

All Your Ingredients In One Magazine

Ingredients

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Manufacturer, Supplier & Exporter

Top Selling Products

- ◆ Phyllanthus emblica Dry Extract 40%
- ◆ Boswellia 65% Extract
- ◆ Garcinia 60% Extract
- ◆ Ginseng 20% Extract
- ◆ Berberine Extract
- ◆ Withania somnifera 5% Extract
- ◆ Fenugreek 40% Extract
- ◆ Gymnema Extract
- ◆ Apple Cider Vinegar 6% Powder
- ◆ Curcumin 95% Extract
- ◆ Shilajit (60% Fulvic acid) Extract & More

Herbal Dry & Soft Extracts

Nutraceutical Ingredients

Nutraceutical Extracts

Herbal Raw Materials

Cosmetics Natural Extracts

Hair & Care Oil Extracts

Oleoresins & Essential Oils

Fruit & Vegetables Spray

Dried Powder

Best for Skincare

- ◆ Licorice Extract
- ◆ Aloe Vera Extract
- ◆ Gotu Kola Extract
- ◆ Witch Hazel Extract
- ◆ Neem Extract & More

Hair Care (Oil/Liquid)

- ◆ Phyllanthus emblica
- ◆ Sapindus Mukorossi
- ◆ Acacia Concinna
- ◆ Eclipta Alba
- ◆ Tea Tree Oil
- ◆ Rosemary
- ◆ Allium Cepa
- ◆ Black Seed & More



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API & excipient trade: The ingredients for growth

DR SANJAY AGRAWAL

INDIA has established itself as one of the world's leading pharmaceutical manufacturing hubs, particularly in generic medicines, vaccines and active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs). At the foundation of this pharmaceutical ecosystem are APIs and excipients- the two essential categories of materials required to manufacture finished medicines.

India has a strong domestic manufacturing base and is a major exporter of pharmaceutical products and ingredients. At the same time, the country continues to import several APIs, key starting materials, drug intermediates and specialised excipients. This makes India's pharmaceutical raw-material trade a combination of strong export capabilities, strategic imports and an ongoing effort to strengthen domestic supply chains.

India's growing API export industry

India is recognised globally for its ability to manufacture high-quality APIs at competitive costs. Indian manufacturers supply APIs to pharmaceutical companies across North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and other international markets.

The country's API export portfolio covers a wide range of therapeutic categories, including anti-infectives, cardiovascular drugs, anti-diabetic medicines, analgesics, gastrointestinal products, hormones and several other essential pharmaceutical ingredients.

Indian API manufacturers have developed considerable expertise in serving regulated markets. Compliance with international quality standards, strong manufacturing practices, regulatory expertise and an established pharmaceutical ecosystem have helped Indian companies become important suppliers to global drug manufacturers.

The growth of India's generic pharmaceutical industry has also contributed to the expansion of API manufacturing. Many Indian pharmaceutical companies have integrated operations that cover everything from raw materials and intermediates to APIs and finished formulations. This vertical integration provides manufacturers with greater control over quality, costs and supply.

Why does India continue to Import APIs?

Despite being a major API-producing country, India remains dependent on imports for a number of pharmaceutical raw materials.

The primary reason is that producing every API and intermediate domestically is not always economically viable. Certain molecules require specialised technologies, large-scale production or access to particular chemical intermediates. Overseas manufacturers, particularly those operating at very large scales, can often produce

these materials at lower costs.

China remains an important source of pharmaceutical raw materials for India. Indian pharmaceutical manufacturers import a range of APIs, key starting materials and intermediates from Chinese suppliers. European and other international suppliers are also important sources, particularly for specialised and high-value pharmaceutical ingredients.

This dependence became particularly visible during global supply-chain disruptions. The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated how disruptions in manufacturing, logistics and international trade can affect the availability and pricing of pharmaceutical raw materials.

As a result, supply-chain security has become an increasingly important consideration for pharmaceutical companies when selecting suppliers.

