In thinking about the various questions posed in the survey, I am reminded of the Social Cognitive Career Theory, which presents a very interesting viewpoint on how one’s academic and career choices are made. It presents a three-step approach of how does an individual develop an interest in a certain career, then how does she make academic and career choices and finally what does it take to be successful in the chosen career option. Self-efficacy, outcome expectation and personal goals are presented to be the three building blocks of this theory, with Interest Development Model being its key construct. The major tenets of this theory are that some people disregard certain occupations because of faulty self-perception and self-efficacy; and that greater is a perceived barrier to an occupation higher are the chances that the individual will not pursue that career.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE TO BE THE CHALLENGES THAT WOMEN FACE IN ACADEMIA?

The patriarchal society shapes the experiences of a female and the way she perceives herself. The interest development model states that one feels more attracted to activities that one feels more competent and successful at. To my mind, the biggest challenge that the women face in academic/research is their apprehension and self-doubt. This lack of self-efficacy occurs because of our belief that the world is way ahead of us and what our offerings are inconsequential. We don’t ever dare to take that leap of faith and jump into it and say loud and clear – ‘Here I am!’.

WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE TO YOUNG WOMEN WHO ARE ENTERING THE RESEARCH FIELD?

I have held senior academic positions in educational institutions and also have been in the board of few companies in the corporate world, and I very strongly believe that we are no less than anyone. To the contrary, we are rather better off in so many ways – be that our ability to analyze problems, developing a conjecture about the solution and then confirming that conjecture through research and proof.

HOW DO YOU THINK WE CAN CLOSE THE GENDER GAP WITHIN ACADEMIA?

“Successful people have fear, successful people have doubts, and successful people have worries. They just don’t let these feelings stop them.” – T. Harv Eker

So dear lady, just take that leap of faith and have nothing stop you from making your own style statement in any field you wish to be in!

HOW CAN PUBLISHERS COLLABORATE WITH INSTITUTES ON CREATING GENDER-BALANCE?

Since the main issue in gender imbalance is our own self-doubt and our reluctance to come out, I think there is little that anyone can do about it.

But just as a thought, some special issues with only female authors might be one idea!

IT’S TIME FOR CHANGE.

Let’s better the balance.

#balanceforbetter