

Link Samahan



Market

The common cold is probably the world's most widespread malady. It is responsible for the loss of millions of working days due to absenteeism, contributing to substantial economic losses. Cold-related health problems are aggravated by changing weather patterns and certain allergens. Sneezing, runny noses, itching eyes and sore throats are the first signs of a common cold.

Since modern medicine has yet to find an effective treatment for the common cold, self-medication using Over The Counter (OTC) products continues to be the only remedy. OTCs assist in alleviating some of the symptoms, rather than curing a cold. The market for such products is large, and there is fierce competition amongst a wide range of products that target most symptoms. There are specific OTC products for sinus, coughs, fever and allergies. These products come in the form of Western medicine, Ayurvedic and Chinese treatments, and homeopathy.

In Sri Lanka, an indigenous herbal formulation for relieving colds and related symptoms, called Peyava, originated from the Deshiya Chikitsa system that prevailed before the introduction of Ayurveda. It has been used effectively for centuries. Peyava is prepared by boiling various combinations of five to fifteen medicinal plants as a decoction. Presently, there are a number of branded Peyavas in the market.

Self-medication for cold and related symptoms using OTC drugs has increased considerably. The market has seen consumer demand for a convenient dosage that is more efficacious, easy to prepare and use. Link Natural Products, after many years of research, developed a 100% herbal formulation called Link Samahan. Introduced in 1995, the product is available as instantly soluble granules that comprise 14 medicinal plants used in Peyava formulations. Link Samahan is presently the leading herbal product for colds and related symptoms in Sri Lanka.

And Link Samahan presently accounts for in excess of 85% of the market for herbal preparations for cold and related symptoms in Sri Lanka. The proven quality and effectiveness of Link Samahan, as a preventive measure at the

first sign of a cold, has enabled Link Natural Products to carve a viable export market in India, Malaysia, the US and Canada, with the approval of their respective health authorities. Most Sri Lankans living overseas inevitably use Link Samahan during the so-called flu season.

Achievements

Link Samahan was the first instantly soluble Peyava introduced to the market. Within ten years, Link Natural Products succeeded in making Link Samahan the best-selling product for cold and related symptoms. The uniqueness of the formulation that provides relief at the first sign of a cold has made it the leader of this highly competitive product category. It has thus satisfied the demand for a remedy that will allow people to return to work sooner. Link Samahan has become a household name in Sri Lanka, with around six million sachets sold each month through some 100,000 outlets throughout the country.

The demand for Samahan from overseas has been rising rapidly. Approval for marketing Samahan in India and Malaysia has been obtained and many other countries are showing an interest in registering the formulation. Samahan has been introduced to the US as a nutraceutical (coined from the words nutritional and pharmaceutical) product, in conformity with the requirements of the Dietary Health Supplement and Education Act (DHSEA); and to Canada, as a herbal health-care product approved by its Natural Products Directorate.

The company was awarded the National Science and Technology Award for its development of standardised quality herbal health-care products.

History

Traditional indigenous medicines for colds and related problems have been used from ancient times. Many such remedies ended up as home remedies – for example, the use of ginger and coriander in a well-known combination called Peyava.

In Sri Lanka, such commercial Peyavas were largely unbranded and therefore had no consistency or guarantee of efficacy. The traditional remedy using herbal products is truly Sri Lankan in origin; it belongs to the Deshiya Chikitsa system that pre-dates the introduction of Ayurvedic medicine. The formulation Peyava, a decoction of medicinal plants, was enriched by the inclusion of over fifteen other herbal ingredients in varying proportions and combinations, based on the experience and know-how of Ayurveda and Deshiya Chikitsa practitioners. Recipes for Peyavas are now officially included in the Ayurveda pharmacopoeia.

Product

The Peyavas in the market contain 25-50 grammes of a combination of herbs in consumer packs. These herbal constituents – essentially, dried plant material – have to be cut, washed and boiled for around an hour before use. Besides, depending on the moisture content, micro flora such as fungi can contaminate these products. Furthermore, they do not necessarily conform to the requirements of uniformity, quality and stability.

