

BioSpectrum Technology Forum - 2012

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Next Generation Innovation

Celebrating a decade of bioscience innovation

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Dr S Natesh, senior advisor (Scientist-H), Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, gives the keynote address

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Dr Ashok Kumar, president, R&D, IPCA, presenting his views on new drug discovery

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Shivkumar, country manager, Agilent Technologies, introduces company's CrossLab services and supplies

BioSpectrum Technology Forum for 2012 was kick-started in Mumbai on July 20. The forum discussed the issues concerning the future of biologics and the emerging innovations.

Based around the theme of Next Generation Innovation, the BioSpectrum Technology Forum 2012,

held on July 20, 2012, saw R&D heads, important policy-makers, and CEOs brave the Mumbai rains to come together to talk about the current innovation in India. The forum that was supported by Agilent Technologies, provided a platform for all those who gathered there to discuss an array of topics and understand what needs to be done to make India the hub of bioscience innovation.

The fact that BioSpectrum too was celebrating a decade of its existence made the theme even more poignant. "We are now in the 10th year of communicating the story of biotech to the Indian community. It has been proven that India has a lot of scope for innovation and this has led to the world looking at India to produce novel and innovative solutions to its problems," remarked N Suresh, group editor, BioSpectrum India, BioSpectrum Asia and Technology Review, while introducing Dr S Natesh, senior advisor (Scientist-H), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), the keynote speaker as one of the most authoritative people to speak on innovation in India and on government initiatives to support such innovations.

Dr Natesh as a part of the keynote talk, spoke about the various initiatives of DBT such as Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), Technology Ignition Grant (BIG), and Technology Industry Partnership Programme (BIPP). He also emphasized on the need to build human capital when he said, "We have started focusing on linking research with education like launching the IISERs and are also promoting clusters such as those at Bangalore and Mohali. Re-entry fellowships such as Ramalingaswami Fellowship have been very well received. From the 8th to the 11th Five Year plan, DBT's budget grew by 16 times."

Along the way, Dr Shivkumar, country manager, Agilent Technologies introduced the company's new line of CrossLab services and supplies designed to streamline the workday of any lab by providing services which cover products of other brands as well.

Dr Ashok Kumar, president, R&D, IPCA engagingly delivered a talk on the philosophy behind new drug discovery. Quoting ancient philosophers and scientists alike, Dr Kumar highlighted the need to get back to the basics of drug discovery by developing core competencies and then working with them.

Future of biologics manufacturing in India

The first panel discussion of the day which focused on the future of biologics manufacturing in India included the heads of India's leading bioscience companies. The panel was moderated by Kaushik Desai, director, DIA India and comprised Dr MK Sahib, director, genomics and biotechnology, Wockhardt Research Centre; Dr Cyrus Karkaria, president, biotechnology, Lupin; Dr Pradeep Nagalkar, manager and head, Haffkine Biopharmaceuticals; and Sai D Prasad, vice president, Bharat Biotech. All of them spoke about the difficulties involved in scaling up of biological products and sustaining the quality. Dr Sahib however pointed out that with advancement of technology, this process is getting simpler.

Sai Prasad said that building a cGMP compliant infrastructure amidst political instability and regulatory delays is a major challenge, but that all such problems are surmountable. Dr Karkaria also positively added, "The 5-6 companies that do carry out large scale biologics manufacturing in India, do have facilities at par with those in western countries as we have to follow the guidelines stated by them for biologics."

The general consensus that emerged however was that regulatory hurdles if reduced, would lead to

faster development of India's biologics manufacturing capabilities.

Building a strong product pipeline

The next panel discussion, centered around "Building a strong product pipeline", saw speakers from diverse backgrounds, such as Dr Deven Parmar, CEO and medical director, Americas, Karmic Life Sciences; Chinny Rao, executive director, Transgene Biotek; Dr GD Yadav, vice chancellor, Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) Mumbai; and Donald Kelemen, vice president business development and corporate strategy, Gennova Biopharmaceuticals. This session was moderated by Anjan Sen, director, strategy and operations, Deloitte India.

Keeping in line with the topic, Kelemen spoke about Gennova's ideology, "Building a pipeline can be very challenging. You have to identify your core competencies, both in science as well as the business aspect and then build the portfolio. We, at Gennova are looking where we want to be in the next five years and then working backwards."

