

## "Opportunities are aplenty with India being in global focus"

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S. Gopal, MD, Scigenics Biotech Pvt Ltd

**As a manufacturer of equipment, where do you find the opportunities in the life sciences and biotechnology industry in India?**

We find requirements in every area of life sciences and biotechnology i.e. agriculture, basic research, production of various biotech-based products thus providing ample opportunities and width for us to grow.

**What kind of support is the government providing to supplier companies like Scigenics Biotech?**

In our opinion, the government has not yet looked at bioequipment manufacture close enough to encourage its growth though several hundred crores of rupees worth of equipment are imported into the country.

Our request is that taking note of the fact that our country almost missed the bus to be along with other countries in semi conductor/computer hardware manufacture, we should ensure in the field of biotechnology, we as Indians should be at the forefront in both hardware/software. In both the areas, India has the necessary skills and it needs to be nurtured on a mission mode.

**How are the domestic biosuppliers placed in the competitive market?**

Even established domestic biosuppliers are currently facing the heat both from the east and west. One has to admit that conservatism exists among domestic manufacturers as far as addressing the specifications of the equipment is concerned. While most of us manufacture equipment addressing the essential requirement, the overseas products are able to address the additional features better. Besides, the cost of equipment from the east, particularly Korea and China are comparable if not cheaper to domestically manufactured products. Customers also realize the disadvantage of importing products due to fly-by-night nature of some of the manufacturers/distributors.

**Entrepreneurs prefer on taking up dealership instead of setting up their own manufacturing units in India. Why is it so?**

Entrepreneurs prefer dealership to manufacture base, owing to severe hardships faced on account of statutory laws and other strictures. Valuable time and resources have to be spent on adhering /deciphering statutes like excise duty, sales tax, labour laws, infrastructure inadequacy among other things, forcing energetic people to seek easier way to sustenance i.e distributorship. This is a very serious issue, which in long term will be ruinous to the economy of the country.

**In what way is the government encouraging entrepreneurs to invest in the manufacturing of equipment necessary for life sciences/ biotechnology industry?**

It is time the government looked at this industry as sunrise sector and clearly envisage policies for organized growth, and not repeat mistakes in semiconductor/hardware industries. The government should encourage small scale industries (SSI) in this sector to perform through liberal banking assistance. Waiver of exorbitant tender fee, EMD and providing incentives similar to exports will support the SSIs. Though SSIs are exempted as per government rules from payment of EMD/security deposit etc., government institutes like the CSIR/ ICAR/ICMR and universities do not accept and choose to ignore, which result in heavy blockage of working capital.

**How you see the growth of global life sciences/biotechnology industry in general and the Indian industry in particular in the next 5 years?**

The opportunities are going to be aplenty with India being in global focus. Biotechnology is going to address every walk of life. Our human resources are going to be the biggest contributor. Our biotech industry is going to grow by leaps and bounds catering to both domestic and international needs and with that biosuppliers are going to have their hands full.

**What are your future plans for Scigenics Biotech?**

SCIGENICS Biotech has been an entrepreneurial venture since its inception in 1997 in manufacturing of ORBITEK range of Shakers, specifically addressed to the field of life sciences and biotechnology. The ORBITEK product range has been expanded to include hybridization chamber, growth chamber, incubators, roller culture apparatus etc. With close to 1500 installations in leading companies, research and education institutes coupled with consistent repeat orders, stand testimony to our customer satisfaction and trust.

Our R&D unit has an approximate floor area of 600 sft and the factory has an approximate floor area of 6000 sft. With 8 offices including distributors, we have employed 40 people. The annual turnover for the last year 2005-06 was Rs 203 lakh.

Narayan Kulkarni