

Expert Opinion - Shama Bhat

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DIAGNOSTICS

Dr Shama Bhat

Molecular diagnostic is the future

With DBT supporting this segment, molecular diagnostic is starting to pick up pace in India

The size of diagnostic industry in India is estimated to be about ~~1,500~~ ~~1,000~~ ~~2,000~~ crore. This includes only the reagents and kits and not the instruments used in diagnostic industry. The industry consists of multinationals who supply the reagents on rental basis and supply the sophisticated and expensive instruments, which are closed end and need to be used with their own reagents; manufacturing companies who manufacture majority of the rapid test kits, ELISA, haematology, immunology and clinical biochemistry kits, and the other companies who package and sell.

The growth in the diagnostic industry is estimated to be about 15 percent per year. Molecular diagnostic is expected to be the future and estimated to record 20-25 percent growth per annum.

Investments are coming in a steady phase and more and more MNCs are willing to set up their production units in India. Low manufacturing cost and good quality people are the two major attractions for the industry.

R&D spending by major players is about 10-15 percent of the total revenues and the added attraction of tax savings helps in setting up more and more R&D units. Added to this, the DBT funding also helps in taking

some risks. For example we have two projects, one from SBIRI and another from BIRAP. These are having some risks, but since these are funded by the DBT, we can afford to take some risks with respect to the investments and project.

Bhat Biotech India was the first company to bring Chikungunya kits to the Indian market and still is the market leader. Now, we are looking at bringing newer kits for TB, and many molecular diagnostic kits. We see that there is a huge potential for the molecular diagnostic kits in India and other countries.

- Dr Shama Bhat, CMD, Bhat Biotech India