

Syngene and the Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH) launch scholarship program for women studying STEM* subjects

- 25 women in tier 2 and 3 institutions have been selected in the first year of the program
- Program aims to attract and retain women in STEM careers and create a self-sustaining network of women professionals in STEM

November 9, 2022, Hyderabad: Commemorating World Science Day, Syngene International Ltd., an integrated research, development and manufacturing services company, and the Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH), announced the launch of a program to support women studying science, technology, engineering and maths. The *Scholarship and Mentoring for Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)* Education and Careers* program will enable women who are currently studying STEM subjects at tier 2 and 3 institutions will receive scholarships to enable them to work on scientific projects in research institutions or companies and receive mentoring support. Twenty-five scholarships have been awarded in the first year of the program. Over time, this program aims to increase the number of women studying STEM subjects and create a self-sustaining network of women professionals in STEM. The program is a part of Syngene's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative and the Company will support it through mentoring the students, providing internship opportunities and sponsoring the scholarships. RICH and Biocon Foundation, the charitable arm of the Biocon Group of companies, are the implementation partners for the program.

As part of the scholarship and mentoring program, participants will be provided with:

- Opportunities for experiential learning through internships at well-established R&D institutions and companies in Hyderabad
- Mentoring by scientists currently pursuing a career in STEM
- Participation in seminars and industry visits

The program was rolled out at an inaugural event held at The T-Hub in Hyderabad. It was graced by the presence of Mr Jayesh Ranjan, the Principal Secretary of the Industries & Commerce (I&C) and Information Technology (IT) Departments of the Telangana government, Ms Rashmi Pimpale, CEO - Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad, Dr Mahesh Bhargat, COO, Syngene International, along with Dr Anupama Shetty, Mission Director – Biocon Foundation.

Expressing his pleasure at the launch of this initiative, **Prof Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India**, remarked, *"It is good to see that various initiatives are working to achieve the Government of India's National Education Policy's objectives of 'access, equity, inclusivity, and quality. It is, however, noteworthy that the successful implementation of these initiatives will be possible only through effective partnerships between the government and industry. On behalf of the Office of PSA, I congratulate the Hyderabad S&T cluster led by RICH and Syngene International for embarking on this partnership to intensify STEM education efforts directed at women."*

"In keeping with the Telangana government's progressive policies, this initiative is another step forward for women empowerment. The program is designed to make interventions at the right stages of the career that will help open up opportunities for women students in STEM-related fields. It will benefit not just the women students but also the institutions and industry by providing them with an excellent pool of candidates and adding diversity to our workforce." added **Mr Jayesh**

Ranjan, Principal Secretary of the Industries & Commerce (I&C) and Information Technology (IT) Departments of the Telangana government.

Dr Mahesh Bhargat, COO, Syngene International, said, *"Increasing the number of women in STEM-related roles will be a game changer in the coming years as academia and corporations recognize the benefits of a diverse workforce in accelerating innovation and growth. It is important to act now to promote careers in STEM fields to women. It is also important for employers to proactively address any barriers to equality in the workplace so that all employees can deliver their best work without compromising other aspects of their lives."*

"We are keen to play a role in building a science and technology ecosystem in Hyderabad with rich opportunities for talent in STEM. The initiative being launched today in collaboration with the Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH), is an important step in building a pipeline of talent for the future."

"Despite the growing number of women graduates in STEM, these fields are known to be male-dominated when it comes to STEM careers. This program is aimed at providing opportunities for women students from various institutes and regions to explore experiential learning, mentoring, and collaborative projects. Through this program, we endeavour to start a movement that will create a nurturing ecosystem for women in STEM careers and education." added **Ms Rashmi Pimpale, CEO - Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad.**

As a part of the selection process, RICH, Syngene and Biocon Foundation partnered with the Telangana State Innovation Cell, Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK) and the Telangana State WE Hub in order to reach out to a wide audience of women currently pursuing their education in STEM subjects across Tier 2 and Tier 3 Institutions in the state. The interested candidates applied by participating in hackathons. Based on the applications received, 25 women were identified by an expert committee to be sponsored and mentored for a period of 3-6 months.

