This is a stark contrast to the past when such dedication to body care was not as prevalent. Today, sports enthusiasts are meticulously attending to their bodies, serving as role models with well-defined physiques, toned muscles, muscular endurance, and stamina. Achieving such physical prowess has been made possible through the strategic use of appropriate nutrition supplements for achieving peak performance.

Not too long ago, the notion of supplement stores promoting "extreme gains" and a "shredded physique" was a rarity in India. Fast forward to 2022, and these establishments are now a common sight, brimming with a diverse range of products designed to assist athletes in prolonging workouts, building muscle and endurance, and ensuring the essential nutrition required for achieving medal-worthy performances.

## The Surge in the Sports Nutrition Market

The rapid growth of the Indian sports nutrition market in recent years can be attributed to various factors. These include the significant expansion of India's sports industry, a robust demand for health supplements and energy drinks among athletes and bodybuilders, a rise in youth participation in fitness-centric activities, the health-conscious mindset of the millennial generation, and the dispelling of myths surrounding supplements. As one of the world's fastest-growing economies, India has experienced increased incomes, prompting households to allocate more funds towards health and nutrition.

## Market Dynamics

Presently, the Indian sports nutrition market operates in the unorganized sector with a market size exceeding ₹1300

crores and a year-on-year growth rate of about 25%. While foreign brands dominate approximately 80% of the market, a paradigm shift is underway. Each year witnesses the entry of at least 50 national-level and numerous regional-level brands into the market, indicating a changing landscape.

## Addressing the Gap

A notable disparity has existed between the demand for high-quality sports nutrition and the offerings available to India's sports community. Indian athletes, historically disadvantaged compared to their global counterparts in accessing premium nutritional supplements, have spurred sports nutrition companies to bridge this gap. Many companies are driven by the vision of making India a global sporting powerhouse, emphasizing self-reliance in supplement manufacturing, and positioning the country as a leading exporter in the industry.

## Market Segmentation

The sports nutrition market in India is categorized into three segments: sports supplements, sports drinks, and sports food. Protein supplements lead the market, commanding a 70% share in overall consumption within this segment.

## The Growing Demand for Sports Supplements

The substantial expansion of India's sports nutrition market over the past few years can be attributed to the significant growth in the country's sports industry. There is a pronounced need for various health supplements and energy drinks, particularly among athletes and bodybuilders. This surge is also connected to the increasing participation in sports and activities requiring high levels of health and nourishment. India, boasting the status of the fastest-growing economy with rising per capita income, has witnessed a shift in focus from essential necessities to a heightened emphasis on health and nutrition.

The pandemic has played a pivotal role in shaping this trend, prompting a realization among people about the essential need for a robust immune system. This has led to an increased awareness of proper nutrition intake. The rise in prevalent health issues like diabetes and hypertension further fuels the growth of the nutrition market.

Despite the emergence of numerous new brands each year, there remains a gap between high-quality sports nu-

trition and the demands of the sports community. Several companies are dedicated to exclusively developing sports nutrition to position India as a global sports powerhouse, enabling Indian athletes to reach their full potential.

## Reasons for the Demand for Sports Nutrition Supplements

### 1. Rising Health Consciousness

The last decade has seen a remarkable rise in health consciousness among Indians. A younger demographic, coupled with an increased awareness of the benefits of an active lifestyle, has led to a significant shift in dietary preferences. Individuals are now proactively seeking ways to enhance their fitness levels, driving the demand for sports nutrition supplements.

### 2. Growing Fitness Culture

The proliferation of gyms, fitness studios, and wellness centers across urban and semi-urban areas is indicative of India's evolving fitness culture. The desire for a toned physique, improved athletic performance, and overall well-being has become a driving force for individuals to incorporate sports nutrition supplements into their daily routines.

### 3. Changing Dietary Patterns

Traditional Indian diets, while rich in flavor and variety, may not always align with the specific nutritional needs of a fitness-oriented lifestyle. Recognizing this, individuals are turning to sports nutrition supplements to bridge the gap between their dietary intake and the requirements for muscle building, recovery, and sustained energy levels.

### 4. Influence of Global Sports Icons

The global appeal of sports celebrities and their emphasis on fitness has transcended borders, influencing Indian youth to adopt healthier lifestyles. This trend has significantly contributed to the surge in demand for sports nutrition supplements, as individuals aspire to emulate the dietary practices of their athletic idols.

### 5. Diverse Product Offerings

The sports nutrition market in India has witnessed an influx of diverse and specialized products catering to different fitness goals. Protein powders, amino acids, pre-workout supplements, and recovery aids are among the myriad options available to consumers. The variety ensures that individuals can tailor



their supplement intake based on their specific fitness objectives.

### 6. E-commerce Boom

The ease of access facilitated by the rapid growth of e-commerce platforms has played a pivotal role in the increased availability and awareness of sports nutrition supplements. Consumers can now explore and purchase a wide array of products from the comfort of their homes, contributing to the market's expansion.

### 7. Emergence of Homegrown Brands

Witnessing the surge in demand, several Indian companies have entered the sports nutrition market, offering locally sourced and formulated products. This not only supports the "Make in India" initiative but also provides consumers with options that align with their cultural and dietary preferences.

### 8. Challenges and Considerations

Despite the rapid growth, challenges such as concerns over product authenticity, misinformation, and the need for greater regulatory oversight persist. It is crucial for consumers to make informed choices, consulting with fitness experts or nutritionists to ensure that their supplement regimen aligns with their health goals.

