



India Alliance at Naturejobs Career Expo

The Wellcome Trust / DBT India Alliance has been constantly striving, since its inception, to – a) disseminate information about the Fellowship schemes, b) provide personalized feedback to prospective applicants about careers and life in India, and c) build a vibrant scientific community. While the India Alliance has been able to reach out successfully to the postdoctoral community in the US, there is limited information about, interaction with and response from the postdoctoral community in Europe. This has raised pertinent questions about a) the composition of the European and UK postdoctoral community, b) their research interests and career aspirations, and c) their sources of funding and information.

Therefore, the India Alliance has set out to seek answers to the above questions, as well as broaden the awareness and relay the message of the organisation as a major biomedical funding body among the wider scientific public outside India. It has taken advantage of the branding, resources and support of *Naturejobs* and participated as an exhibitor by setting up an information booth at the fourth [Naturejobs Career Expo](#) held on 23 September 2010.



The India Alliance was represented by two of its Grants team members - Dr. Sanjiv Sonkaria and Dr Vid Nukala. Its presence attracted a diverse population of participants to the booth from the 1450 people registered to attend the event. A survey of the attendees who communicated with the Grants Advisers showed that 25% were PhD qualified with post-doctoral experience and 41% were students of which 21% were registered for a PhD/DPhil. Approximately two-thirds at 66% expressed an interest to pursue a career in academia. Many of the visitors expressed an interest to directly conduct or establish collaborative research in India.

A major area of concern, stemming from discussions with booth visitors, is related to sponsorship from universities/institutes based in India. Those interested in applying to the India Alliance Fellowships are hindered by the lack of awareness and knowledge of research organizations in India. This knowledge gap extends to Indian funding organizations as well. While most of the visitors are familiar with the Wellcome Trust in UK, very few are knowledgeable about the Department of Biotechnology in India and its various new initiatives, such as the India Alliance. At the same time, some of the visitors generously offered to advertize the organisation on their websites and in their career fairs.

To enhance our target audience and their interest in the Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance, it is prudent in participating in events such as the Naturejobs Career Expo periodically. These approaches provide unrestricted access for individuals to discuss specific scientific opportunities that cater to their needs at a personal level with the India Alliance representatives. This is particularly valuable for an organization that is largely unknown and underrepresented outside India.

The additional benefit of communication through “word of mouth” and personalized discussions is an immeasurable resource with the potential to generate widespread interest across the international scientific community. It is envisaged that a successful outcome will result in increased website visits attracting competitive scientists of international repute to compete for India Alliance Fellowships and contribute to the scientific growth of India.

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