

## News & Events

# The Launch of an IPA Working Group on Gender in Physics

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2016, which is International Womens' Day, a group of physicists proposed to the IPA that it constitute a working group on Gender in Physics. The proposal received strong support from the IPA Executive Council. In the January-March 2017 issue of *Physics News*, the IPA President announced that such a working group had got off the ground.

It was not entirely a coincidence that the Jan-March 2017 issue of *Physics News* had an all-female authorship of its articles, and was guest-edited by members of the same group - the idea for such a special edition of *Physics News*, to be brought out along with similar efforts for the magazine *Resonance* and the journal *Current Science*, had its genesis in brainstorming among that very same group of physicists.

Why was such a working group on gender in physics deemed necessary?

The scientific enterprise is intended to be one where both women and men can thrive. The patterns in the gender gap prevalent in the profession, however, point to barriers *within*, which need to be addressed. With the current state of affairs, the enterprise is clearly not achieving its full potential. While India is no exception to these world-wide trends, indications are that the causes for the gender gap in science are complex, and could be culture-specific and discipline-specific as well.

The proposers of the working group for gender in physics, viz., Prajval Shastri, Neelima Gupte, Shobhana Narasimhan, Sumathi Rao, Rohini Godbole, Ramakrishna Ramaswamy, Bindu Bambah, Sulabha Kulkarni, and Vandana Nanal, argued that (a) the gender gap in the physics enterprise is among the largest in science, (b) the Indian physics profession is no exception to the global trends w.r.t. the gender gap, (c) efforts by the government and the academies have been directed at addressing gender disparities in all of science, and these initiatives need to be complemented by efforts from *within* the different disciplines, and that (d) the IPA would be an effective platform to address issues specific to physics. The Gender in Physics Working Group has therefore been constituted to review the status of the profession from the point of view of gender parity, facilitate forums to deliberate on the issue, and find ways to address the gender disparity.

Our ultimate goal is a situation wherein gender will become irrelevant in physics practice in India, so that the need for a Gender in Physics Working Group will cease to exist.

*Prajval Shastri, on behalf of the IPA Gender in Physics Working Group*

*E-mail us with your suggestions at: [gipwg.ipa@gmail.com](mailto:gipwg.ipa@gmail.com)*

### Members of the Gender in Physics Working Group of the IPA:



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