

MOST RESPECTED

ENTITIES IN SRI LANKA



THE TOP 100

**How and why they are the most admired
AND Why the world is their oyster**



**Deshabandu
Dr. Victor Hettigoda**
Chairman



Asoka Hettigoda
Managing Director

HETTIGODA

FAMILY PRACTICE TO GLOBAL PLAYER

Hettigoda, or the Siddhalepa Group, has not only won the hearts of Sri Lankans, but made its mark on the global platform.

Q: What are your company's key strengths – and weaknesses, if any?

A: The primary strengths are a knowledge base encompassing over 200 years of Ayurveda learning; a heritage of Ayurveda health practitioners (Deshabandu Dr. Victor Hettigoda is a fifth-generation Ayurveda doctor); and an impressive, up-to-date research and development capacity, which has resulted in innovative products such as Ayurveda soap and toothpaste, etc. Another key strength is our staff.

In terms of weaknesses, employee dissatisfaction is not limited to one type of vocation – even a chairman may become frustrated! Lateral transfers and positive reinforcement are methods we use to combat this negative psyche. We have conducted innovative programmes to bolster employee satisfaction and efficiency as well as ensure that they understand the importance of their contribution – and, through this, we have built a strong, vibrant team.

Another important aspect of our success is the management system and practices that are in place. We are a well-managed company with a strong focus on ensuring continuity, which ensures success.

Q: How have these elements gen-

erally impacted on your company's performance in the period under review?

A: Through the perseverance of our founder, we have grown from a small, family-owned enterprise into an international player, present not only in South-East Asia, but also in the West. Our products are marketed to the US, the UK and Europe, as well as the Far East – to Japan and Hong Kong – and Singapore. We have diversified our operations to include health care and personal-care products, as well as offering wellness services through our dedicated Ayurveda spas in Sri Lanka and overseas.

Our foray into the health-services industry resulted in the first, fully-fledged private Ayurveda hospital in the island that caters to both low-middle and top ends of the market. We are, without a doubt, the number-one Ayurveda services provider in the island, as well as being the only Ayurveda company globally to operate treatment centres in multiple countries.

We also ventured into the hospitality trade, with the opening of hotels and spas both here and in Europe. This diversification led to many innovations, including biodegradable packaging, organic fertiliser and a signature range of spa products. These cater to our spas and supply top-end

spas and resorts in the Maldives, across Asia and beyond. We also have three spas in Germany and one in the Czech Republic.

Q: How would you assess existing as well as potential market opportunities? What threats, if any, do you perceive to your company and the sector?

A: As market leaders, we are in a position to take advantage of the growing trend towards more holistic healing and the demand for natural products. The demand for biotechnology, especially in China and India, are potential areas. In terms of threats, the removal of trade barriers and the influx of foreign brands at extremely low prices means that we cannot compete due to their economies of scale.

Locally, we are also affected by cost factors and supply issues, as endemic species of plants and herbs are not available in commercial quantities. Today, local producers face the daunting test of conforming to a barrage of certifications, while the corresponding imported products have little or no certification. Another aspect is the unethical practices adopted by many international Ayurveda companies and the regulatory factors that permit the importation of inferior products.



MEDIA SERVICES PHOTOFILE (SIDDHALEPA GROUP)

Q: What achievements has your company enjoyed in the year under review? What accolades has it received?

A: Sri Lanka and the world have recognised the contribution that Siddhalepa has made to Ayurveda. In addition to the many accolades we have received, we are proud to be recognised by the international community – which, perhaps, has a greater appreciation of things natural. The trend towards harmonious living is growing and this has certainly helped us leverage our brand to a wider audience. The opening of several spas in Europe and the success of operations in India continue to bolster our success.

We were the first in Asia to receive ISO certification for our type of products, and we are the only company that has certification and licensing to market such products in Europe, Japan, the Middle East and the US. We were the first to offer an Ayurveda spa to the world as well as a restaurant offering food according to the Ayurveda concept. We were also awarded 'Superbrand' status last year.

Q: What impact will the inclusion of your company among the MOST RESPECTED have on your future business prospects?

A: Independent organisations continue to rate us highly and our inclusion in the MOST RESPECTED rankings further bolsters our position. This unbiased study conducted by LMD in conjunction with The Nielsen Company is important in terms of perception – especially so for Sri Lankans, who may not have the necessary knowledge about corporates.

This is necessary from a local perspective and as this publication is read internationally, it promotes and informs the world at large about noteworthy Sri Lankan companies. We are grateful that through this publication, the manufacturer is accorded a place as a captain of industry and is recognised as an asset to the country.

Q: What are your company's plans for the future?

A: We hope to strengthen our position in the local market, while targeting the Asian region for the supply of top-end spa products to niche clientele. In addition, we hope to expand our operations in India – through opening manufacturing facilities which offer a more conducive climate for manufacturing and distribution.

We also hope to foray into markets such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Middle East. We are recognised as the number-three Ayurveda company in the world,

with Indian companies occupying the top spots.

We also hope to expand our health-care division to include respiratory and digestive products.

Q: What type of CSR activities has your company engaged in recently and how do you think this may have impacted on how it is perceived?

A: As a company that has grown locally, we decided to give something back to our customer – the public. We began the 'Sri Pada' programme to provide Siddhalepa and Lak Peyawa free of charge to 1.5 million devotees at this site and other religious places. We were the first to institute an education campaign on dumping garbage here. We put up signs at schools, places of worship, etc., to address this.

In addition, we assist students with funding and work with the differently able. We also provide for children with special needs on an annual basis.

We have set up herbal gardens at schools and educate children on the benefits of Ayurveda. In addition, a special programme conducted by our Chairman addresses social and moral awareness among students, and he conducts a marketing-development programme for entrepreneurs.