

Probiotics help cure vaginosis

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Hyderabad-based Microbax India successfully completed a SBIRI funded project in collaboration with Talwar Research Foundation to manufacture a better and safe alternative for vaginosis in women

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nal discharge syndrome) is a very common disorder worldwide. It has been reported that 30 percent of the women from urban areas and 62 percent of rural women suffer from this syndrome, which is caused by a wide variety of microorganisms. Vaginosis is widely prevalent in India and elsewhere in the world. Though antibiotics and drugs are available to cure vaginosis, they also eliminate the beneficial probiotic *lactobacilli* resident in the vagina. The present project will bring out products for replenishing probiotics of desirable properties in vagina of the women lacking these and also curing the local vaginal infections.

To find a solution, Microbax India based at Hyderabad, initiated a project in 2008, on industrial manufacture and marketing of selected probiotic tablets containing *Lactobacillus* strain(s) along with polyherbal microbicide for relieving vaginosis, vaginitis and replenishment of probiotic *Lactobacillus* strains. The research and development (R&D) team at Microbax comprised of five scientists. The project was driven in collaboration with Talwar Research Foundation under the guidance of Professor GP Talwar, founder and director of National Institute of Immunology. While the research work at Talwar Foundation involved the isolation of the microorganisms, the large scale production was carried out by Microbax.

Explaining further on technology, Vikas Rajurkar, CEO, Microbax said, “The technology has been perfected and will help to bring into market a very stable product which has been tested for its efficacy. As

per our knowledge, no other similar product exists in the market.”

The funds amounting to a total of ₹7 crore from Small Business Innovation and Research Initiative (SBIRI) scheme of Department of Biotechnology (DBT) enabled the company to procure and install sophisticated fermentors and other equipment which will be used to produce high quality products.

Appreciating the government support, Rajurkar said, “We are thankful to the DBT and all the people behind the SBIRI scheme. We have not only received the funding, but also mentoring from the project monitoring committee members which has helped the project. Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL) has also been very helpful.”

Way forward

Microbax will produce for the first time in India, the vaginal probiotic capsules containing strains of *Lactobacilli*. The company will utilize submerged fermentation technology and lyophilization to produce the probiotics on a large scale. The strains have been selected by time resolved fluorescence (TRF) after conducting probing clinical trials at two premier institutes in the country. The project has been completed and the product is all set to be launched.

Speaking further on PPPs in biotech, Rajurkar added, “These partnerships will definitely result in bringing into the market innovative products, as the schemes such as SBIRI launched by DBT provide grants and loans at nominal interest rates for projects in “proof of the concept” stage. This will help the entrepreneurs to take the risk and work on novel technologies and products. Our project is the proof of such partnership between a research institute and industry.”

Rahul Koul