‘Biosimilars offer a huge opportunity for Biocon’

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and Christiane Hamacher as the CEO of Biocon Biologics, will this vertical be spun off into a separate company leading to a possible listing later? Biocon strongly advocates diversity and inclusion as a key business imperative and inculcates it as a core value. Biocon has had diversity in its board of directors since inception, with people from different nationalities. Being a woman leader, Hamacher brings a diversity perspective which is integral to our leadership journey. We definitely plan to unlock value from the biologics business at an opportune time. In the interim, we want to build value because we believe we are at the right place at the right time and given the global concerns over rising healthcare costs, biosimilars offer a huge growth opportunity for Biocon.

You had earlier said that it is difficult to find women in leadership roles? What steps are you taking for gender balance in your company? There is definitely a dearth of women in leadership roles today. We need to see more women playing important roles across the business value chain. I see there is greater participation of women in the technology sector but we need to have a much larger number of women inducted into the economic mainstream in our country. We must encourage more women to join research & development and science-led technology businesses. I for one believe that women have all that it takes to participate in the jobs of the future.

Recent developments point to the increased acceptance of biosimilars in the US. There is a growing realisation that biosimilars address issues of access and affordability. Accordingly, we have seen several favourable policy decisions that have provided greater predictability on biosimilars penetration. Encouragingly, US pharmacy benefit managers are also giving preference to biosimilars. In 2018, seven biosimilars were approved by the USDA. By all indications, the US presents an attractive market for biosimilars developers like us.

As the CEO of Biocon Biologics, what are the immediate priorities for the segment? Hamacher: We have one of the largest portfolios of a biosimilar with successful partnerships. It ties with Biocon’s principle of bringing low-cost healthcare to a large number of people. In the biosimilar business, we believe that by using AI and data we have an extremely interesting journey ahead of us.

Will Biocon look at more such partnerships now that you have taken over as CEO? We will further evolve our strategy which is a part of our business. For me, it is important to see that the partnership continues on its strength. It is an exciting time as new dimensions have entered our business. There is data, technology shifts for which we will adapt and evolve based on the overall trends and changes that the healthcare industry is facing. The topic of digital is high on the agenda of pharma and biotech companies. Topics like data & AI are geared up towards how can we reach more patients.

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