

Biotech education grows slowly

02 September 2011 | News



Every industry needs talented human resources to sustain itself and grows. For the \$4 billion Indian biotechnology sector, the requirement is even more than the other industry segments in terms of talent, as one would expect from knowledge-based industry. The 500 educational institutions, majority of which were set up in the past are the heart beats of the vibrant industry.

So, the status of the biotech sector is the focus of the third volume of the annual biotech industry surveys conducted by *BioSpectrum*. The results of the 7th *BioSpectrum* BT Schools Survey are presented in this issue of the magazine. Every year, 25,000-30,000 eager students are enrolling for the numerous BTech and postgraduate courses in biotechnology disciplines in 500 institutions in the country. The *BioSpectrum* survey indicates that some 100,000 students are enrolled currently in biotechnology courses.

Thanks to these students, biotech education is now a **1,150 crore annual market**. It grew by 9.5 percent during 2010-11. The annual intake of the industry is in the range of 8,000-10,000 new employees. Yet, nearly three times this number of students are reposing their faith in the growth prospects of India's biotech industry and aiming for a career in biotechnology. So what happens to the ones not hired by the industry? *BioSpectrum* estimates indicate that a third of the students who complete biotech courses in the country are enrolling for higher education both within and outside the country. Another third are absorbed by the information technology industry whose appetite for fresh brains continues to be huge. Only the remaining third gets into the biotech industry.

The top ranks in the public institutions category had changed in the first five years of the survey. For the first time, ICT, Mumbai, is No.1 for the second year in running. In the private institutions category, the musical chairs continue and Sastra University, Thanjavur, is back as No. 1. Some of the prominent institutions, both in public and private categories, which were part of the rankings last year, could not join the survey this year due to time constraints. Their names have been indicated in

the survey highlights.

Many readers will be wondering about the absence of some of the high-profile private institutions who are not featured in the rankings. A prominent biotechnology institution in the National Capital Region put a stiff condition to participate in the survey: a guaranteed top rank for consideration. Another equally prominent institution in Chennai region too has opted out of the survey in the last two years on a similar demand.

The integrity of BioSpectrum's editorial is of paramount importance. Even a blank cheque cannot influence the survey processes whose credibility is the greatest asset of the magazine. There is a Chinese wall that separates the editorial and marketing operations of the magazine and it will not become porous under any circumstances. I advise the discerning readers of *BioSpectrum* to be wary of such institutions that overstate their strengths. The results of this survey are for the student community to evaluate the institutions based on credible information gathered by the magazine.

I wish all the 58 institutions who participated wholeheartedly in the BT Schools survey and I am sure the future biotechnologists and the industry will benefit immensely once again from the invaluable information provided here.

Happy reading!

Narayanan Suresh

Chief Editor

sureshn@cybermedia.co.in