

# Top 3 Insights: Poornima Rao

## 1. The Educational Background

Ms. Rao built a strong scientific foundation through a diverse academic path:

- **Undergraduate Studies:** Completed a three-year bachelor's degree in India, studying the fundamentals of **botany, biochemistry, and microbiology**—exploring the chemistry of life across plants, animals, microbes, and humans.
- **Advanced Training & Skill Building:** Began a PhD program before deciding to pivot toward hands-on industry skills. She completed specialized technical courses to master new laboratory methods, tools, and technologies.

## 2. Rewarding Moments as a Product Manager

Poornima finds fulfillment across several key areas of her work:

- **User Impact:** Hearing directly from educators and students who say, *"We love this product—our students learned so much from it,"* which validates the entire team's hard work.
- **Business Milestones:** Achieving strong financial performance and seeing successful product launches that keep the business growing.
- **Peer Recognition:** Working in a culture where colleagues actively celebrate each other's day-to-day contributions, which builds momentum, boosts morale, and makes coming to work genuinely exciting.

## 3. Discovering the Field Beyond Medicine

Growing up, Poornima had never heard of a "product manager." Like many students interested in life sciences, she originally assumed that being a doctor was the only career path available:

- **The Eye-Opening Conversation:** Frustrated by limited options, she spoke with a family friend who worked as a biotechnologist at a food tech company.
- **A Broader Perspective:** That conversation showed her how wide the life sciences industry truly is—from food science and drug discovery to biopharmaceuticals and alternative fuels.
- **The Path Forward:** Inspired by these broader possibilities, she pursued biological sciences, gained industry experience, and eventually transitioned into product management later in her career.