

THE CHANGEMAKERS

The river warrior

Girish Patil is a water conservationist, who is empowering youth to lead climate action, reviving rivers and communities across India

Girish Patil, a 23-year-old from Jalgaon, Maharashtra, is one of India's highly influential youth climate activists. His work is an amalgamation of environmental activism and a commitment to social welfare.

In 2020, he established YOGI, an organisation grounded in grassroots realities, encouraging the youth to act against environmental issues. The aim was to achieve socio-economic upliftment aided by ecological restoration and climate action. Under his leadership, the organisation has expanded its reach. Consequently, conservation and sustainability have now become part of tribal belts like Gaurypada, to urban academic campuses alike, fortifying his vision of climate resilience powered by youth leadership. With over 1,000 young leaders trained through his programmes, Girish has fostered a new generation of river warriors across India.

Girish's passion for the environment isn't just limited to water conservation. Being the youngest member of Maharashtra's River Committee, he is directly associated with advising policy decisions. On the international front, he holds the position of Youth Fellow for Climate and Gender with Plan International South Asia's Youth Leadership Academy. This platform enables him to collaborate on cross-border climate justice initiatives.

He is currently a Member of the Young People Action Team of UNICEF Yuwaah India. "Currently, I am working on a new initiative in Jalgaon, aiming to make schools plastic-free. So far, over 52 schools have adopted a rule to only use steel tiffins and bottles. More than 38,000 students are engaged with us in discussions about a plastic-free and healthy life. This effort alone is projected to reduce two tonnes of recurring plastic generated in Jalgaon city by the end of this year."

His motivation is simple yet powerful. He intends to build a future with free-flowing rivers, sustainable communities, and youth as the custodians of the planet. Girish Patil isn't just protecting rivers, he's transforming India's environmental future, one youth-led action at a time.

— Himanshi.Duseja@timesofindia.com



GIRISH PATIL
River Conservationist

Credit goes to the leadership for India's role as a global leader in generic drugs and vaccines, with the pharmaceutical industry ranking 3rd in volume and 14th in value



One Capsule at a time; Healthy today, happy tomorrow

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The Indian Pharmaceutical Industry has evolved into a thriving industry, growing at a CAGR of 9.43 per cent since past nine years. Generic drugs, OTC medications, bulk drugs, vaccines, contract research and manufacturing, biosimilars, and biologics stand out. According to IBEF, India has the highest number of pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities that comply with US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), and has 500 Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) producers that make for around eight per cent of the worldwide API market.

India's pharmaceutical exports reached \$4,961.71 million in May 2025, marking a 7.38 per cent rise over the same period last year, as per data released by Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India. This underscores the sector's momentum and its expanding role in global healthcare supply chains.

pharma presence with value focus to be achieved by investing in R&D," states Vinit Menon, CEO, Farmson Basic Drugs Pvt Limited.

shares, "The PLI Scheme and Bulk Drug Parks have empowered researchers and manufacturers to develop world-class solutions."

GROWTH DRIVERS

Their aspiration is also shared and is being addressed by GoI. Initiatives such as Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme and the establishment of Bulk Drug Parks are to boost domestic manufacturing, and reduce reliance on imports. Bulk Drug Parks have been designed to promote the manufacturing of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), Key Starting Materials (KSMs), and Drug Intermediates (DIs). Suresh Subramanian, National Life Sciences leader, EY Parthenon, shares, "India's progress in achieving self-reliance in the production of APIs and KSMs is commendable. Pharma companies are adopting varied strategies to secure supply chain and reduce import dependence."

On a similar note, Dr Divneet Kaur, CEO and co-founder, Dermabay,

EXPORT SCENARIO

"India fulfils approximately 20 per cent of the global demand for generic drugs (formulations) and plays a crucial role in making essential generic medicines affordable and accessible worldwide. That is why India is called the 'Pharmacy of the World'," avers Menon.

