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India is positioned to become a major global hub for biologics development and manufacturing: Manoj Kumar Panicker

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Indiaâ??s biosimilar opportunity is particularly significant as high-value biologics in oncology, immunology, and rare diseases lose patent protection



India’s biologics and biosimilars market is entering a decisive growth phase, and the opportunity is both immediate and transformative. With several global biologics going off patent, rising demand for affordable therapies, and strong government backing through initiatives such as Biopharma Shakti, Manoj Kumar R Panicker, General Manager – South Asia, Cytiva believes India is positioned to become a major global hub for biologics development and manufacturing.

Panicker, who transitioned from a mechanical engineering background into life sciences innovation and holds 12 international patents, says the convergence of engineering excellence and bioprocess innovation is unlocking new commercial possibilities. “India already has strong capabilities in generics and vaccines. The next wave is biosimilars and complex biologics, where process efficiency, speed to market, and regulatory readiness will define competitive advantage,” he notes.

India’s biosimilar opportunity is particularly significant as high-value biologics in oncology, immunology, and rare diseases lose patent protection across regulated markets such as the US and Europe. Indian biopharma companies and CDMOs (Contract Development and Manufacturing Organizations) are well placed to capitalize on this shift due to cost competitiveness, scientific talent, and expanding regulatory expertise. Panicker highlights that the demand is no longer limited to domestic needs — Indian manufacturers are increasingly targeting semi-regulated and highly regulated international markets.

Cytiva’s recent investments in India reflect this confidence. The company has expanded its manufacturing footprint in Pune and established a 30,000 sq. ft. Fast Track Process Development Services facility equipped with advanced bioreactors and chromatography systems. According to Panicker, such infrastructure is critical for accelerating molecule-to-market timelines. “Biologics development cannot shortcut biology, but it can eliminate inefficiencies. The real market opportunity lies in reducing trial-and-error cycles and improving process robustness early,” he explains.

Beyond biosimilars, Panicker sees strong growth potential in novel biologics, orphan drugs, and advanced therapies. Academic research output in India has been robust, but commercialization has historically lagged. With stronger incubator ecosystems, policy incentives, and global partnerships, more molecules are expected to transition from lab-scale innovation to industrial-scale production.

Looking ahead, Panicker believes India’s biologics market could witness sustained double-digit growth over the next decade, fueled by patent expiries, government policy support, and global demand for cost-effective therapies. “This is not just a cyclical opportunity,” he says. “It is a structural shift. India has the science, the scale, and now the infrastructure to become a leading biologics powerhouse.”

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