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India's Tergene Biotech develops vaccine for pneumonia

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Singapore: Tergene Biotech, an Indian start up, has developed a promising vaccine candidate to combat pneumonia. The vaccine is targeted against specific types of bacteria that cause pneumonia in India, South Asia and Africa.

Founded by Mr M Kuppusamy, a biotechnologist and veteran in the vaccine industry, Tergene is deploying novel vaccine technology to cut time and cost and make the vaccine affordable. Current vaccines are priced at Rs 3,500 per dose and the immunization program involves three doses. This makes the vaccine highly inaccessible to low income groups.

"The vaccine will probably hit the market in the next 2-3 years. The existing vaccines are tailored to help prevent pneumonia caused by serotypes (there are 90 identified so far) of bacteria in the western nations", said Ms Pushpa Vijayaraghavan, vice-president of Sathguru Management, which has helped Tergene through its journey of developing the vaccine and setting up facilities.

Earlier this year, India's leading drugmaker Aurobindo Pharma had announced a joint venture with Tergene to develop the pneumonia vaccine candidate. As per the deal, Aurobindo will have a majority stake in the JV and will fund the product development in a phased manner spanning over three years.