LOOKING AHEAD

India's pharmaceutical sector is set to solidify its position as a global leader by 2047, reaching a projected market size of \$450 billion, according to an EY Parthenon (EY-P) report in collaboration with Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India. Subramanian concludes, "Innovation and integrated healthcare will be key drivers, with emphasis on quality focus, ecosystem collaboration, talent development and digital integration."

VINIT MENON



To become a global pharmaceutical powerhouse, India will require sustained and concerted effort to address existing challenges, with emphasis on enhancing quality standards, and forging strategic collaborations across the global healthcare landscape

—CEO, Farmson Basic Drugs Pvt Ltd

SUNIL KUMAR AGARWAL



I am proud of India's pharmaceutical journey. What excites me the most is the breakthrough work in liposomal technology across pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals. It is revolutionising drug delivery

—MD, West Bengal Chemical Industries Limited

Dr DIVNEET KAUR



Bold leadership combined with deep scientific curiosity and quality commitment has positioned India as a global leader in pharmaceuticals. The massive export growth during the last decade demonstrates how innovative entrepreneurial spirit and public-private partnerships have created success stories

—CEO & Co-founder, Dermabay

Powering the new possible

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From generics giant to innovation engine, India's pharmaceutical sector is rewriting its global script as science, startups, and new-age leadership take centre stage

Once defined by its dominance in the global generics market, the pharmaceutical sector is undergoing a seismic shift. A new wave of leaders is propelling India to the forefront of biologics, genomics, and AI-driven drug discovery. This shift moves beyond mass manufacturing to bold science and global impact. Projected to grow from \$50 billion in 2023 to \$130 billion by 2030, Indian pharma is evolving from supplier to shaper of the world's medical future.

"Next-gen pharma is more than just scientific advancement, it's a movement driven by purpose," says Nikhil K Masurkar, CEO, Entod Pharmaceuticals. "As a new generation of leaders, we're harnessing the power of biologics, genomics, and AI to solve complex healthcare challenges, from rare diseases to scalable public health," adds Masurkar.

POWERING PROGRESS

What sets this generation of pharma leadership apart is its embrace of technology as the driving force of change. "The pharma industry is at an inflection point, characterised by deep science, digital technology, and a new mission. With new

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES ACCELERATING INNOVATION

- >> PLI scheme (₹ 15,000 crore): High-end drugs (oncology, diabetes)
- >> Bulk drug parks (₹ 3,000 crore): Gujarat, HP, Andhra Pradesh
- >> SPI scheme (₹ 500 crore): Lab upgrades, R&D boost
- >> PLI for medical devices (₹ 3,420 crore): MRIs, implants
- >> Raw material incentive (₹ 6,940 crore): Reduce imports

INDIA'S ROLE IN GLOBAL HEALTH

- >> 50 per cent of UNICEF vaccines
- >> Leading supplier of WHO's DPT, BCG, measles vaccines
- >> Trusted partner for low-cost generics and lifesaving drugs
- >> New global image: From 'Pharmacy of the World' to 'Lab of the Future'

THE BIG PICTURE

- >> Market boom: Indian pharma is set to grow from \$50 Billion (2023) to \$130 Billion by 2030
- >> Innovation drive: Biologics hit \$12.3 Billion and personalised medicine \$13.3 Billion in 2024, both set to triple by 2033
- >> Powering people: Talent is the new currency, with skilling and collaboration driving the next leap

Sources: Media reports, indiaemployerforum.org

capabilities in biologics, genomics and AI-based drug discovery, the industry is gradually transforming itself to emerge as a global hub of healthcare innovation," shares Raheel Shah, director, BDR Pharmaceuticals.

India's pharmaceutical industry

now ranks third globally in production volume and 14th in overall value. It supplies 20 per cent of the world's generic drugs and plays a key role in the global vaccine supply, meeting over half of UNICEF's vaccine needs and providing most of the WHO's DPT, BCG, and measles vaccines.

