

Biotech should seek inclusive innovation

PUNE: The science of [biotechnology](#) offers a big opportunity for innovation and entrepreneurship, but innovators must keep in mind that India's billion plus people benefit from it, said senior scientist and former director general of the Council for Industrial and Scientific Research Raghunath Mashelkar on Saturday.

The breakthrough ideas that biotechnology will seek should touch the lives of the country's masses and should not be confined to small groups of its people, Mashelkar said. Mashelkar was delivering the keynote address in the inaugural session of Biotech Summit 2009, jointly organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), MCCIA, Government of Maharashtra and University of Pune.

Mashelkar also formally inaugurated a biotechnology resource centre, set up in the campus of University of Pune.

India, particularly Maharashtra, has a significant advantage in terms of its natural and physical resources to leapfrog the development of biotechnology, but the task will have to be guided by three principles; speed, scale and sustainability, he said. "We are a country of a billion plus people and the biotechnology-based solutions that we intend developing should be relevant for all," Mashelkar said.

He said [India](#) and particularly Maharashtra has a wide variety bio-resources available and there is a significant scope for technology led entrepreneurship.

Maharashtra Principal Secretary (Industries) A M Khan said the state has taken an encouraging approach to biotechnology, identifying its potential ahead of many other states. He said the state has eight notified special economic zones for biotechnology and is also seeking development of private infrastructure for the sector. Biotechnology resources centres is a major step in facilitation of development of the sector and the will go a long way in helping the small and medium scale enterprises in biotechnology.

[CII](#) Maharashtra council chief Pramod Chaudhari said biotechnology has been showing steady progress in the country and the size of biotechnology intensive business is Rs 10,000 crore. Sixty-seven per cent of this comes from biopharma, 15 per cent from services such as analytics, 12 per cent from agri-biotech, 4 per cent from industrial biotechnology and 2 per cent from bio-informatics, he informed. Maharashtra Development Commissioner for Industries Malini Shankar said the total revenue generated from biotech sector is Rs 3000 crore out of which Maharashtra accounts for 33 per cent.

Former chancellor of the University of Pune Ashok Kolaskar said there is a perceivable shortage of teaching staff in the biotechnology education sector and this will have a bearing on the scalability of the industry in the short term. However, the quality aspects of the biotechnology human resource are getting stricter and this will lead to higher quality of the resources, he said. Biology teachers are being re-oriented to work as biotechnology teachers as an attempt to deal with the shortage, he added.

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