

Inspiring a daughter to make her own path " >

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Chief Talent and People Solutions Officer Tripti Jha's mother prioritized her learning in a rural region of India with limited opportunities for girls.

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At Novartis, we believe in gender equity. We continue to choose to challenge inequity, including through our public pledge with the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) to achieve gender balance in management and further improve our pay equity and transparency processes by 2023.

This International Women's Day, we want to celebrate our progress while continuing to challenge ourselves and others to strive for meaningful change. We asked employees to recognize role models who have challenged and inspired them to become who they are today. Tripti Jha, Chief Talent and People Solutions Officer, shares her story.

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Pramila Jha helped her daughter prioritize learning and taught her the importance of listening.

Nobody remembers exactly what year my mother was born, so we say 1955, the year listed on her passport. She lived in a tiny village in Central Eastern India, near the Ganges River, and her family was relatively poor. She did not finish high school, but she is among the wisest people I have ever met.

When I was growing up in the same region of India, she made time for me to study, helping me to prioritize learning instead of household chores. At the time, it wasn't considered important for girls in my area and in my class to go to college or make a career for themselves. My father encouraged me and my mother made it happen.

I remember my mother telling folktales, stories that had passed from generation to generation. The stories that she chose to tell always had a female character who worked to change things around her. She told many stories about Radha, a young girl who lived in a village with many boys. Radha was not physically strong, but she was smart and mischievous. She used her wit to outmaneuver the boys.

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Tripti Jha with her daughters

Her folktales prepared me to make my own path. When you go with a flowing river, it's easy. When you go against the current, that might be the right direction, but it's much harder, and it requires skill. This was a recurring theme in her stories.

My mother always told us – my brothers and me – to lead life with a purpose. And she was clear about hers: To make the world a better place for her children. She's always tried to make a difference. For example, when I went to college, she started a small charity to help girls in our community find places to study, safe spaces in homes their parents trusted.

My current role is Chief Talent and People Solutions Officer for Novartis. My purpose at Novartis is to ensure that we have the skills, capabilities and talent at scale to reimagine medicine for patients around the world. Our

people are our greatest strength, and my team works to unleash their potential.

Ganges River



Tripti Jha grew up in Central Eastern India near the Ganges River (shown). Through folktales, her mother prepared her to make her own path instead of going with a flowing river. Image by Clippn/Adobe Stock.

The pandemic has presented many challenges. Initially, my team focused on finding quick solutions for associates to address immediate needs. For example, we embraced flexible work schedules and increased the amount of mental health support offered to employees.

But the pandemic also challenged us to accelerate an effort underway to explore the future of working. We ran a brain trust exercise with some of our associates. We really listened – and continue listening – to what our associates have to say. My mother taught me that it's important to listen. When my mother listened, she wasn't trying to fix or to prove a point or to win. She asked great questions to get me thinking and talking. She was a true coach in difficult moments.

Out of our team's listening sessions came a new model for working that we call Choice with Responsibility. It empowers associates with the choice to decide how, where and when they work to create the greatest impact in their role and strengthen work-life balance. Associates have the responsibility to keep their managers informed and align with teammates for high impact collaboration.

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Tripti Jha

Choice with Responsibility creates new opportunities for our talent, including by changing the way we think about building teams. We're experimenting with virtual assignments to provide more growth opportunities for associates. It's not always possible for people to move for a project or position. We can move toward greater equity by offering all associates opportunities to develop.

Like my mother, I want to leave this world a better place. I have two girls, and I want to do my part in shaping a society that they can carry forward.

Main image of Tripti Jha by Björn Myhre

Chief Talent and People Solutions Officer Tripti Jha's mother inspired her to make her own path.

Learn more about a new model for working that empowers associates with the choice to decide how, where and when they work to create the greatest impact in their role and strengthen work-life balance.

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