



November 24, 2017

INDIA

Kerala scientist blends Arabic, Indian medicines for global market

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🕒 November 23, 2017

Thiruvananthapuram: A scientist from Kerala with over a hundred patents has gainfully blended traditional Arabic and Indian herbal medicinal knowledge to launch a range of nutraceutical products that are catching the fancy of international markets.

Dr Muhammed Majeed, founder-chairman of the Sami-Sabinsa group with key offices in the US and in South India and who holds 164 patents, has tapped the medicinal properties of the traditional Arabic herb black cumin and launched a nutraceutical product that draws on native knowledge about the healing properties of the seed and modern scientific validation.

The Rs8-billion (Dh45.3-million) company has recently made the product available across the UAE through its retail arm, Sami Direct, and is gearing up to make it available in the Indian market and the rest of the world.

"The healing powers of black cumin has been known for centuries to the Arab world, and it is known to be a cure for everything but death. It stimulates metabolism, fights asthma and is an anti-oxidant, among others," says Majeed.

It is also known for its pro-fertility properties and its ability to reduce lead level in the heart.

Dr Majeed's innovation has been to make the product available in a soft-gel format, with the extra advantage of a halal certification for the first time for the outer cover of the nutraceutical which is normally made of meat gelatin.

The Sami-Sabinsa group has production facilities in the US, the UAE and India, and is in the process of establishing research collaborations with partners in the UAE.

"There is every likelihood of starting capsule manufacturing in the UAE, and the talent pool available in the country is competent," Majeed told Gulf News.

Though native to the Arabian region, black cumin is now grown in different parts of India, enhancing the availability of the raw material for the nutraceutical, much like the Arabica coffee variety now being widely grown across coffee plantations in India.