

## **Bala Sarda Founder & CEO VAHDAM® India**

**Bala Sarda** is a 33-year-old founder and CEO of [VAHDAM® India](#) who has made a significant impact in the tea industry. He comes with over 90 years of lineage in the tea industry and is the fourth generation in his family to start a tea business. Given his lineage, he started with tea but the vision was always to do much more.

*VAHDAM is the reverse anagram of Bala's father's first name, 'MADHAV' whom he considers his biggest inspiration.*

With a deep-rooted family heritage and an innate passion, Bala recognized the flaws in the conventional tea and spices supply chain early on. He witnessed the loss of flavor and freshness that occurred due to a broken and fragmented system. Driven by a burning desire to create and change, Bala set out to disrupt the 200-year-old global supply chain and forge a new path.

Bala's entrepreneurial spirit was nurtured from a young age, setting the stage for his extraordinary achievements.

**In 2015**, armed with determination, knowledge, and an unwavering vision, **Bala founded VAHDAM® India at the tender age of 23** with a vision to take the best of Indian wellness to consumers across the globe under a proud home-grown Indian brand devoid of any middlemen and direct from source. It has been shipped to over 5 million consumers across 150 countries.

### **Awards & Recognition**

Bala Sarda has been recognized as a prominent young entrepreneur and featured in the following prestigious lists:

- Fortune 40 under 40 - 2023
- [Forbes 30 Under 30 \(Asia\)](#) - 2018
- [GQ Top 25 Influential Young Indians](#) - 2021
- [Entrepreneur 35 Under 35](#) - 2019
- [BW Disrupt 30 under 30](#) - 2021
- [Business World 40 Under 40](#) - 2019
- [Young Entrepreneur of the Year by Business World](#) -2020
- [Entrepreneur of the Year by Entrepreneur India](#) - 2022
- E4M Game Changer Entrepreneur of the Year Male-2023
- SABERA-Emerging Business Leader of the Year

- The Economic Times-Global Entrepreneur of the Year- 2024

Under Bala's leadership, VAHDAM® India has emerged as a trailblazer brand garnering numerous accolades and recognition. **VAHDAM® India has been honored with over 75 GLOBAL awards, including the**

- [Forbes 100 to watch' across the Asia-Pacific region](#)
- [SOFI Award](#) (Speciality Food Association, USA)
- Global Tea Championship (USA)
- The Great Taste Awards (UK)
- [Best Homegrown Tea Brand' by Travel + Leisure Co. India & South Asia](#)
- [DIGIDAY-GREATER GOODS AWARDS](#) (USA)

VAHDAM India was awarded the 'Global SMB OF THE YEAR' by **Jeff Bezos, Founder, Amazon** in January, 2020. The award was received in person by Bala Sarda



### **Brand Highlights**

Today, VAHDAM® India is the country's largest home-grown Indian teas and spices brand. Under Bala's leadership, the brand has been able to achieve the following milestones:

- VAHDAM India has been endorsed by global celebrities and icons like Oprah Winfrey, Mariah Carey, Ellen Degeneres, Martha Stewart, Drew Barrymore, Wendy Williams, Chris Pratt, Nicole Scherzinger, all organically.
- Only Indian brand to have **featured in Oprah's Favorite Things two years in a row - 2018 and 2019.**
- VAHDAM India is available in over 4000 stores across the globe with presence in biggest retailers such as Walmart and COSTCO.
- In September 2023, VAHDAM® India became the first tea brand in India and the 8th Indian brand globally to get the coveted and highly-respected B Corp certification. B Corp certification is awarded to select global brands that consider business as a force of good and use their profits and growth to positively impact their stakeholders and the planet. It is awarded only to those brands with the highest levels of social and environmental impact.
- VAHDAM® India has established its **presence on over 25+ online marketplaces** worldwide. Notably, the brand has achieved remarkable success on Amazon USA, emerging as one of the leading brands in its category.
- VAHDAM® India made waves by being the first Indian wellness brand to have featured in the **coveted Oscars and Emmys goody bags, 2022.**
- VAHDAM® India **partnered with the popular Netflix original series, Emily in Paris, Season 3.** In another exciting collaboration, VAHDAM® joined forces with renowned **American singer and actress, Nicole Scherzinger, to introduce a limited-edition gift set**
- VAHDAM® India secured an organic placement in one of the country's top talk shows - **'Koffee with Karan',** season 7.
- VAHDAM® India has been loved and **featured heavily by the global press.** Over 3000 features, globally.
- Extensively **featured on National Television in the USA** including Good Morning America, CBS News, View Your Deal, QVC and more.
- With its extensive portfolio, VAHDAM® India offers over 100 signature blends spread over 250 SKUs including Loose-Leaf Teas, Pyramid-Shaped Tea Bags, Gifts, Samplers & Assortments, Matcha, Iced Teas, Teawares, Drinkwares and more. It also recently

[launched its second biggest category - VAHDAM Spices](#) with Michelin-star awarded chef **Vikas Khanna**.

- The brand's omni-channel presence, focus on marketing and strategic partnerships has helped expand its reach and build a loyal customer base to 4 million across 130 countries.

### **Financial Highlights**

With Bala's visionary leadership, VAHDAM India has become a globally recognized brand.

- The brand has **raised over 290 crores in funding** that include VCs like IIFL AMC, Fireside Ventures, Sixth Sense Ventures, Mumbai Angels (20+ Angels), Family Offices i.e Mankind Pharma, SAR Group, Urmin Group , Entrepreneurs - Kris Gopalkrishnan (Infosys Founder), Pankaj Chaddha (Zomato Founder), Amrish Rau (PayU Founder) & more and Individuals like Sachin Tendulkar (Cricketer) & Abhishek Bachchan (Bollywood Actor)
- Since VAHDAM's inception, it has delivered a **CAGR of 151%**.
- It **grew by 110% during COVID**
- In 2022, VAHDAM® India experienced significant growth and achieved net profitability
- **VAHDAM's trademark** is now registered in **50+ countries** globally.

### **Social Impact & CSR initiatives**

Under Bala's vision, VAHDAM® India accelerated their commitment to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals, driven by the belief that businesses can create positive change. **VAHDAM® India embraced the ethos of "DO GOOD BY DOING GOOD,"** aiming to make a sustainable impact on the people and planet.

- VAHDAM® India focuses on giving back to society and the community. A minimum of **1% of VAHDAM® India's revenue** is directed towards the education of its growers' children under its flagship CSR Initiatives, **TEACH ME**.
- TEACH ME has **impacted the lives of nearly 15,000 children in 70+ tea estates**, schools, and community centers across West Bengal, Assam, and the Nilgiris.
- Bala initiated **VAHDAM® India Scholarship for Higher Education** in 2020 with a clear aim of supporting the youth of tea estates who wanted to continue their higher education but did not have the means to. As of date, the total number of **VAHDAM® Scholarships for Higher Education is 76**.
- VAHDAM India has been a **certified Climate neutral & Plastic neutral brand for 3 years** now. We have been offsetting our carbon footprint by purchasing verified carbon credits

from Gold Standard Foundation, Switzerland and aim to become and remain a net-zero emission organization.

These accolades underscore VAHDAM's success as a prominent direct-to-consumer brand in the food and beverage industry, showcasing its dedication to delivering exceptional products and experiences to its customers.

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