On the domestic front, reforms like the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMB-JP) have transformed drug access. With more than 15,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras offering generic medicines at prices up to 80 per cent lower than their branded counterparts, patients now have access to essential treatments at a fraction of the cost.

FUTURE FORWARD

"In 2024, India's biologics market grew to \$12.3 billion, and personalised medicine crossed \$13.3 billion, with expectations to nearly triple by 2033," notes Dr Sujit Paul, group CEO, Zota Healthcare Ltd (DavaIndia). "The full bio-economy reached \$165.7 billion in 2024, over 4 per cent of GDP, and is on track to fully double by 2030," he elaborates.

This rapid growth reflects a deeper shift in focus within the industry. "Today, we focus on rare diseases, individualised therapies, and scalable solutions to global health. This is a sign of how Indian pharma is evolving i.e., quick on its feet, ambitious, and responsive to the needs of the world," adds Shah. To support this transformation, the industry is turning its attention to talent and training.

"As this transformation unfolds, workforce capability is emerging as a critical lever. Around 83 per cent of pharma executives believe reskilling and upskilling are essential to keep pace with technological change," avers Jeevan Kasara, director and CEO of Steris Healthcare.

Healing people with a heart

Primary healthcare leadership should ensure that treatment is smarter, faster, and more equitable for the underserved



SUJAY SANTRA

him, what must be happening to the millions living in far-flung areas? A tech person, Sujay Santra, founder & CEO, iKure Techsoft Pvt Ltd, then realised how technology has always been designed around hospitals — not around patients. "That had to change," says Santra.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

The idea for his venture began to take root as a conviction that every person deserves dignified, affordable, and accessible healthcare. "I wanted to build trust, touch, and a continuum of care — from the village doorstep to a doctor's desk, powered by technology but led by empathy," he states.

TRANSFORMING THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR

The centre of gravity is shifting, he feels, from hospitals to homes, cities to villages, and from treatment to trust. "Our model is built around three core pillars: community-based care, women-led frontline health workers, and technology that works in the last mile," he says. Community women — iCHAs — are trained and deployed to become the first point of care.

His Wireless Health Incident Monitoring System (WHIMS) functions even in the remotest, internet-poor regions. "It enables offline-first data capture, tracks patient journeys, and ensures that every consultation, medicine, or diagnostic step is recorded, followed up, and referred," avers Santra.

IMPACT TILL DATE

With far-reaching impact on more than 34 million people, 4.5 million

THE TECHNOLOGICAL EDGE

The robust, homegrown digital platform WHIMS is purpose-built for last-mile primary healthcare. It supports:

- >> AI-powered risk stratification for early detection of chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension, especially in remote regions
- >> Customised dashboards for real-time analytics, patient tracking, and operational insights across geographies
- >> Health worker performance monitoring, enabling evidence-backed supervision and training of iCHAs and iCHEs
- >> Integrated supply chain management, ensuring medicine availability and reducing pilferage across clinics and doorstep delivery points



patients have been treated across 12 Indian states, including coastal, tribal, and areas with limited healthcare access. "In the Sunderbans, we've introduced a risk stratification model to manage chronic diseases proactively, reducing complications in high-risk zones," says Santra. The model is now being scaled through partners in Africa and Southeast Asia.

LOOKING AHEAD

Over the next four to five years, Santra aims to scale to 10,000 iCHAs and impact over 200 million people. "Our long-term ambition is replicating our model across Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America, in collaboration with local partners," signs off Santra.

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DR SUJIT PAUL



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—Group CEO, Zota Healthcare Ltd

NIKKHIL K MASURKAR



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—CEO, Entod Pharmaceuticals

RAHEEL SHAH



With new capabilities in biologics, genomics and AI-based drug discovery, the industry is gradually transforming itself to emerge as a global hub of healthcare innovation

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