Link Natural Products identified the shortcomings of these generic Peyavas specially produced for the mass market. It conducted research to develop a more effective, safe and quality dosage which is easy to use and portable, especially to be carried to the workplace. The company's multidisciplinary team of Ayurveda practitioners, chemists, botanists, pharmacists and technologists created the first completely natural and instantly soluble Peyava, to combat and counter the common cold in its





very early stages.

Link Natural Products, in consultation with a group of renowned Ayurvedic practitioners, selected a recipe of fourteen medicinal plants to formulate its special cold remedy. The first task was to make sure that authentic herbal raw materials of good quality were available. Specifications for raw materials were developed so that their procurement ensured minimum variability. The company also took measures to cultivate most of the necessary plants under controlled conditions. Plantlets and seeds were also supplied to outgrowers, with a guarantee of purchase. They were trained in modern methods of cultivation, harvesting and post-harvest techniques.

Scientifically optimised protocols for processing herbal materials were developed and the final extracts were scientifically formulated into instantly soluble granules to be marketed as Link Samahan. The instant solubility and the special formulation enables it to act quickly, and relieve cold and cold-related symptoms in an effective manner.

The product – quality controlled and made into a uniform dosage – was an immediate success, as it filled the need for an effective, easy-to-use product. Soon, Link Samahan became the market leader.

The product is subjected to good manufacturing practices vis-a-vis the ISO 9001:2000 certification for quality management, HACCP certification for safety and ISO 14001:2004 certification for environmental management.

The raw materials are authenticated by its

quality-assurance department, which also monitors the in-process parameters and the quality of the finished product prior to its release to the market. The solubility, uniformity of dosage and stability of the product are thus thoroughly tested. Market surveillance of the product's performance is also undertaken at regular intervals.

Packed in a triple-laminated sachet, Link Samahan retains quality and potency under a variety of climatic condition – humid and tropical, temperate and cold – so that the product can be exported to any country.

Recent Developments

Different flavours have been incorporated into Link Samahan to cater to the tastes of a range of customers. Lime and lemon-flavoured Link Samahan have been added to the range without affecting therapeutic effects. For diet-conscious customers, a low-calorie version has been developed and is now being exported. Link Samahan has also been supplied to agents in other countries, packed in sachets designed by them and incorporating the labelling requirements in those countries.

Promotion

The main promotional medium for Link Samahan is word of mouth – its loyal, satisfied consumers. At the launch stage, it was promoted with both above-the-line and below-the-line campaigns. TV, radio and press were used for above-the-line promotions, while door-

to-door campaigns lasting two years covered most parts of the island.

The nature of Link Samahan was depicted in its initial above-the-line campaign, as a quality product developed using ancient Ayurveda wisdom, and modern science and technology. Some programmes were educational, to increase awareness of Samahan's quality and stability. Subsequently, these included real-life situations involving the use of Link Samahan. TV, radio and the print media have been used extensively in new campaigns.

Sponsorship of research, educational initiatives, and sports and health-care activities of schools and professional associations has added a new dimension to its promotional activities. Many publications, including the SriLankan Airlines in-flight magazine, have featured both the product and company.



Brand Values

Samahan relieves sufferers from the unpleasant symptoms of a cold and enables them to continue with their normal day-to-day activities. Millions of consumers perceive Link Samahan as a 100% natural, safe and effective product that relieves cold and related symptoms. The brand has the hallmark of quality, efficacy and safety.

Link Samahan is the brand leader among herbal cold-care products, with a pre-eminent position in the mass market in Sri Lanka.

www.linknaturalproducts.com

THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

Link Samahan

- > Nearly 55% of Link Samahan consumers are regular users.
- > Some six million sachets of Link Samahan are sold each month through some 100,000 outlets throughout Sri Lanka.
- > Link Samahan is a wholly natural, effective preparation which conforms to standards of quality, purity, uniformity and stability.
- > Link Samahan is the nation's best-selling herbal remedy for cold and cold-related symptoms. Samahan has been approved for sale in India, Malaysia, the US and Canada – and it is gaining popularity in many other countries.
- > It is among the most popular remedies for the common cold among Sri Lankan expatriates.
- > It is exported to 32 countries around the world.

