

A survey of gender issues in Indian Astronomy

- an (incomplete) list of resources and
initiatives

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ASI 2014, IISER Mohali

A survey (of surveys) of gender issues in Indian Astronomy

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What this talk is about

- A survey of work done in India on women in science
- A survey of work done in other countries on women in astronomy
- A brief list of ongoing fledgling attempts in India
- Some final points

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& as for why ...

“Ben Barres gave a great seminar today, but then his work is much better than his sister's”

- recounted by Ben Barres, a transgender biologist after he changed his gender from female to male.

Gender in Indian science

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Surveys (of various kinds) are needed to qualify & quantify them

What are some such initiatives in India ?

Studying gender bias in Indian science

- 2001 : Mukhopadhyay did a study on girls in school opting out of science in India
- 2003 : Indian Academy of Science (IAS) set up a committee on 'Women in Science'
- 2004 : Indian National Academy of Science (INSA) commissioned a study headed by Bamji, done with SNDT
 - Resulted in a report "Science career for Indian women"

(caveat : an incomplete list !)

Studying gender bias in Indian science

- 2005 : Task force for ‘Women in Science’ set up by DST, under Bamji, recommended by sc. advisor to PM
 - Published a **report** based on feedback from 1000 women scientists, “*Evaluating and enhancing women’s participation in scientific and technological research*”
 - gave a number of recommendations to the GoI
 - Held consultation **meetings** across India
 - Set up a **website** (<http://indianwomenscientists.co.in/>) - no longer up to date, has a directory of Indian women scientists
 - Commissioned a **book** by SPARROW, “*The balancing act, stories of women in science*”, 2013
 - Organised a national **conference** of women scientists in 2008

Studying gender bias in Indian science

- 2005 : Indian Academy of Sciences (IAS) formed a panel for “Women in Science”, led by Godbole
 - Set up a **website** (<http://www.ias.ac.in/womeninscience>), is still active and has useful info
 - **Published** “*Lilavati’s Daughters*”, ed Godbole, Ramaswamy
 - Published a **report** “*Trained scientific women power : how much are we losing and why ?*” in 2010
- Talked to (1) women in science research, (2) women not in science research (3) women not working, (4) men in science research. Gave detailed recommendations
- Maintains **database** of women in science on website
- Organises a **lecture series** “Women in science : a career in science”

Books on Indian women in science

- “*Lilavati’s daughters : the women scientists of India*”, ed. Godbole and Ramaswamy, 2008
- “*Women and science in India : A reader*”, ed. Neelam Kumar, 2009
- “*Dispersed radiance : caste, gender and modern science in India*”, Abha Sur, 2011
- “*The balancing act : stories of women in science*”, SPARROW, 2013

Women in Astronomy - global

CSWA (Committee on Status of Women in Astronomy) established by the AAS in 1979 in the USA

Is doing amazing and inspiring work

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- Has a very active **website** : <http://www.aas.org/cswa>
- Conducts regular **surveys**, prepares annual **reports** for AAS
- Organises campaigns and **conferences** on gender issues, bias etc
- Prepares **resources** on issues, e.g. 2 body problem, mentoring, unconscious bias, restarting careers, sexual harassment etc
- Conducts **gender audits** of all conferences (speakers, chairs, etc)
- Recently had a gender audit of questions asked at conferences (<http://arxiv.org/abs/1403.3091>)

Women in Astronomy - global



AAS Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy



For information about the above images, click [here](#).

Contact members and associates of the CSWA

[CSWA Climate Site Visits for Astronomy Departments - Policy and Procedures](#)

Official information from the AAS

Publications

- [AASWomen](#)
- [Women in Astronomy Blog](#)
- [STATUS](#)
- [Facebook page](#)
- [Follow us on Twitter](#)
- [Baltimore Charter](#)
- [Pasadena Recommendations](#)
- [Strategic Plan 2009](#)
- [Annual Reports](#)

About the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy

What's New:

October 2013 - The CSWA is sponsoring a survey on two-body careers in astronomy. Whether or not you are partnered, you are invited to participate. [here: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CSWATwoBodyCareers](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CSWATwoBodyCareers)

October 2013 - At the [223rd AAS meeting near Washington, DC](#), the CSWA will present a Town Hall describing the results of the CSWA survey. Since 1992, the CSWA has been conducting demographics surveys of major astronomy departments and divisions since 1992 to track the status of women in astronomy across the field. Discussion about the implications for policy in our field will be invited. Organizer: A. Meredith Hughes. Tuesday, January 7, 2014, 10:00 AM. [Presentation slides available here.](#)

August 2013 - At the [223rd AAS meeting near Washington, DC](#), CSWA and the AAS Committee on the Status of Minorities in Astronomy presented a special session entitled, 'The Proper Use of GRE Scores for Enhancing Diversity and Excellence in Astronomy Graduate Programs.' Wednesday, January 8, 2014, 10:00 to 11:30 AM.

