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Lack of proper financing hampers research focus

INDIAN biotech sector is looking positive today with a clear purpose and commitment to product development. However, the industry remains largely fragmented with most of the companies being service providers, providing services only for a part of the product development process.

Although some entrepreneurs would like to take on the difficult road to discover and product develop, they are stymied by the lack of proper financing models, infrastructure and human resources. The financial investors and the markets are today dictating to the larger companies and there is little mind-space left for the entrepreneur to focus on novel product development.

Biotech companies with innovation and expertise in their domain area will be the potential targets for partnering and acquisition. The Indian market is big and the value lies in developing and marketing products suited to the local market. India is being touted as one of the key countries that will help drive the global adoption and acceptance of biotech products in the future. Biotechnology has indeed transformed agriculture into a multifaceted hedge against hunger, sickness and environmental degradation.

Therefore, one route to product development would be the consolidation within the biotech sector.

There are many small groups with expertise in different aspects of discovery and development. This new consolidated entity should garner finance from both public and private sector and build focused discovery and development groups for a particular disease target of around 100-150 people. The year will be

hassles. In other words, what I propose is the coming together of the clinical processes and regulatory approval processes.

Globally, pharma companies are looking at innovative drug delivery strategies as a means of extending and protecting product lifecycles with additional therapeutic effects. Opportunity, therefore, exists for Indian biotech firms to make it big by focusing on product-oriented research and bring innovative products to the market. The various committees that operate within very ambivalent, ambiguous and unclear guidelines that do not facilitate the entrepreneur are currently wasting much time. The committees are designed to put up to thwart the enthusiasm of the product developer. A friendly open committee working with us to enable India to succeed would be such a joy.

I believe that if we can get this to function along with a policy that allows academics to move for a few years into industry while retaining their position in academia would be a positive step. We need to create flexi-public-private models that will throw up new human resources, new ideas and new finance structures and new products to move India towards a product oriented research economy.

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challenging for small and mid size biotech companies, who will look at entering into more M&As.

This team would be linked upstream to academic institutions and have a committee of experts from the public sector to keep the technology level at a high with limited political interference. Downstream, there should be a joint regulatory and clinical team to take the product through the process with limited