

naturejobs

**JOBS OF
THE WEEK**

Several months ago, I noticed a trend in the stream of e-mails coming into the Naturejobs inbox. Scientists and students were writing to our "Ask an Expert" column (<http://tinyurl.com/3748bo>) seeking advice about careers in biotechnology. This, of course, isn't unusual. But nearly all the e-mailers were from India and most had completed master's degrees in biotechnology there. It didn't take much sleuthing to discern a trend worth pursuing. The result is this week's feature (see page 580).

India's biotech industry is booming. At least, that's what the media reports say. So one can understand Indian scientists being optimistic about their job prospects in the field. Unfortunately, the sector is not yet generating enough jobs to cope with the increasing number of graduates.

So why is there such a discrepancy between the hype and the reality? At the moment, most of the jobs in the sector are in biotech services, such as outsourcing activities related to clinical trials. Few opportunities are available in innovation and discovery — the type of jobs that graduates are looking for and that would drive the field forward. In addition, the country's education system has not kept up with the sector's growth. Many programmes lack sophistication in terms of equipment, practical experience offered and the number of qualified faculty members. Often, master's graduates simply don't have the necessary skills to enter the workforce.

The government has recognized the shortfall and is seeking ways to remedy the situation. Together with the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises, it is setting up 'biotechnology finishing schools' that would provide the practical experience needed by master's biotech graduates. The move is similar to the development of 'professional' master's degree programmes by many US universities (see *Nature* **445**, 458; 2007).

Young researchers-in-training must be careful not to believe the media hype. And, perhaps most importantly, they should make sure that the degree programme they choose provides them with the training they need to further their career.

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