

"I hope to see more women rise to the top"

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—**Dr KR Rajyashri**, Founder & director, Navya Biologicals, Hubli (Karnataka)

Dr Rajyashri has filed five patents. A published author, Dr Rajyashri shares insights on the challenges she faced in her career, and the opportunities for women in the life sciences industry

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Q What type of challenges did you face during the initial stage of your career?

The biggest challenge I faced during the initial years of my career was in finding a balance between family and career. As a young mother, I was eager to be with my daughter as she was growing. Yet, I chose to continue with my career and was not sure if I will be able to manage both. My passion for science did not allow me to give up my career. However, I was happy when my daughter, one day, told me that she is proud of her mother being a scientist.

Q What according to you are the difficulties women face in the life sciences industry?

Today, more women than men seem to take to science. Many women voluntarily put a hold on their career for other priorities, and so we do not see many women in leadership positions.

Life science is not a part-time job where you can go home and switch off. You carry your scientific problems home, have to read after work hours, be part of peer and discussion groups; and be aware of the latest developments in science. Setting priorities right and multi-tasking are the only ways for women to be able to balance work and family.

At Navya, we strive to encourage and support young girls starting on their career, and inspire them to take up leadership positions.

Q How do you balance family and work issues?

In my initial days, it was extremely tough to strike a balance but now, I am able to achieve a good balance. My family encourages all my efforts. My business partner, Vinay, is tremendously supportive at work.

Q Considering your vast experience in life sciences industry, how do you see women in this industry in the next five years?

About 60 percent of women take up science at the college level. And not all of them start a career in their field after college. That is one of the reasons why few women reach leadership roles. I hope to see more women become leaders, and rise to the top in the next few years.