

"We envision a future where personal genomics is fully integrated with wellness"

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By : Rahul Koul - March 6, 2019



Personalized health solutions based on genetic tests are fast becoming

popular among Indians and so are the providers. One such name is the

a molecular diagnostics company that

Hyderabad based [Mapmygenome](#),

combines genetic health profile and health history with genetic counseling,

backed by actionable steps for individuals and their physicians towards a

Among the first generation Indian genomics companies, Mapmygenome envisions to touch 100 million lives.

successfully pioneered it through growing product lines, expanding affiliate network, and a Pre-Series A round of funding. Under her able leadership, the company has won several awards and honors.

In this exclusive interaction with the BioVoice, Ms Anu Acharya, Chief Executive Officer of Mapmygenome India, shared her views on the company's journey, achievements, vision and much more. Read on:

The founder of the company, Ms Anu Acharya



How aware are Indians about the personalized health solutions based on genetic tests? How is Mapmygenome making a difference in this regard?

When we launched Genomepatri in 2013, we introduced personalized health solutions to Indian consumers. We did not have a readymade market. There were some innovators who were eager to try Genomepatri even before the launch. One of the first tasks at hand was to create awareness – amongst the healthcare community and opinion leaders. Many conference and event organizers expressed interest in having us present and talk, so we could connect with opinion leaders. To connect with healthcare professionals, we opted for strategic partnerships with many institutions. Media interest helped, especially in connecting us to the early adaptors. Many of our customers have recommended Genomepatri to their friends and family, thus contributing to our customer base.

Today, the scenario is different. Advances in mobile and other technologies are helping many consumers take charge of their health. There is a large section of audience that is focused on preventive healthcare for themselves and their families. They know about genetics-based personalized health solutions and understand the value of such a test.



Please tell us about the idea behind Genomepatri?

After the success of the Human Genome project, experts were talking about ways to harness genetics to personalize healthcare. At our first venture Ocimum Biosolutions, we developed robust genomics workflows for many of our projects. We also had an extensive gene expression database covering therapeutic areas such as oncology, cardiology, and inflammation. It was possible for us to envision taking this technology to the next level – by making it more personalized, connecting to people. We started working on a comprehensive health profile that can help people to predict, delay onset, or prevent disease, while optimizing treatment and building healthy habits. In order to help people interpret the report

and enable healthy habits, we started offering genetic counseling.



What are the other services offered by the company currently? Are these affordable to common folks?

In addition to our most comprehensive test Genomepatri, we introduced smaller panels, fitness and nutrigenomics products, genetic counseling, clinical diagnostics, newborn screening, pharmacogenomics and more. Another key division is our tuberculosis detection and typing kit, SpoligoTB, which is used by major research and diagnostic labs across the globe.

There are many research services including single cell sequencing for tumors, data analysis projects, and more.

Our panels start at INR 3500. There are tests for everyone. Moreover, these costs are just a fraction of treatment costs for many preventable diseases. Many consider it a wise investment.



How has the company performed in last few financial years? Are you looking at raising another level of funding any sooner?

We started offering our services in 2013. In 2015, we raised a Pre Series A round of funding of USD 1.3 million. In the recent years, the focus has been on scaling up, technology upgrades, process improvements, and innovation.



How do you look at the progress of Mapmygenome since its inception? What are the key achievements of the company so far?

Mapmygenome is the first to market in personalized healthcare and managed to stay ahead of the game in this nascent space, which requires extensive experience in genomics and a database created over time. Value added services like Genetic Counseling and an action report with workable plans towards better health give us the primary advantage over competitors. Our unique brand name Genomepatri, a combination of science and traditional Indian astrology, has the highest recall value in this domain.

Few of our key milestones include the launch of Genomepatri in 2013; Pre-series A round of funding and CE certification for SpoligoTB kits during 2015; Algorithm patent early published in 2016; and NABL accreditation in 2017.

We have been recognized on numerous occasions. During the year 2015, Mapmygenome made it to the NASSCOM EMERGE 50 – LEAGUE OF 10 and also the SMARTCEO list of top 50

startups, for contribution to healthcare. The company was nominated among the 5 Top Innovators for Jio Economic Times Startup Awards 2015. Mapmygenome was awarded the Bio Excellence “Emerging Company of the Year” award by the Government of Karnataka in the same year.

In 2016, it was a Wall Street Journal Startup Showcase Finalist. During the year, Mapmygenome became the first winner of eN-ABLE Startup Award in the Genomics Category. In May 2016, Women Economic Forum honored CEO with the award “Iconic Innovative Trailblazers of the Decade”. In February 2016, Mapmygenome was recognized by FAST COMPANY as one of the top 10 innovative companies from India.

Mapmygenome was named Achiever of the Pride of Telangana – 2018 awards in the Start-up category. The company is a 2016 Red Herring Top 100 Asia winner and Red Herring 100 Global finalist.



How big is the market for preventive healthcare in India and what is its future growth potential? Please share few interesting trends?

In the recent years, we have seen healthcare move from a symptomatic approach to wellness. For many people, regular health checks are a norm. Today, more and more people are becoming aware of health trends and are taking charge of their health – this can be surmised from the growth of wearable health devices, mobile apps, etc. This consumer centric approach has revolutionized many aspects of healthcare, paving way for preventive healthcare. Healthcare is also becoming more inclusive – people are discarding taboos about mental health and women’s health and there is more incentive to address these issues. Fertility treatments have seen tremendous growth, with people opting for carrier screening and other informed choices.

Preventive healthcare is here to stay – consider the tremendous growth in health food market. Today’s consumers are aware that healthy food can be tasty too.



How do you view the business/regulatory environment in India? What kind of challenges remain and need to be tackled?

India has seen a tremendous growth in startups and innovations. There is still red tape, excessive tariffs, and other regulatory issues that need to be tackled.



What is your outlook for the future of personalized genomics in general and Mapmygenome in particular?

With improving tech, we can hope for decrease in costs and turnaround time, as well as better coverage of health issues. In tandem with other emerging technologies, personalized genomics can help in improving the quality of life of all people across all age groups. We can also look forward to technological advancements that enable experts to correct disease-causing sequence anomalies rather than just identifying potential threats and offering alternative solutions.

As pioneers of personal genomics in India, we envision a future where personal genomics is fully integrated with wellness.