

Women Are Born For Science

Dear Friends,

First and foremost I would like to honestly admit that I did not know anything about Womeninscience .When I was first informed about it my first reaction was that of disbelief. Why disbelief ?

Because I have lived in Gujrat for last 18 years, Because news papers year after year print that women did better in board results.

Whenever I have walked in to any science college, women's presence in large numbers has only reemphasized that women love science.

I still recollect being taught by teachers at AIIMS of whom 50 % were women.

I am a working mother's child who worked till she reached 60 yrs. and all 4 women in my family have great careers (1 sister and 3 bhabhis)

On Top of all this I have always felt that women were born for science . What is typically called Women's temperament is what makes women ideally suited for science.

Women are born passionate. We love hard, cry hard, and when we care about something passionately, we can change the world. A must for a scientist .

Women are more in touch with instinctive inner guidance. All great inventions & discoveries have been an outcome of this extraordinary tool .

Women are flexible and adaptable , and good at juggling a dozen different projects. A must for pursuing research where the outcome is unknown.

Women never compromise on integrity. That is the reason they are considered trustworthy . The most trusted profession – nursing – is 94% women. There can be no science without integrity.

Women consistently prove they have an amazing ability to endure. Science often tests endurance remember the innumerable times Addison tried and failed ...

Women use their holistic intelligence to accumulate knowledge and synthesize that material. In the "total immersion" process of learning, women take it in all at once, through our eyes, ears and intuitive senses, which makes often them a genius.

All sounds perfect . The real world is never perfect. So here is some good new & some bad news for Indian women. Good News Women are ideally suited for science is supported by an INSA study which says that indian

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women have proven to be capable intellectually , do brilliantly in university and are often gold medalists , and also enter Ph.D programmes.

Bad News - Yet they do not continue to make great careers. It is later that there is under representation of women in science in India and all over the world . Reasons are obvious and understandable - responsibilities of family and children , unavailability of facilities such as creches on workplaces / campus, or the advantages of flexible working schedules to be able to return to work after breaks. In addition to adverse working conditions, there is the direct or indirect gender bias against women. Let us look further in to this

Let us acknowledge that everything is not right about the world we live in. Our news papers are full of columns exposing various atrocities towards women. Most disturbing are the one's that happen within homes, within families. Have you ever wondered why a woman is helpless? Most obvious reason is economic dependence.

Is making money so tough? Just think who cooks food for families across the world? Of course woman! Yet the best cooks in the world are men. Who stitches the clothes at home? It is a women. Yet the best tailors in the world are men . Who maintains the house ? yet Hospitality Industry is also dominated by Man. Just try to think has it ever happened that your mother was unable to provide you food Have you noticed that your mother could feed you irrespective of the circumstances & difficulties . Earthquake, Floods , marriage , Death whatever but you never went hungry . In corporate world this is called “Zero Error” . And a women achieves that so naturally! Because she is strong , passionate , committed and never looks for excuses ! Yet all this competence will never be used for her empowerment , for getting better status , independence and power in society .Because she herself is not aware of her own strength.

Have you ever noticed that a huge elephants are kept tied to a chain. Why does the elephant who can easily break that chain with all the strength that it posses choose to remain tied ? Elephant believes that it can not break that chain . Why ? Because the first time he was tied to a chain and tried to break it he could not do so . And now he has been conditioned to believe that he does not have the strength to break it. So when he grows up and develops tremendous strength, Elephant is not aware of it , continues to remain tied to a chain . I feel women's case is similar. Women continue to feel chained because they have been conditioned to believe it. Whenever some women tests her strength , she finds out the chain was not strong enough !

We have millions of young minds who are aware of their intellectual capabilities and choose to enter scientific fields such as nuclear physics,

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engineering , medicine , pharmacy , biotechnology and so on Yet at the end of it all there is this complex puzzle facing all working women who dream to make a career. In my opinion formula for success, for women as well as men, lies in being able to create a balance between family & job. Anyone who has walked this path is sure to have faced many trying moments.

Today with advancement of technology new solutions are coming up e.g. concept of working from home is picking up . I have an architect friend who has a small kid and is working from home, without in any way compromising on her career. Lot of employers are allowing flexi timings. Today assignments are more around deliverable rather than the time spent . Women with very demanding jobs sometimes move to less demanding ones after marriage and family. All have found their own key to balancing work & family. Each case is going to be unique and so will the solution be. Yet one thing is sure, that behind every successful women you are going to find a supportive husband, family and friends . I am not saying that the path will be easy. I am neither denying nor challenging the biases that have grown in society over centuries. I am trying to say that there are as many solutions as number of problems. I can share stories about my friends who are Entrepreneurs, Physicists , Computers Scientists , Biotechnologists and each one has found her own way of achieving a bright career.

That is the good news & great newsworld around has been silently changing and is becoming supportive to women. .

Today's men expects and treats his wife as a friend , a partner in the journey that they take together .We are in a world where Narayanmurthy proudly tells the world that he set up a Infosys with money borrowed from his wife. He loves to tell the world how all the bills during their courtship days were always paid by Sudha Murthy. Aishwarya Rai accompanies Abhishek and Amitabh on world tour and gets better media coverage. Madhuri leaves the kids with Dr Nene to join the Bachhan's tour. **Biocon's** Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw's pioneering efforts in biotechnology have drawn global recognition. Suhsma Swaraj balances a family and her political career beautifully.

A woman today is aware and wishes to change the future for younger women. Hence she is very supportive to all women making careers. Government is acknowledging the difficulties faced by working women and is definitely making strategic changes to reduce this stress for women pursuing science.

This is the world that you are going to walk in to when you pass out . A world which believes in Women . A world that supports women! All that is

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required is that You believe in yourself. I would like you to believe that building a career for a women is something achievable and all it takes is good planning , strong conviction , grit , determination , commitment and positivity . If you start your career in gujrat you have a further advantage. Gujrat could easily be rated as women's paradise in India. Look at Navaratri & Garba and you will accept that this is one society that treats women as equal.

I am a Pharmaceutical Scientist. I would like to share with you some of the opportunities that Pharmaceutical World provides. The pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries continue to revolutionize how diseases are studied, treated, cured and prevented. Pharmaceutical Research Centers work for discovery, development and clinical evaluation of pharmaceutical products and for providing ongoing scientific support for marketed products. You can become a part of this journey of making a chemical or a biological in to a medicine for people in one of the various divisions of the Research centre . If you are someone who enjoys operations and lot of action , you could be a part of a Drug or Formulation manufacturing Unit . Similarly for Biologists there are biotech Production Plants and Research centers working for bringing biotech medicines to the market. I will not go in to details, because in this age of internet finding information has really become easy.

My company, which is amongst the first five Pharma companies in India , has many women General Managers and Vice President. EliLilly's, one amongst the first five Pharma companies in the world boasts off having 50 % women scientists in the Lilly Research Centre .

Not sold on the idea yet? Believe it or not, more women seems to mean better performance. Fortune 500 companies with the highest proportion of female corporate officers boasted, on average, a 34 percent higher total return to shareholders than those with the lowest proportion of female execs, according to Catalyst. What's more, the Center for Women's Business Research found that, over the last two decades, majority-women-owned firms have grown at two times the rate of all businesses.

Go Grab your share of the sky! The world is waiting for you

Note : The views expressed in this speech are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect or represent the outlook or beliefs of any person or organisation.