### 9. Future Projections

The trajectory of India's sports nutrition supplement market indicates a promising future. As the fitness culture continues to permeate various age groups and regions, the demand for specialized and high-quality products is likely to surge. This growth presents opportunities for both established global brands and innovative local players.

### Mission for a Self-Reliant India

Many companies are actively pursuing the mission of making India self-reliant in

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the development of dietary supplements and positioning the country as a major exporter in this industry. This mission aligns with the broader goal of nurturing a self-reliant India in various sectors, with a specific focus on dietary supplements as a strategic export commodity.

## Segments of the Sports Nutrition Market

The sports nutrition market can be categorized into three primary segments: sports supplements, sports drinks, and sports food. Among these, protein powder consumption takes the lead, with Protein Powder Manufacturers dominating the market. The impressive performances of sports personalities across diverse sports events have significantly contributed to the growth of the Indian sports nutrition industry. Many athletes heavily depend on dietary supplements to maintain their remarkable physical

forms. The government's efforts to revive the sports culture in the country further contribute to the positive trajectory of the sports market, making it an opportune time for investments in the sports nutrition sector.

## Contributions to India's Sporting Success

India's improved performance on the international stage, particularly at events like the Olympics, Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games, has significantly influenced the growth of the sports nutrition industry. The remarkable showing at the Tokyo Olympics 2020, where Indian athletes secured seven medals, including a historic gold in men's javelin and the Indian hockey team's bronze after 41 years, has ignited optimism for the future of Indian sports. Increased representation at major sporting events indicates a positive trend, with nutritional supplements

playing a pivotal role in supporting athletes' peak forms.

## Government Initiatives and Cultural Shift

The current government's emphasis on reviving India's sports culture, exemplified by initiatives like the 'Khelo India' program, has further fueled the growth of the sports nutrition market. Investments in sporting infrastructure and professional leagues, coupled with increased funding for promising young talent, have created a conducive environment for sports nutrition to flourish. The expanding interest in sports beyond cricket, including football, tennis, wrestling, boxing, weightlifting, and cycling, bodes well for the sports nutrition sector.

## The Fitness Revolution

The booming fitness sector in India, fueled by Bollywood's influence, has significantly contributed to the growth of the sports nutrition market. A shift in body

ideals, with actors like Hrithik Roshan, Shah Rukh Khan, and Salman Khan showcasing lean and muscular physiques, has popularized a new fitness standard. Gyms are proliferating across the country, and bodybuilding championships have witnessed a surge in participation. The prevalence of marathons and increased interest in various sports indicate a growing market for sports nutrition.

## Changing Career Perceptions

A study by the FICCI-International Institute of Sports Management revealed that 90% of the youth view sports as a reliable career option. Sporting infrastructure in small towns and villages has led to a rise in sportspersons from these areas, contributing to the overall growth of the sports nutrition market.

*(The author is Leading Pharmaceutical Consultant and Editor-in-Chief of IJMToday)*



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# More two years gone, FSSAI yet to issue gazette notification lifting ban on methylcobalamin

Laxmi Yadav

It has been more than two years since the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) lifted a ban on methylcobalamin, also known as vitamin B12. However, the apex food regulator has yet to issue a gazette notification on the same, leaving nutraceutical manufacturers in a bind.

In 2021 FSSAI came out with a notification lifting the ban on methylcobalamin. The FSSAI banned methylcobalamin through a gazette issued in 2016. The product was later approved by the FSSAI's scientific committee in December 2019 based on scientific evidence of its safety.

"Methylcobalamin has been approved by the US FDA for use as a dietary supplement and is now listed on page 41 of the USP, but the FSSAI continues to ignore in-

dustry requests to release a gazette notification lifting the methylcobalamin ban," stated Dr Sanjay Agrawal, a leading pharmaceutical consultant.

Dr. Agrawal appealed to Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to direct the FSSAI to issue a gazette notification that would lift the ban on methylcobalamin, but to no avail.

Methylcobalamin is an essential nutrient to regulate certain vital bodily functions like cell multiplication, blood formation and protein synthesis.

Methylcobalamin has been used in clinical trials to treat some nutritional and other diseases, including Alzheimer's disease and rheumatoid arthritis. As an auxiliary agent, it protects neurons by promoting nerve regeneration and inhibiting glutamate-induced neurotoxicity. In

recent experimental and clinical studies, several lines of evidence have suggested that methylcobalamin may have analgesic properties. For example, methylcobalamin reduced pain behaviors in diabetic neuropathy, low back pain, and neuralgia. Methylcobalamin improved nerve conduction, accelerated nerve regeneration, and reduced ectopic spontaneous discharges of injured primary sensory neurons.

In the absence of a gazette notification, there are no guidelines for the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) or tolerable upper limit (TUL) of methylcobalamin-containing products. The domestic market is flooded with various brands of methylcobalamin with RDAs of up to 1500 mcg intended for prophylactic use. This is in contravention of the FSSAI's recommended RDA of 1 mcg, stated Dr Agrawal.

Once notified, the approved RDA value

can be defined scientifically based on available evidence, he added.

He had written to FSSAI time and again seeking clarification from it on easy availability of high doses of methylcobalamin in absence of the authority's gazette notification on removal of ban on the product.

In a communication to the pharmaceutical consultant on December 26, 2021, the FSSAI clarified that all vitamin B12 derivatives, including methylcobalamin, have been listed under the Food Safety and Standards (Health Supplements, Nutraceuticals, Food for Special Dietary Use, Food for Special Medical Purpose, Functional Foods, and Novel Foods) Regulations, 2016 through amendments notified on September 16, 2021. As a result, the food regulator has issued product licences for all vitamin B12 derivatives, including methylcobalamin.



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