The Role of Key Starting Materials and Intermediates

The API industry is closely connected to the production of key starting materials and drug intermediates. These materials form the foundation of API manufacturing and are therefore critical to the pharmaceutical supply chain.

If the supply of an important intermediate is disrupted, API production can be affected even when the final API manufacturing facility has sufficient capacity.

India has consequently been focusing on developing greater domestic manufacturing capabilities for critical APIs, key starting materials and intermediates. Increasing domestic production can help reduce supply-chain risks while also creating opportunities for Indian chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturers.

Excipients: Essential part of pharmaceutical manufacturing

While APIs provide the therapeutic effect of a medicine, excipients play a crucial supporting role in the formulation.

Excipients are used for a variety of purposes, including improving stability, enhancing drug delivery, controlling release, improving tablet formation, preserving formulations and providing the required physical characteristics to a pharmaceutical product.

Common pharmaceutical excipients include lactose, microcrystalline cellulose, starch derivatives, povidone, magnesium stearate, hypromellose and various specialised polymers.

India has a growing domestic excipient industry, but pharmaceutical manufacturers continue to import several specialised excipients. This is particularly relevant for high-purity and functional excipients used in complex formulations, controlled-release medicines, injectables, biologics and advanced drug-delivery systems.

For pharmaceutical manufacturers, the avail-

ability of an excipient is not determined simply by whether the material is produced in India. The material must meet the required pharmaceutical grade, quality specifications, regulatory requirements and consistency standards.

Govt focus on reducing import dependence

Strengthening domestic production of pharmaceutical raw materials has become an important part of India's pharmaceutical manufacturing strategy.

Various government initiatives have been introduced to encourage investment in domestic production of critical APIs, key starting materials and drug intermediates. Incentives for bulk-drug manufacturing and the development of bulk drug parks are intended to create a stronger manufacturing ecosystem within the country.

The objective is not necessarily to eliminate imports completely. Instead, the focus is on developing reliable domestic capacity for strategically important materials and reducing excessive dependence on a limited number of overseas suppliers.

This approach can also make Indian pharmaceutical companies more resilient to international price fluctuations, transportation disruptions and geopolitical uncertainties.

Opportunities for Indian API manufacturers

The changing global pharmaceutical supply chain presents significant opportunities for Indian manufacturers.

Pharmaceutical companies around the world are increasingly looking to diversify their sources of supply rather than depend heavily on a single manufacturing region. India is well positioned to benefit from this trend because of its established pharmaceutical infrastructure, skilled workforce and experience in regulated markets.

There is also considerable potential in high-value and specialised APIs. Manufacturers that invest in complex molecules, advanced manufacturing technologies and niche therapeutic ingredients can move beyond competing solely on manufacturing cost.

Quality and regulatory compliance will remain equally important. Companies supplying international markets must demonstrate consistent manufacturing quality, robust documentation, traceability and adherence to global regulatory requirements.

Opportunities in excipients market

The excipient industry also offers considerable growth potential.

Instead of focusing only on conventional commodity excipients, Indian manufacturers can explore specialty and functional excipients designed

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Raw material trade to become diversified

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for advanced pharmaceutical formulations.

The growing demand for controlled-release medicines, orally disintegrating tablets, injectable products, biologics and specialised drug-delivery systems is creating demand for excipients with specific functional properties.

Developing these products domestically can help reduce India's dependence on imported specialty excipients while creating new export opportunities for Indian manufacturers.

The road ahead

India's pharmaceutical raw-material trade is expected to become increasingly diversified and

strategically important.

The country will continue to import certain APIs, intermediates and specialised excipients where international suppliers offer cost, scale or technology advantages. At the same time, domestic production of strategically important materials is likely to receive greater attention.

For Indian pharmaceutical manufacturers, the key challenge will be to balance cost competitiveness with supply-chain security.

Future growth in API and excipient exports will depend on several factors, including manufacturing capacity, product quality, regulatory compliance, technological capabilities and the ability to provide reliable long-term supply.

