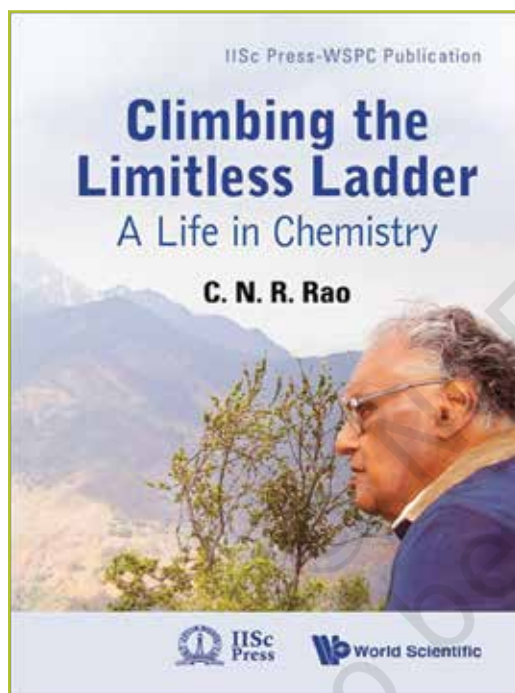


BOOK REVIEW

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- Book name: Climbing the Limitless Ladder: A Life in Chemistry
- Author: C. N. R. Rao
- Publisher : World Scientific Publishing Co and IISc Press
- Language : English
- Paperback : 232 pages
- ISBN-10 : 9814307858

"Climbing the limitless ladder: A life in Chemistry" is a brutally honest autobiographical account of doing scientific research in India. It provides insight into the making of a scientist from a developing country. It narrates the author's early years to his academic adventures, his journey from Bangalore to where he goes on a "pilgrimage for knowledge" to Banaras for Postgraduate studies, then to Purdue University, Indiana, USA, for a Doctoral research program to taking up a research associate position at the University of California, Berkeley, USA where he developed critical thinking and problem solving, honed his analytical and scientific skills, and evolved his writing and communication which matured and defined him as a scientist, and finally to his return to his country and his engagements thereafter.

The book offers many lessons to young and aspiring scientists. The paramount lesson to draw from the life of C N Rao is that in Science, it is not enough if you are good at the subject and at the lab. To make a mark in research and academics, one should get many things right. Firstly, one should try to have the right mentor. Second, one should learn to collaborate. Third, one becomes visible in the community of scientists through research publications, reviews, and books—Rao has to his credit, a whopping 1400 research papers and 43 technical books on a

wide range of topics. The book also includes a few of his select essays and papers. There is also a letter to a young scientist at the end.

The book has also brought out a few more aspects of being a good scientist—be able to win grants, pitch for a cause to philanthropists, and try to be a member of the right platforms and academies.

For an extremely focused scientist of his calibre, if you expect the book to be dull and dry, you are definitely mistaken. On the contrary, the book is as entertaining as educational. His uncanny ability to recollect

does not fail when he brings to life many of the funny anecdotes at several sections in the book.

Charismatic. Hard-working. Humble. Compassionate. Pioneer. Dedicated. Trailblazer Visionary. Poster Boy of Indian Science. This book has brought out all of these qualities and many more of C N Rao very nicely. This autobiography provides an insight into the feeling of how, in spite of the many limitations, one can try to climb the limitless ladder of excellence. This book is, therefore, a gift to humanity and a treasure for eternity.