Presenting an academician's view on this matter, Professor G D Yadav mentioned, "In India everybody works well in isolation but not as a team. For scalable technology, it is very important that the industry and academia work in collaboration to ensure that ideas produced in the lab get translated in the industry."

India is the solution

Further continuing the discussion on India's capabilities, the final session was aptly titled "India as the Solution: Innovative Products can work anywhere". The panelists included Krishnakumar Sankaranarayanan, associate director, pharma lifesciences, PricewaterhouseCoopers; Dr Neelima Khairatkar Joshi, senior vice president and head, biological and chemical research, Glenmark; Dr BN Ganguli, research advisor KJ Somaiya Trust, former deputy director, R&D, Hoechst Pharma; Dr Shirshendu Mukherjee, strategic advisor, R&D initiatives, Wellcome Trust. This session was moderated by BioSpectrum group editor, N Suresh.

Being perceived as the generics capital by most of the western world, innovation in India is still said to be in its infancy as compared to other countries. Sankaranarayanan, however, pointed out that, "India has one of the key advantages of scale. Barring China, very few countries have such a huge pool of manpower. Also need for solutions is a major driver for growth in research."

Dr Neelima Joshi elaborating on how Glenmark was becoming innovation proficient said, "Glenmark is in the process of out-licensing its novel first-in-class programs to leading pharma companies. This model allows innovative research to be awarded and presents a niche opportunity to Indian companies as big pharma is looking for cheaper solutions."

Dr Mukherjee who has been closely associated with funding innovative solutions through the aegis of the Wellcome Trust also spoke about how Wellcome Trust is closely working with over 14 projects in India that are focused on affordable innovation.

Speaking at the forum, Sandeep Tandon general manager - India, chemistries and supplies division, Agilent Technologies India, said, "Agilent CrossLab is a brand new supplies portfolio for major brands of non-Agilent analytical instruments. The goal is to improve productivity and efficiency through quality, availability, and support." The new HPLC offerings, combined with its existing CrossLab GC supplies will enable its customers to find the right supplies across multiple instrument brands. "Agilent recognizes that laboratories are often equipped with instruments from a range of

vendors, and we are committed to facilitating multi-vendor repair, maintenance and compliance across services and supplies. Agilent is uniquely qualified to be a lab-wide service provider and provide single-source laboratory services across any site or organization," added Bharat Bhardwaj, general manager - India, service and support division, Agilent Technologies India.

The event was successfully concluded with the handing over of mementos to the speakers, with the promise of more chapters of this event in other cities as well.

Manasi Vaidya

BSTF SESSION - 2012

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Future of biologics manufacturing


From left: Kaushik Desai, director, DIA India; Dr Cyrus Karkaria, president, biotechnology, Lupin; Dr M K Sahib, director, genomics and biotechnology, Wockhardt Research Center; Dr Pradeep Nagalkar, manager and head, Haffkine Biopharmaceuticals; Sai D Prasad, vice president, Bharath 

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Building strong product pipeline

From left: Anjan Sen, director, strategy & operations, Deloitte in India; Prof. G D Yadav, vice chancellor, ICT Mumbai; Donald Kelemen, vice president, business development & corporate strategy, Gennova Biopharmaceuticals; Chinny Rao, executive director, Transgene Biotek; Deven Parmar, CEO and medical director, Americas, Karmic Life Sciences

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India is the solution

From left: Narayanan Suresh, group editor, BioSpectrum; Dr Shirshendu Mukherjee, strategic advisor, R&D initiatives, Wellcome Trust; Dr Neelima Khairatkar Joshi, senior vice president & head, biological and chemical research, Glenmark; Dr B N Ganguli, research advisor, KJ Somaiya Trust, former deputy director, R&D, Hoechst Pharma; Krishnakumar Sankaranarayanan, associate director, pharma lifesciences, PwC

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Dsc0289bharat **Bharath Bhardwaj**, general manager-India, service and support division, Agilent Technologies, India

Dsc0363 **Sandeep Tandon**, general manager-India, chemistries and supplies division, Agilent Technologies, India

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