

Amrutanjan turning aggressive in Biotech

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Amrutanjan, a Chennai based company, which is in to herbal products is moving in to biotechnology. S Radhakrishna, MD of Amrutanjan, says that it was a part of the diversification process. In biotechnology the company is focusing on the cloning and expression of Recombinant Therapeutic Protein. As part of the expansion into biotech research, Amrutanjan is constructing its R&D Biotech unit in the SIPCOT industrial park, which will be completed by the middle of this year. The unit will have facility for protein downstream processing, work related to molecular biology, tissue culture, mammalian cell culture etc. Made with an investment of Rs 3.5 - 4 crore, the size of facility is 10,000 square feet. The R&D facility will be open to other contract services as it intends to operate it as a semi-commercial facility.

Besides the coming up of the R&D facility at the SIPCOT Park, Amrutanjan has major plans coming up by the middle of this year. Very soon Amrutanjan will enter into the business of marketing Brucellosis, an animal vaccines that will prevent abortion in the cattle. Brucellosis, according to Dr S Kumar, Chief R & D - Biotechnology Division, Amrutanjan Limited, will have a very good market in India for the vaccines currently available in India cause many side effects. "We have a strong network of 2,500 channel players through whom we will market the vaccine. It looks like a deviation from our main activity, but ones we realize the potential of this vaccine we intend to produce this here itself." A US-based company is manufacturing Brucellosis, the details of which the company is not ready to disclose now.

By mid 2003, Amrutanjan will be venturing into bioinformatics training course, for which it has sought affiliation with Madurai Kamraj University. The course has been started to benefit its in-house R&D activities. "Not only that most of the bioinformatics course available does not stress on the WetLab activity, which is a crucial aspect," added Dr Kumar. The five month course costs Rs 35,000.

Molecular Diagnostics Services is yet another endeavor, which is in the pipeline from the company. To be functional by the middle of this year, it has invested Rs 25 - 30 lakh in this project. The company intends to use the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) method for testing infectious diseases and for cancer testing. Most genetic disorders have to be looked at the DNA level or the protein level. Amrutanjan is looking at the DNA level since it is quicker and is considered to be more stable. This project from Amrutanjan is being positioned as a part of the company's social responsibility program to serve the community and especially the economically weaker sections of society. As part of this project, Amrutanjan will be setting its first testing center in Chennai to be followed by sample collection centers through out Tamil Nadu.

A known name in every household, Amrutanjan is an analogue for instant relief whether it be from backache, body ache, sprain, cold, cough etc. One has come across Amrutanjan in various forms as in Amrutanjan Strong pain balm, Cold Snap Gel, Mridul Cough Syrup, Yellow pain balm etc. Established in 1893, Amrutanjan has always stood for herbal products by making use of the latest emerging scientific advancements matched with age-old tradition. In 1977 they started R&D Fine Chemicals under the stewardship of late Prof. TR Govindachary and late Dr BR Pai. Fine Chemicals is into making drug intermediates, which are being sent to the domestic as well as Europe and the US markets.