Biocon Foundation, the CSR arm of the Biocon Group, will be the implementation partner for the program.

Harshitha Vadlapudi from Telangana, one of the scholarship recipient, said, *"Career advancement in STEM needs a lot of effort in terms of mental and financial preparations, and opportunities like these will help me to move beyond the socio-economic boundaries. The scholarship, followed by the internship, gives me great confidence, and I believe it will make a significant contribution towards my career aspirations."*

Ms. Sreejani Sen from West Bengal, another recipient of the scholarship, added, *"Women constitute a significant proportion of the labour force in our country, both in the formal and informal segments. By providing financial aid and excellent exposure to research, This program will enable us to explore the world of science beyond the theoretical knowledge of textbooks."*

Background

Currently, women make up about 43% of all STEM graduates in India, one of the highest percentages in the world. However, their representation in STEM jobs is a mere 14% in India. While

there is an under-representation of women in the STEM workforce worldwide, India stands out as being exceptionally low despite more women enrolling in STEM academic programs each year. According to [reports](#) by the Ministry of Education, between 2011-2016, *'the percentage of female enrolment in higher studies in science has seen a steady rise. However, post-enrolment, the problem of drop-outs before completion remains persistent. Thus, the rising education levels in women failing to translate into employment is a concern that needs to be addressed through consistent education and mentorship programs.'*

Experts report that societal stigma, biases, and social norms in India have a profound impact on the standard of education that women receive and the subjects that they study. These are also the factors that lead to the low workforce participation of women in STEM roles. This disparity in career choices represents a lost opportunity and results in an imbalance in society because societal constraints hold back one gender.

According to a Niti Aayog poll of women in science, 30% believed that their careers had negatively impacted their commitments to their families and home duties. In addition, 47% of the respondents said that family responsibilities prevented them from accepting a demanding job offer.

About Syngene

Syngene International Ltd. (BSE: 539268, NSE: SYNGENE, ISIN: INE398R01022) is an integrated research, development, and manufacturing services company serving the global pharmaceutical, biotechnology, nutrition, animal health, consumer goods, and specialty chemical sectors. Syngene's more than 5200 scientists offer both skills and the capacity to deliver great science, robust data management, and IP security and quality manufacturing at speed to improve time-to-market and lower the cost of innovation. With a combination of dedicated research facilities for Amgen, Baxter, and Bristol-Myers Squibb as well as 2 Mn sq. ft of specialist discovery, development, and manufacturing facilities, Syngene works with biotech companies pursuing leading-edge science as well as multinationals, including GSK, Zoetis, and Merck KGaA. For more details, visit www.syngeneintl.com

Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH)

Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH) is the nodal agency for the Hyderabad Science & Technology (S&T) Cluster, an initiative of the Office of Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) to the Government of India. Launched in 2017 by the Government of Telangana, RICH acts as a facilitator and aims to foster greater collaboration between various entities in the research and innovation space. RICH operates in close coordination with the S&T Cluster Apex Committee and the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).

About Biocon Foundation

Biocon Foundation, the Corporate Social Responsibility arm of Biocon, Biocon Biologics and Syngene International, is working to empower marginalized communities since 2005. Biocon Foundation partners with the society to promote social and economic inclusion. It has thus made significant investments in enhancing access to quality healthcare, education and civic infrastructure along with environmental sustainability initiatives. These programs create a momentum to elevate the vulnerable and underserved sections of the society. The Foundation has built a strong reputation for the quality of its programs and their impact in addressing social, humanitarian and environmental challenges faced by the communities it serves. The programs have contributed to

realizing the vision of empowering and integrating the underprivileged into the social and economic mainstream of India.

For further information, please visit www.bioconfoundation.org & follow Biocon Foundation on Twitter [@Biocon_FDN](https://twitter.com/Biocon_FDN)