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Women Achievers- DR RENU SWARUP

14 December 2017 | Features

HAVING A PhD IN GENETICS AND PLANT BREEDING, DR RENU SWARUP IS PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN STRATEGY PLANNING FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY.



Having a PhD in Genetics and Plant Breeding, and Post- Doctoral fellowship at The John Innes Centre, Norwich UK, under Commonwealth Scholarship, Dr Renu Swarup who was having two options- researcher and science manager – took up the assignment of a Science Manager in the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology in 1989. Since then she was actively engaged in formulation of the Biotechnology Vision in 2001 and National Biotechnology Development Strategy in 2007 as the Member Secretary of the Expert Committee.

She was also a member of the Task Force on Women in Science constituted by the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Prime Minister.

Talking about her role in developing strategy plans for the niche biotechnology industry, Dr Renu says “I was very fortunate that I got different opportunities be it from being associated with first Vision document on biotechnology brought in the year 2001, National Biotechnology Development Strategy in 2007, Second strategy in the year 2015; creating new models of the programmes to be taken up be it first intelligency programme of Department of Space. We did a characterisation of biodiversity project as the first public- private-partnership programme (PPP).

We did for microbial prospecting and then shaping policies in the government for the first time for supporting and funding PPP research and then moved on eventually to BIRAC. I think the large canvas that was before me has really given me enormous opportunities. Over 29 years, I have looked at different aspects of policy planning.”

At DBT, she heads the National Bioresource Development Board and is involved in developing, funding and monitoring programmes in the area of Energy Biosciences, Bioresource Development and Utilization and Plant Biotechnology-Bioprospecting, Tissue Culture and other Biomass associated programmes. She has also been closely involved in programmes and activities related to Women and Science. She was responsible for getting implemented the DBT Scheme on Biotechnology Career Advancement for Women Scientists – BioCARe.

Commenting on challenges she says, “Challenges are working within the system. Challenges are trying to see how to keep pace with the fast moving changes in the field of biotechnology as this domain is moving really fast and if we have to plan the policy for biotechnology, we have to keep pace with that change. What you plan today will not really stay in next five years. Challenges have been how we keep up not only nationally but competitively in the global scenario. More than anything else challenge is how do you work through this whole policy in inclusive manner and get everyone on board. And biotechnology offers that challenge much more than any other area because it cuts the cross-sectors.”

“There will be ups and down in your career and there will be successes and failures and there will be set backs but all this should not detour you. If you have a broad vision of what you wanting to achieve and if you know what your goal is, focus on the goal and with hard-work, determination and passion you will surely reach somewhere. Even if there are slippages and you fall back, you should always get up and move on with faster pace ahead because that failure will teach you where you went wrong,” she concluded.