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India biotech rides on biologics manufacturing

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A large chunk of the Indian firms are also looking at contract manufacturing of biologic products for western companies. The contract manufacturing organization (CMO) market is a growing market in India and is expected to grow at an average of 20 percent in the coming years. Primary players in the CMO space include Piramal Healthcare, Jubilant Life Sciences, Strides Arcolab, Shasun, Dishman Pharma and Divi's Laboratories who have established their infrastructure facilities for the job.

Back in 1997, Hyderabad-based Shantha Biotechnics introduced the first indigenously produced hepatitis-B vaccine, Shanvac-B. Since then, there has been no looking back. They have bolstered their manufacturing capabilities for recombinant DNA products and have maintained a healthy pipeline of products in the space, and once commercialized, they are also looking at exporting these products, mainly to the emerging markets of the world. At present, there are 20 recombinant therapeutic products approved for marketing in the Indian market.

"The biopharmaceutical industry in India is expected to see strong growth in 2012, driven by growing markets, several new biosimilar product launches, exports of biosimilars and product-based partnerships," says Mr KV Subramaniam, president, Reliance Life Sciences. Today there are around 25 Indian biosimilars players in the space with around 50 products in the market in the country. Some are also being sold in the unregulated markets.

Indian biotech organizations are also bullish on the vaccines market and are making significant contributions to both the domestic and international markets. This has led many of the homegrown companies to set up state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities and a chunk of the volume produced there are exported to global regions and non-institutional organizations, such as

the World Health Organization, GAVI and PATH. The vaccine market had an estimated sales of 2,180 crore for the previous fiscal and they account for 50-to-60 percent of the total biopharma market.