

'On my entrepreneurship journey'

08 March 2015 | Views | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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I am fortunate enough to experience my second biotechnology start-up in India. Through Theramyt, not only can I do what I love but also make a difference to millions of lives.

After my Master's degree in clinical microbiology from KMC Manipal and an executive MBA from IIM-B, I gained significant industrial experience in Biocon and Millipore. It was then time to utilize my experience in creating much greater value than what a 9-to-5 job would allow. When my business partner Sohag and I started our first venture Inbiopro, back in 2007, one

of the key drivers of us working together was our differing yet complementing thought processes. We realized very early on that we can build great organizations if we can harmonize our differences in to building a synergistically balanced partnership where there is freedom, expertise, experience and fun that can be blended for value creation.

We built Inbiopro over 5 years and sold the company and our pipeline of biosimilars to a listed Indian pharma major.

Now it was time to start Theramyt (incorporated in July 2013) to take India to the forefront of global biotechnology industry through our innovation and research. Over the last 2 years, we have focussed all our efforts in generating strong IP led platforms which will deliver the next generation of differentiated antibodies. We have progressed well with 6 IP provisional filings and continued interested from our investors for larger quantum of monies for our positioning in the global markets.

Biopharma industry in India is one of the few sectors where there is a slightly better gender equality with almost 35% of the workforce being women. There has been an equitable interest in creating centres of excellence where women have led the new pathways, teams, initiatives and competencies.

The challenges that I have seen other women in this sector face is to do with women returning to senior levels after they have children, distances to travel as CMO's, larger Biotechs are typically not within the CBD but an average of 20-30kms away from their place of residence, a preference for men in CMO's vs women, women are preferred in QA/QC/RA profiles and in Cell Culture applications.

It was very encouraging and very path breaking when Biocon started a Day care center right opposite the company for working mothers employed to visit their very young kids and feed them too.

It's also interesting to note that though there is a very high ratio of women to men in Biotech engineering courses, the opportunities available seemed to be halved when it comes to job applications and the gender ratio.