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

As an Indian and a woman, the challenges double. There is a need to accept that women can also be good administrators and researchers. I haven’t faced this much in Symbiosis however every time I represent the institution at various national and international fora I have felt that other gentlemen tend to view my achievements patronisingly and feel that I may not have earned it because of merit but because of my gender. On the other hand, at Symbiosis I have felt that my performance and merit have been appreciated and if I have moved forward or ahead then it has been because I earned it.

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

This field requires patience and an ability to persevere which is available in abundance with women. Also because of a higher EQ women make better administrators and team players. I feel women should bank strongly on their merit and persistence to move ahead and not use their gender like a crutch. Like in any profession they must keep their qualification up to date, do good quality research consistently, be mobile, be ready to learn new perspectives, seek out good mentors and give their natural abilities a priority in life. Education as a sector and industry is coming of age and therefore being professional in terms of qualification and outlook will be greatly beneficial.

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

I feel that women bring a unique perspective to research and those that want to publish consistently in good journals must seek their perspective. Just like women must step out and connect to more researchers likewise men should also consider collaborating with women researchers to build a better portfolio. I am not a fan of any kind of reservation however women need to first prove themselves by way of doing better research, attending seminars and conferences that promote research and reach out to a wider audience with the kind of work they are doing.

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

I feel publishers can come out with special issues or conferences that promote women researchers and topics that are on gender diversity and inclusion. Keep a quota for women researchers to come and present their work, senior researchers could help and guide them to improve their work. Have women only journal and/or conferences from organisers to reviewers and presenters alternatively 1-2 tracks in well-known conferences can be women only. When the gods wanted to kill a demon they invoked Shakti in the form of a goddess - I feel now the time has come for Shakti to invoke herself to her full potential and then surely women will win in this area as well.