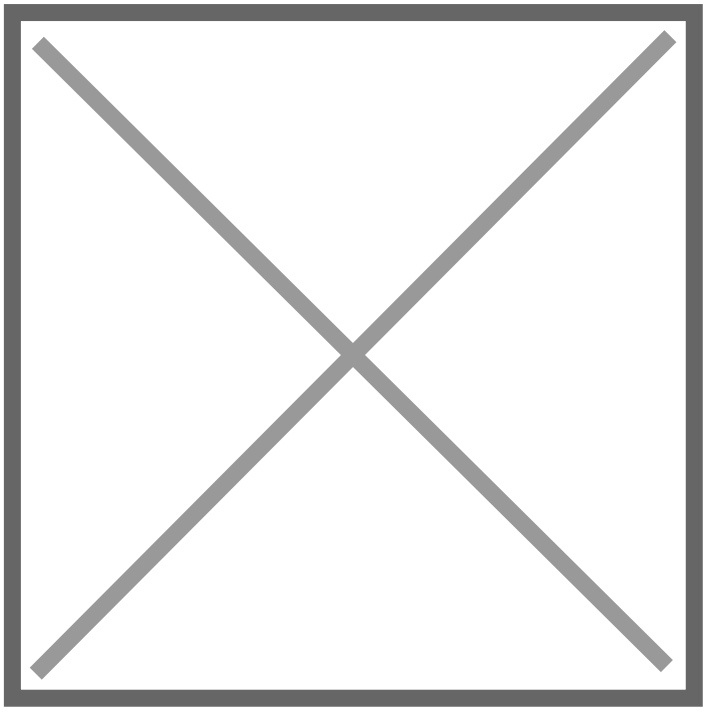
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MNCs eyeing India

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A plethora of positive factors is encouraging global suppliers to look at India as an attractive destination to make their presence felt.

The growth of the life sciences market and increasing levels of investments from the venture capitalists in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, an increase in the government spending on research and development and other factors are all encouraging suppliers to look at India as a destination to make their presence felt. Leading players like Pall Corporation, Shimadzu, VWR International, RSA Security, Agilent Technologies, World Courier to name a few who have been doing business with the Indian companies, have now opened either demonstration, customer support, or development centers to meet the requirements of the local customers directly.

Considering a growing pharmaceutical market in Asia, Pall Corporation last year announced that it has added industry experts and more key executives to its regional team in Bangalore as part of its global initiative of aligning with customers worldwide. These initiatives address evolving biopharmaceutical customer needs by building on a strong Pall infrastructure throughout the region and furthering the company's focus on India, China and Southeast Asia.

To meet technical and training needs, Pall Corporation will be opening a new Center of Excellence (CoE) in Bangalore. The center will provide India's pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and discovery marketplace with a full range of total fluid management solutions. It will include a state-of-the-art process proteomics lab designed specifically to help customers speed the discovery process, a training facility and a validation laboratory to meet the growing need for support as Indian companies enter the highly regulated drug export market.

Shimadzu Analytical (India) Pvt Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Shimadzu Corporation, Japan has opened its customer support center equipped with a state-of-the-art instruments. The center developed with an investment of Rs 4 crore will focus on customer training and aid in analytical method development for its customers. In addition to overseeing the activities of the customer support center, it will be providing marketing support to its distributors. Shimadzu has been marketing its products in India through its distributors Toshvin Analytical, Amkette Analytics, Swan Environmental, and Spinco Biotech for more than 35 years.

Agilent Technologies has launched a new product demonstration center in Bangalore, India and at its Santa Clara, California, corporate headquarters to showcase its life sciences and chemical analysis capabilities. It also plans to set up R&D center in Bangalore as part of its expansion plans by investing $35 million in India over two years. The life sciences center will host a multi disciplinary team for advanced technology focusing on chemical analysis, molecular biology and software for creating novel and complex scientific applications on its bioanalytical instrument and software platform. The center will collaborate with

scientists in pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries with academic researchers from around the world for the generation of new products, solutions and applications to support activities in drug discovery, clinical trials, pharmaceutical manufacturing and diagnostics.

RSA Security, a global player in protecting online identities and digital assets, too announced its plans to open its first development center in Bangalore. The center will expand RSA Security's presence in India and enhance its expert competencies in developing identity and access management solutions to meet the emerging demands of the international security market. The center will operate in tandem with RSA Security's other development centers located in Brisbane, Australia; Bedford, USA; Herzelia, Israel; and Chennai, at HCL Technologies. The opening of the Bangalore development center showcases its commitment to the growing international security industry. The center will play a key role in building mission-critical consumer solutions for authentication and extending its current fraud protection offerings.

VWR International, a pure play global distributor, has announced the establishment of a full-service, wholly owned subsidiary called VWR Lab Products Pvt Ltd in Bangalore and a branch office in Mumbai, to better serve the needs of the rapidly expanding pharmaceutical and biotech industry in the subcontinent. The new subsidiary will serve as a central resource for customer service, sales support and technical services for the Indian subcontinent. As a fully licensed Indian company, VWR Lab Products will hire locally and conduct transactions in local currency, offering an added convenience for VWR's global customers. It will continue to serve as a location for VWR's strategic sourcing of laboratory supplies, equipment and instruments within India.

This is not restricted only to equipment/ instrumentation/ analytical companies. Even a logistics company like World Courier made an announcement of opening of its new investigational drug storage facility in Bangalore. The new facility provides comprehensive logistical solutions in a variety of temperature-controlled environments to companies participating in global clinical trials and would be staffed by full-time licensed pharmacists.

There are many supplier companies who have been looking at India to have a direct presence in the country to tap the growing and potential market. These companies are making investments in setting up demonstration, customer support centers to train and to reach out to the existing and new customers directly. They say that it will help in the long term to serve the customers better and offer them with good after sales services. The entry of more suppliers will push the growth of the economy, as there will be establishment of more industry clusters that in turn generates more employment opportunities.

Narayan Kulkarni