

“I am pleased to join this Valedictory and Award Session of Global Bio India.

Biotechnology has emerged as the backbone of various industrial sectors in recent times. Its application in healthcare and pharmaceutical sector, agriculture and food processing have had a profound impact on the quality of human lives. It has also become the driving force of significant transformation of various processes in a number of sectors.

India’s biotechnology industry is built on four core beliefs of entrepreneurship, innovation, development of local talent, and demonstrating high value-based care.

India ranks amongst the top 12 preferred destinations for biotech in the world. This has been primarily due to the strong foundation laid by the Government through the Department of Biotechnology, which was established in 1986 with a mandate to create a strong enabling environment for the growth of the sector.

I am happy to note that the efforts of the Government have helped in effective engagement with all stakeholders by not only providing financial support but also in introducing key policy changes. The biotech sector is growing exponentially in India. With approximately 3% share in the global biotechnology space, India is the leader in the global supply of DPT, BCG and measles vaccines.

Thanks to the consistent efforts over the last few decades, the biotech sector in India enabled our country to respond effectively to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is gratifying to note that India is at the forefront of fighting the pandemic, particularly in terms of manufacturing vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics.

I express my appreciation to the Department of Biotechnology for working relentlessly to mitigate the COVID-19-induced health crisis through development of diagnostics, vaccines, monoclonals, and novel protection equipment, besides extending support to start ups, scaling up diagnostic capacity and rapid regulatory response.

In tune with the spirit of VausudhaivaKutumbakam(whole world is one family) and our age-old philosophy of ‘share and care’, India supplied COVID vaccine to several countries drawing praise from the World Health Organization. Its Director-General had thanked the Prime Minister, ShriNarendraModi for supporting vaccine equity and observed that sharing vaccine doses is helping over 60 countries to vaccinate their health workers and other priority groups.

Dear sisters and brothers,

India is in a unique position to transition from biotech industry to a bio-economy.

India stands as an example to the rest of the world in showing that a culture of science and innovation can help in meeting public health goals – both within India and globally. In line with the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, India has taken a leading role in the manufacture of diagnostics, medical equipment and vaccines. We were able to quickly ramp up our testing capacity and take over one million samples for testing for Covid-19 every day, spanning almost 1900 laboratories across the country.

I must compliment the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology for adopting a pro-active approach and supporting various research programs in modern biology and biotechnology; building capacity in innovative areas of research, developing requisite infrastructure, building new partnerships and nurturing the existing ones.

The contribution of the autonomous institutes and PSUs to the R & D efforts is also noteworthy.

I am told that the Government through DBT and its PSU, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) has supported more than 3,500 technology-driven Entrepreneurs, Startups and SMEs.

I am also happy to note that a network of 55 Bio-incubators has been built, which helped innovators to create a pool of intellectual wealth—over 260 IPs have been filed-- and supported the launch of more than 200 products and technologies in the market.

As we move ahead, we have an ambitious target of becoming a USD 150 billion industry by 2025 and contribute to a knowledge and innovation driven economy.

I am glad that the Government continues to support the development of bio-tech parks taking into consideration the priority of developing a “well linked innovation ecosystem”. It is creating incubation infrastructure and support mechanisms to enable a smooth transition from “research to commercialization”. Government is rightly focusing on building an effective industry – academia interface, providing access to specialist facilities, providing mentorships and handholding the entrepreneurs.

Recognizing the immense potential of the biotech sector, the Government has eased regulatory approvals for the ecopreneurs. I am pleased to know that these initiatives have resulted in a multifold impact as seen in the number of innovators, technologies and products, incubation space and IPs generated in the last year despite the pandemic.

It is also heartening to note that the fertile ecosystem has attracted numerous international collaborations in advanced manufacturing, process and data analytics to develop India as an exporter of process technologies and “new” business models.

In view of the attractiveness of India’s value proposition and comparative advantage in bio-economy, the ‘Make in India’ initiative or Atmanirbhar Bharat will help in achieving the paradigm shift from “biotech” to “bioeconomy”. I am sure that the new policy actions would result in the growth of a sustainable bio-economy.

The Biotechnology-based programme launched by the department for societal development to benefit the vulnerable sections of the society, particularly the farmers, women and SC/ST population is a laudable initiative.

The huge potential of Biotechnology sector must be fully leveraged to come up with new interventions to address the challenges faced by agriculture and allied sectors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need to be ever vigilant for tackling the outbreak of sudden and unforeseen epidemics and pandemics. Our scientists and researchers must always be ready to combat new and emerging diseases.

With about 50 per cent of India’s population below the age of 25 years, biotech sector offers vast potential to upskill our youth in this area. I urge the academia and the industry to join hands and engage pro-actively in imparting training and skills to the youth.

As we move forward, it is imperative to focus on sustainability and scaling up of innovations, innovators and enterprises and create a more vibrant knowledge and innovation ecosystem

Before concluding, I would like to compliment the startups whose achievements were showcased in this session. I do hope that, some highly innovative products that have been launched will benefit a large population in our country and across the globe.

My heartiest congratulations to all the awardees! My best wishes to the bio-technologists who are working tirelessly for a better tomorrow and a happier planet.

Jai Hind!”
