



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Vibha Dhawan is Director General of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). Her research includes biofuels and sustainable development

plants annually through tissue culture technology, a legacy initiated by Dr. Dhawan.

Her role extended to the development of genetically modified (GM) crops, including GM mustard with enhanced vitamin A content and insect-resistant cabbage and cauliflower. Despite the success in development, regulatory challenges prevented their commercialization. Dr. Dhawan played a pivotal role in creating awareness and advocating for regulations related to genetically engineered crops, emphasizing issues like intellectual property rights (IPR) and biosafety.

Global Impact and Leadership Roles

Dr. Dhawan's influence transcended national borders as she served as an Advisor to the Director General at CIMMYT and later as Adjunct Professor & Consul General for the College of Agriculture and National Resources at Michigan State University, USA, contributing significantly to wheat and maize improvement in South Asian nations.

Her leadership prowess shone through as she assumed the role of Vice-Chancellor of TERI School of Advanced Studies from 2005-2007, further solidifying her impact in academia and research.

Overcoming Personal and Professional Challenges

While immersed in groundbreaking agricultural research, Dr. Dhawan adeptly balanced her professional commitments with her responsibilities as a wife and mother. The challenges inherent in juggling these roles occasionally led to moments of doubt, but with unwavering support from her family, she persevered.

"At times, it was tough. I remember one day I was almost in tears, and I said I wanted to quit my job. But my family, my husband, and especially my father stood behind me," she recalls. The challenges she faced, both personally and professionally, only fueled her determination and made her stronger.

Continued Impact and Future Initiatives

Dr. Dhawan's journey continues with an undeterred commitment to research and leadership. Currently spearheading TERI, she played a pivotal role in establishing the DBT-TERI Centre on Integrated Production of Advanced Biofuels and Bio-commodities. Under her stewardship, TERI recently launched the Green Shipping program in collaboration with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, Government of India.

Her parting words reflect a visionary perspective: "We need to keep pushing the boundaries and find solutions to arrest global warming. We must come up with innovative and smart solutions in the field of renewable energy, and agriculture."

Dr. Vibha Dhawan's life and career stand as a testament to her enduring commitment to sustainable development, agriculture, and environmental stewardship. Her legacy continues to inspire and pave the way for a greener and more sustainable tomorrow.

Pioneering Sustainable Agriculture for a Greener Tomorrow



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In the intricate tapestry of women achievers, Dr. Vibha Dhawan emerges as a trailblazer, navigating the realms of sustainable agriculture, biotechnology, biofuel, and bioresources. With an illustrious career spanning nearly four decades, she currently serves as the Director General of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), a globally recognized organization for its remarkable contributions to energy, environment, and sustainable development.

Awards and Accolades

Dr. Dhawan's stellar achievements have earned her accolades, including the prestigious Woman in Agriculture Award and the Social Impact Leadership Award. Her influence extends beyond borders as she actively participates in various institutions, contributing significantly to research and policy development on both national and international fronts. Driven by an unwavering commitment, she tirelessly works towards creating a better, healthier, and sustainable world for future generations.

Balancing Roles with Grace

Beyond her professional triumphs, Dr. Dhawan seamlessly wears multiple hats – a researcher, an environmentalist, a visionary leader, and a devoted mother. Her journey, marked by personal and professional challenges, reflects her resilience and strength of character.

From the outset of her career, Dr. Dhawan displayed a passion for agricultural research. Raised in a middle-class family, she faced the challenge of convincing her parents to allow her to pursue a career in agriculture. Undeterred by societal norms that questioned a woman's entry into the research domain, she remained steadfast in her determination.

"After my MSc., I insisted on going for research rather than pursuing a B.Ed. degree, as my parents suggested. I worked in the field of plant tissue culture and submitted my thesis," she recalls.

Joining TERI in 1985 marked the beginning of a transformative journey. Within three months, she secured an externally funded project in her field of expertise, granting her independence. With a substantial grant from the Department of Biotechnology, she established a Tissue Culture pilot plant in 1991, a pioneering initiative that showcased India's capabilities in this emerging field.

Contribution to Technological Advancements

Dr. Dhawan's indigenously designed laboratory became a hub for large-scale propagation of elite planting material, particularly in the forestry sector. The project not only broke new ground in tissue culture technology but also generated employment opportunities for school dropouts. Today, India produces millions of banana