India already occupies an important position in the global pharmaceutical industry. Strengthening its API and excipient ecosystem can help the country move further up the pharmaceutical value chain.

With continued investment in manufacturing, technology and quality systems, India has the potential to become an even more important global source of APIs, intermediates and pharmaceutical excipients—supporting both its domestic pharmaceutical industry and the international medicines supply chain. ○

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Traceability, core of sourcing strategy

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along with emerging business hubs. However, Joshe said customer segmentation could become more important than geography.

The company is targeting environments where consumers already demonstrate an appreciation for quality, including technology companies, global capability centres, financial institutions, premium hospitality establishments and design-led workplaces. Tier-II cities could also emerge as important markets as premium consumption expands beyond India's major metropolitan centres.

Consistency remains operational challenge

For a premium workplace beverage business operating across multiple cities, maintaining consistency remains one of the biggest challenges. "Anyone can prepare an exceptional cup once. The challenge is producing that same cup thousands of times, across cities, operators, machines, water chemistries and environmental conditions," Joshe said.

Specialty coffee is sensitive to variables such as grind size, water temperature, extraction time, pressure, mineral composition, bean freshness and machine calibration. Pret à Boire addresses these challenges through an integrated system involving water treatment, brewing equipment, ingredients, calibration, preventive maintenance and barista training. "Coffee is an

engineered sensory experience," Joshe said.

Indian coffee needs to tell its own story

As international coffee brands continue to expand their presence in India, Joshe believes Indian specialty coffee has an opportunity to establish its own distinct identity. "We do not believe Indian coffee needs to imitate international coffee brands. It needs to tell its own story better," he said.

India's coffee-growing regions offer biodiversity, shade-grown plantations, multiple processing traditions and increasingly sophisticated producers. The opportunity lies in translating this provenance into stronger consumer interest. Pret à Boire plans to make coffee origins more visible by highlighting estates, geography, altitude, processing methods, tasting notes and the people behind the coffee.

Through initiatives such as L'orientalis, the company also aims to explore coffee origins beyond the established southern coffee belt. "The international brands have built familiarity. Indian specialty coffee now has the opportunity to build fascination," Joshe said.

Indian-origin coffee eyes global markets

The opportunity for Indian specialty coffee also extends to international markets. Joshe identified the UAE, Singapore, Japan, the UK and selected European countries as attractive

markets due to their established specialty coffee communities and growing interest in origin-led products.

The focus, he said, should be on taking differentiated, traceable and micro-origin Indian coffees to global consumers rather than simply exporting commodity coffee. "Indian coffee already has international recognition, but we believe there is considerably more room for differentiated, traceable and micro-origin Indian coffees," he said.

Traceability, core of sourcing strategy

For Pret à Boire, traceability and direct engagement with coffee-growing communities form an important part of its sourcing strategy. "Specialty coffee without traceability eventually becomes simply expensive coffee," Joshe said.

Understanding where coffee comes from and how it is cultivated, harvested and processed can support quality assurance, consistency and greater predictability across the supply chain.

As India's coffee market matures, a deeper understanding of provenance could become increasingly central to the specialty coffee experience. The conversation is moving beyond simply asking which coffee brand a consumer drinks towards questions about where the coffee was grown, how it was processed and the journey it took before reaching the cup. ○

From agri diversity to food innovation

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It can become a global supplier of high-quality, specialised and value-added food ingredients.

The ingredients of the future may come from familiar Indian resources—spices, millets, pulses, fruits, vegetables and botanicals—but their commercial value will increasingly de-

pend on how effectively modern science can extract, standardise, validate and apply them. The future of India's food ingredients industry is ultimately a story of turning agricultural diversity into scientific innovation. If research, technology, quality systems and responsible regulation progress together, the country can

create a stronger ingredient ecosystem that benefits food manufacturers, farmers, consumers and international markets alike. ○

(The author belongs to department of pharmaceutical sciences, SV University, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh)