ACM India Grad Cohort 2018

Organisers: Rituparna Chaki, Arati Dixit, Nutan Limaye

July 6-7, 2018

Introduction. CRA-W, an international computing body, has been organising the Grad Cohort workshop since 2004 in the US for women graduate students in computing. Over the last 15 years, the workshop has helped many women students through their graduate years and beyond.

Starting this year, ACM-W India decided to adapt the model of this workshop to the Indian setting. ACM India Grad Cohort 2018, the first pan-India workshop for women graduate students in computing was organised this year. The event took place on July 6, 2018 and July 7, 2018 in CSE department at IIT Bombay campus. This workshop was also made a part of the Diamond Jubilee Celebration of IIT Bombay.
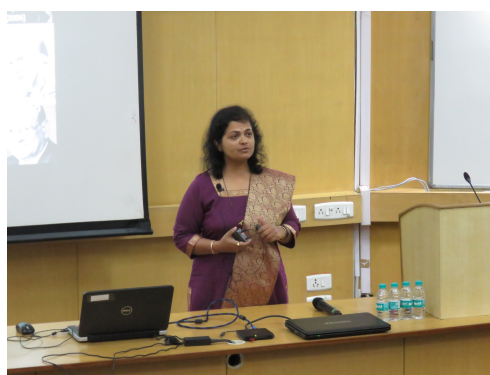
Participants. The main goal of this workshop was to reach out to Indian women graduate students in the field of computing. The event was attended by 75 participants who came from approximately 20 different colleges and universities across India. Among these around 45 students were pursuing their PhD in areas of computing, while the rest were students pursuing their Masters degree.

Speakers We were fortunate to have 15 eminent Indian women speakers at the event from various academic institutes and from the industry. The list of speakers along with their affiliations is given below (in the alphabetical order of their last names).

Names	Affiliations
Shweta Agrawal	(IITM, Chennai)
Varsha Apte	(IITB, Mumbai)
Kalika Bali	(Microsoft Research India, Bengaluru)
Aiswarya Cyriac	(CMI, Chennai)
Meenakshi D'Souza	(IIITB, Bengaluru)
Mythreyee Ganapathy	(Microsoft, Hyderabad)
Padmaja Joshi	(CDAC, Mumbai)
Preethi Jyothi	(IITB, Mumbai)
Hemangee Kapoor	(IITG, Guwahati)
Shruti Kunde	(TCS, Mumbai)
Neeldhara Misra	(IITGn, Gandhinagar)
Rijurekha Sen	(IITD, Delhi)
Rekha Singhal	(TCS, Mumbai)
Nidhi Tiwari	(Infosys, Bengaluru)
Mythili Vutukuru	(IITB, Mumbai)

Program details of Day 1 (06 July 2018)

The event took place over two days. The first day started with inauguration ceremony in which the Head of the CSE department, IIT Bombay, Prof. Uday Khedker welcomed the attendees. This was followed by the opening statement made by Dr. Arati Dixit, ACM-W Chair.

The following three talks took place in the first half of the day.

Topic	Speakers
Masters vs. PhD.	Hemangee Kapoor, Shruti Kunde
How to select a research topic?	Shweta Agrawal , Mythili Vutukuru
Technical reading, writing papers and choosing the venues for publishing.	Padmaja Joshi, , Preethi Jyothi

This was followed by lunch. In the second half of the day another two very engaging talks took place, which were followed by a panel discussion. Their details are given below.

Topic	Speakers
Industry vs. academic research positions. Phd academic and non-academic career paths. Job hunt.	Rijurekha Sen, Rekha Singhal Kalika Bali, Meenakshi D'Souza
Panel Discussion: Work-life balance: balancing graduate school and personal life.	**Panelists:** Meenakshi D'Souza, Hemangee Kapoor, Shruti Kunde Rekha Singhal, , Kalika Bali **Moderator:** Padmaja Joshi

Each talk was followed by enthusiastic participation of the attendees and engaging question and answer session. Each speaker was presented with a book as a memento.

Program details of Day 2 (07 July 2018)

The next day was a half day event. The first session had the following talks.

Topic	Speakers
Building confidence	Shweta Agrawal, Aiswarya Cyriac
Time Management	Nidhi Tiwari, Mythili Vutukuru
Technical presentation skill vs Inter-personal communication skill	Varsha Apte, Neeldhara Misra

These talks were followed by a lunch. We could see that by this time the participants and speakers were already very comfortable with each other and there was an overall feeling of camaraderie.

The day ended with another engaging panel discussion, the details of which are given below.

Topic	Speakers
Panel Discussion: Life of a woman in computing: the challenges and opportunities.	**Panelists:** Shweta Agrawal, Varsha Apte, Rijurekha Sen, Nidhi Tiwari, Mythreyee Ganapathy **Moderator:** Neeldhara Misra

Overall the event was received well by the attendees. Many women opened up and spoke about their worries and challenges. We believe that the participants as well as the speakers learned a lot from each other.

Going forward   We believe that such an event is very useful and has many benefits to women graduate students in India. We would like to organise this event every year. In the future, we would like to reach out to many more colleges and students from all over India. We would also like to explore other India centric topics relevant to graduate students in India in the program.

We hope that this event grows and becomes a vehicle for graduate women students in India to network with each other and thereby empower themselves and the future generation of graduate students.