

Quality education is the key

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There is no doubt that biotechnology has acquired a buzz in the last two years. It is not yet in the same league as information technology (IT), software and BPO. But everyone agrees that biotechnology too will acquire the same ringtone as these three sectors in the next few years.

With increasing awareness about biotechnology, there has been an increased desire for enrolling into biotech courses. BioSpectrum has been a witness to this desire in the last one year through regular mails from a large chunk of students asking us on the list of the Top 10 colleges in India; the best colleges in various cities; should one do BSc in biotech or are there other fields through which one could pursue biotech; is there a future? There have been queries and suggestions from across the country, from parents to students, doctors to agriculturists. The interest level in biotechnology is amazing. What is even more amazing is the fact that in the last two years, more students have opted for biotech courses in the leading engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, leaving thousands of IT seats vacant in these states.

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Though the biotech industry in India is still small, nascent, and grappling with various hurdles in its growth path, BioSpectrum believes that it is coming to terms with the dynamic market conditions and is emerging as a niche sector. There are already some good success stories. Take for example, Biocon. Today, it is not only the largest biotech company in India, but also cherishes a global dimension. There have been others like Bharat Biotech, Biological E, Indian Immunologicals, Intas, Panacea Biotech, Serum Institute, Shantha Biotechnics, Wockhardt, producing various vaccines, both for the Indian and global markets. Besides, there are others like Avesthagen and Metahelix, which specialize in agribiotech; Ocimum and Strand

Genomics are focused on bioinformatics. Collectively, the industry is bullish that India has the opportunity to generate Rs 45,000-50,000 crore in the next seven years.

While all this is happening on one hand, our education program too has seen a change. Pune University for example has been innovating and taking pioneering steps forward. It started a two-year full-time MBA program in biotechnology in academic year 2002-03. It is testing waters for launching programs in the clinical trials and research arena. Then there are others like IBAB, Bangalore, which has started innovative programs in the informatics sector.

The growing buzz about biotechnology is the reason for the birth of BioSpectrum in March 2003. Ever since, the magazine has been chronicling the remarkable men and women who are making this a happening sector. As the sector grows, we realized that some of the niche areas too require more focus. The discerning BioSpectrum reader needs more specific information. BioSpectrum Student is an attempt to fulfill the yearning need for more information about biotech courses in the country. It provides you a lot of information about the various industry trends, opportunities, the future prospects, various programs and a list of colleges offering courses in biotech. We have tried to be as comprehensive as possible. However, this is the first step in keeping you abreast with the developments. With your support, we hope to bring this out more regularly to include other key details like the best courses, colleges, institutes and biotech education outside India. There could be some inadvertent omissions. And we request you to send your feedback on the same so that we update and in future keep the information more relevant.

