



The Courageous Story of Dr. Kamala Sohonie

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Over the years a woman has overcome many obstacles and made a mark in every walk of life. It was not at all a very smooth road for the very first woman to put her first step and make a way for others. Scientific research was one such field. Earlier women were denied of the opportunities to learn and pursue science as a carrier.

Dr. Kamala Sohonie (nee Bhagvat) was the first Indian woman to receive Ph.D. in scientific discipline. She was from a very educated background and was a topper in the Masters Course in Chemistry, still it was a "Herculean task" for her to get admission to Indian Institute of Science (I.I.Sc) Bangalore. She had to fight a silent revolution for getting admitted to the doctorate programme. She was denied admission by then- Director and Nobel Laureate Prof C.V. Raman just because she was a woman. He considered that woman were not competent enough to pursue research. Kamala held a "Satyagraha" outside Prof C.V. Raman's office and finally persuaded him to grant her admission. He gave her permission but with three conditions.

1) She would be on probation for the first year 2) As per her Guides instructions she would have to work late night 3) She should not be a "distraction" to the male researchers. She admitted to these humiliating conditions and became the first Indian woman to register for Doctorate in Science in 1933. With her work she convinced Prof. Raman and the scientific world that Indian woman can excel in the scientific research. Next year onwards Prof. Raman opened the doors of I.I.Sc for female students.

Dr. Kamala's main research focus was on proteins present in milk, pulses and legumes. Her Thesis was unique of only forty pages unlike the conventional ones with hundreds of pages but with her work she could impress the reviewers and examiners. She earned her doctorate in 1939 and became the first Indian woman to receive Ph.D.in science.

Dr. Kamal's work has paved a way for the Indian woman to carve a niche in scientific research. Today Indian woman scientists owe gratitude and grate respect for Dr. Kamala Sohonie.

A million thanks to Dr. Kamala Sohonie and all the wonderful woman of science.

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