

FROM TRADITION TO TREND: INDIA'S HERBAL EXPORTS IN THE WELLNESS ERA

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ABSTRACT

India's ancient Ayurvedic heritage is regaining prominence in the global wellness economy, positioning the nation as a major herbal exporter. In 2023–24, India exported Ayurvedic and herbal products worth about \$651 million, marking a 3.6% rise from the previous year. This expansion aligns with global preferences for natural, sustainable, and preventive healthcare, as the herbal medicine market heads toward \$437 billion by 2032. Growing consumer awareness, clean-label choices, and plant-based pet care drive demand. However, challenges like product standardization, regulation, and value addition persist. This article examines India's evolving strategies to enhance global competitiveness.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Consumer trends, Global wellness, Herbal exports, Natural health, Plant-based products, Regulatory compliance, Value-added products

AYURVEDA AND INDIA: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL WELLNESS

India's ancient wisdom of Ayurveda is experiencing a remarkable resurgence on the global stage. In a world increasingly leaning toward natural, holistic, and sustainable wellness solutions, Indian herbal products are capturing the attention of consumers seeking preventive and mindful health practices. More than just remedies, Ayurveda emphasizes balance, lifestyle, and mental well-being—principles that resonate strongly with modern wellness philosophies. As research continues to validate traditional practices, India is emerging not just as a supplier, but as a thought leader in global wellness.

A THRIVING GLOBAL MARKET

The global herbal medicine market, valued at \$233.08 billion in 2024, is poised to reach \$437 billion by 2032, reflecting a robust 8.23% CAGR. Similarly, the herbal supplements sector, worth \$42.33 billion in 2024, is projected to climb to \$90.24 billion by 2033, at an 8.89% CAGR. Rising lifestyle diseases, growing awareness about chemical-free products, and a shift toward preventive healthcare are driving this expansion. In parallel, innovators are creating functional beverages, fortified foods, and nutraceuticals to meet evolving consumer demands, further broadening the market landscape.

INDIA'S EXPORT FOOTPRINT

In 2023-24, India exported 10.63 crore kilograms of Ayurvedic and herbal products, generating \$651.17 million—a 3.6% increase from the previous year. Leading destinations include the United States, the UAE, and Australia. Products like ashwagandha, turmeric, and ginger have earned global acclaim for their health-promoting properties. Indian exporters are also moving beyond raw materials, introducing value-added products such as ready-to-consume supplements, herbal teas, and natural skincare items. This strategic shift not only increases revenue potential but positions India as a trusted, innovative source for high-quality herbal products worldwide.

EVOLVING CONSUMER PREFERENCES

Modern consumers are increasingly prioritizing clean-label, sustainably sourced, and natural products. U.S. sales of herbal supplements grew by 5.4% in 2024, reflecting a broader interest in healthy aging and foundational wellness. Beyond the product itself, buyers now consider supply chain transparency, ethical sourcing, and environmental impact when making purchasing decisions. Social media, wellness influencers, and online communities are also shaping expectations, making brand storytelling, authenticity, and educational outreach critical elements for global success.

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

Despite its potential, India's herbal export sector faces challenges such as quality standardization, regulatory compliance, and competition from established international players. Meeting stringent global certifications is essential to broaden market access. However, these challenges also present opportunities: focusing on finished products, investing in scientific research, and creating strong brand identities can differentiate Indian products in crowded markets. Educating global consumers about authentic Ayurvedic practices further strengthens India's position as a premium wellness provider.

PATHWAYS TO GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

To capture the expanding global market, Indian exporters should:

- **Obtain International Certifications:** GMP, ISO, and organic certifications build trust and facilitate compliance.
- **Prioritize Value Addition:** Finished products such as supplements, skincare, and plant-based pet care items yield higher margins.
- **Leverage Digital Channels:** E-commerce and social media marketing enable direct connections with international consumers.

- **Invest in Research and Innovation:** Continuous R&D ensures products align with evolving consumer needs.

Collaborating with global wellness brands, participating in international expos, and creating educational campaigns can further enhance visibility, trust, and consumer loyalty.

CONCLUSION

With its centuries-old expertise in herbal medicine and a rising global appetite for natural wellness solutions, India is uniquely positioned to shape the future of the herbal market. By focusing on quality, innovation, and value-added offerings, Indian herbal products can not only expand their international footprint but also set global wellness trends. As the world increasingly embraces holistic health, India stands ready to lead, combining its rich heritage with modern market strategy to redefine wellness worldwide.

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