January 2013 (updated) - At the [221st AAS meeting at Long Beach, CA](#), CSWA sponsored a special session on Monday, January 7, 2013, "Family Leave Policies and Childcare for Graduate Students and Postdocs." Speaker list and other details [here](#). The presentation slides are available [here](#).

June 2012 - At the [220th AAS meeting in Anchorage, AK](#), the CSWA sponsored a Town Hall with presentation, "Introduction to Astronomy Graduate Programs." (slide show, PDF, 1.8 MB)

June 2012 - Members of CSWA and [CSMA](#) collaborated on a description of the status of women of color in astronomy and recommended actions at the [National Academies-sponsored conference](#).

Women in Astronomy - global

- The IAU's Working Group on Women, established in 2003 (<http://iauwomeninastronomy.org>)
collects statistics, organises meetings
- Astronomical Society of Australia has constituted a 'Women in Astronomy' chapter
collects statistics, prepares resources, organises meetings
- "Women in Astronomy" resource of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific
- "She is an Astronomer" campaign of the IYA 2009 (two people profiled were from India)

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Popular Topics

- [AASWOMEN \(243\)](#)
- [women in STEM \(86\)](#)
- [gender bias \(65\)](#)
- [family \(55\)](#)
- [career \(50\)](#)
- [jobs \(41\)](#)
- [work-life balance \(35\)](#)
- [mentoring \(25\)](#)
- [unconscious bias \(23\)](#)
- [diversity \(22\)](#)
- [harassment \(21\)](#)
- [career profiles \(16\)](#)
- [impostor syndrome \(15\)](#)
- [two-body problem \(14\)](#)
- [Why So Few? \(8\)](#)

Popular Posts

-  [Astronomer to Data Scientist](#)

department chair, senior vice burden - and if it is tments will protect their l proposals.

Searches?

through the month of sunlight. The Kepler field ty search season begins e learn (often through io has received a faculty

Advice

[Dealing with Discrimination and Harassment](#)

[Being Ignored in a Meeting](#)

[Advising Graduate Students](#)

[Dealing with Student Tears](#)

[When to Raise a Family](#)

[Negotiating for a TT Position](#)

[Negotiating for a TT Position II](#)

[Workplace Bullying](#)

[Workplace Bullying II](#)

Blog Archive

▼ [2014 \(47\)](#)

▼ [March \(13\)](#)

[Career Profiles:](#)

[Astronomer to Senior](#)

Women astronomers in India - initiatives

- A couple of interviews in “Lilavati’s daughters”, and in the “She is an Astronomer” of IYA 2009

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- A **facebook page** for women astronomers in India, started by Sushan Konar
- A **survey** of the female/male ratio in research institutes (Preeti Kharb, this session)

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- A facebook page for women astronomers in India, started by Sushan Konar
- A survey of the female/male ratio in research institutes (Preeti Kharb, this session)
- An informal discussion session on “Women and Gender in Indian Astronomy” at ASI 2013 in Trivandrum
 - identified a set of issues
 - made a number of recommendations to the ASI

ASI 2013 session on women and gender

Issues discussed

- “Women in Science” scheme of DST, drawbacks and problems
- Leaky/blocked pipeline
- Role models, mentoring programmes
- Organising talks by women astronomers, increase visibility
- Facilitating return after break, and issues involved
- Part-time, flexi-time, age cutoff, 2 body problem etc
- Representation on speaker lists, panels, decision making bodies, ASI, IAU etc

ASI 2013 session on women and gender

Recommendations made to the ASI

- Facilitate quantitative and qualitative surveys to identify issues
- Lobby with DST etc about coming back after a break, age cutoff etc
- Increase gender parity at the ASI (speakers, chairs, EC etc)
- Child care at ASI meetings : **DONE !**
- Make this session a regular feature
- Proactively increase number of women members of the ASI
- Set up a website on women astronomers, have an Indian version of 'She is an Astronomer', etc
- Set up a commission on Women in Astronomy

Some final points

- Need to set up a formal as well as informal fora
- Need to conduct extensive surveys
- Need to create a website with resources, and use social media
- Need to look at how gender issues intersect with other identities like class, caste, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion etc
- Need to not make assumptions about what the main issues faced by women are
- Need to look at gender bias in non-research astronomy sites
- **Need to keep talking about gender !**

Vishakha guidelines

The Supreme Court Directives, 1997 (Vishakha guidelines), made it mandatory for employers to set up an Internal Complaints Committee to look at sexual harassment. This committee should be advertised widely internally, and should submit reports every year.

This is now superseded by the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013

Out of 7 institutes from which I got responses, all have the ICCs set up.

The level of publicity given to it internally varies from 'prominently' to 'not at all'