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Summer 2015



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## Vol. 20:2 :: Special Issue on Social Advocacy

**Work-Life Balance:** Taking on the challenge of higher education while raising children....

**On Social Advocacy:** Privilege and Advocacy: Case of HIV/AIDS....

**On Social Advocacy:** Learning to Challenge Violence in Schools across Jharkhand: *Report by ICRW*....

**On Social Advocacy:** Communicatively Constituting Careers....

**IWA Salutes The Graduates of 2015!**

**In The Spotlight:** Meet Anisha Singhal...

**Reflections:** Holi 2015....

**From The Board:** Inspired Actions leading up to a summer break....

## Taking on the challenge of higher education while raising children: IWA members share their (awe) inspiring experiences!

*Story Idea: Seema Mattoo Execution: Ranjani Rao*

The U.S. Department of Education defines a “traditional college student” as students in the 18- 25 age range while non-traditional students are older than 25, sometimes with significant family and work responsibilities. Traditional students make up the dominant majority on most college campuses in the U.S.

And then there are wonderful women like our IWA member participants who have been or currently are non-traditional students and have shared their stories with us. With one, or two and sometimes three or more kids, they have worked on a wide range of educational opportunities available to them through Purdue, Indiana University, Ivy Tech or H&R Block. How did they do it? How did they manage everything on their plate? More importantly when the going got tough what drove them to work so hard and to persist against all odds?

### Seema Shankar’s Story

“This may sound very cliché, but it is love for Medicine and that I thought it was my life's calling to serve. That did not go away how much ever I tried. I had to do it. I had nothing to lose,” says Seema Shankar who is currently completing her residency at Indiana University’s Department of Medicine. Having studied medicine in India Seema took stage 1 of her United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) when she was pregnant with her daughter, completed stages 2 and 3 through her child’s infancy and toddlerhood. She tried to match for 7 years, restricting her opportunities geographically to be close to her family. In the meantime, Seema worked on research related to cancer and

ageing research at the Gerald P. Murphy Cancer Foundation and fueled her passion to serve by volunteering at a community health clinic while also building clinical experience. “Perseverance was very important in my case. But it is NOTHING without my family support” opines Seema who credits her husband Mithuna, her daughter Nesara and her parents and in-laws who wholeheartedly supported her.

### Rashmi Chaturvedi’s Story

Family support comes across strongly in Rashmi’s story as well. “I found it hard managing school/work load along with family. It really helps though to have a supportive family and spouse. Alok( Rashmi’s spouse) and I were forever exchanging our babies (they were ages 5 years and a new born when I began my Ph.D.) in the hallways of Krannert and Liberal Arts building, parking lots, and the Union. I also took small steps in order to make sure that the family adjusted to my school schedule by taking lighter course load in the first semester of my graduate work.” Rashmi completed a Ph.D. in International Relations from Purdue’s Department of Political Science with two kids, taking baby steps and managing expectations, celebrating the little milestones along the way. Research supports Rashmi’s experience. In his dissertation work on persistence in non-traditional students, researcher Steven Brown found that family support was a key indicator of a non-traditional student’s ability to complete an academic program. While all the participants in this

*Continued on page 3*

discussion including Seema, Rashmi, Tanuja, Veena, Kavita, Somali and Rani have named their family as strong sources of support, Tanuja also emphasizes the role of a caring and understanding mentor.

### Tanuja Sheth's Story

"I finished my Ph.D. in Consumer Behavior and Retailing with 3 girls- ages 14, 10 and 6. I took 3 leaves of absence- 2 pregnancies and 1 major illness. I was blessed with not only supportive family and friends, but also a fantastic mentor and caring major professor. I don't think that anyone has mentioned the role of a mentor who takes into account all of the life circumstances that a woman goes through- motherhood, taking care of a spouse! In my case it was a child diagnosed with leukemia at age 2. My professor- Dr. Richard Feinberg was so compassionate to all of my issues- his wife had faced her own problems with education/career, so he knew all sides of the issue. He said to me that if I had it in my heart to get a Ph.D., he would support me fully. He said that my dissertation would be another "baby" to me. I finished my Ph.D. and do feel that I owe a lot to him. Nice to portray a male in a positive light- one who is not in your family and is a colleague and mentor. He was/is well-respected and I thank him for his guidance always." Tanuja's story is a beautiful reminder that while 'life happens', it also gives you sources of support (spouse, mentor, family friends) and the skills to manage the uncertainty.

### Veena Sagi's Story

Veena Sagi's advice for women contemplating getting back into academics with kids is "develop those marketable skills." Having completed her undergraduate degree in 1983, Veena got married immediately. She joined a 6 semester course in software programming 10 years later, after

having two children; building an all-important skill set, software programming. She then completed an MA from Osmania University in Hyderabad, India. Tax training with H&R Block followed her move to the U.S.; giving Veena her second, really marketable skillset. All this juggling early on as a parent and student has helped her manage her full time software engineering job at HP, annual seasonal work with H&R block, two kids and her informal but very active role as a community leader in the West Lafayette.

### Kavita Pai's Story

While a number of women participating in our discussion had pursued advanced degrees, not all of them were confident at the start of their programs. Kavita Pai did a lot of thinking before taking on the three year executive MBA program at Purdue's Krannert School of Management. It was a program she would have to balance with a full time job and a family. "I got married really young and had a kid right away. I had a dream of going back to school at some point of time. After getting turned down for a promotion I realized I had to improve my resume with a better qualification because the international degree was holding me back. Having a small child at home did make me think of my decision hundreds of times. But I also knew it was now or never," says Kavita. Even after starting the MBA, Kavita approached the first semester with caution, "I entered the first year telling myself that if I totally flunk it I would at least have no regrets that I did not even try it. But after the first semester I understood how the system works, that gave me a new found confidence." Kavita Pai completed her MBA a couple of years ago. Besides getting used to an academic program there is also the challenge of competing with professionals who are child-free or with a stay at home spouse on one hand, while also fulfilling the desire to be there for your child or children on the other.

*Continued on page 15*

## *Participatory Social Change*

*Advocacy implies advocating for change. As most sociologists would note, advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or pleads on behalf of others. Advocacy encompasses a variety of actions.'*  
*-Mangala Subramaniam*

*IWA members coalesce around the shared value of philanthropy and advancing social goods locally and globally. We believe that social change is possible when it is participatory and successful when we engage and integrate diverse ideas and practices.*

*Building on the vision we have begun partnering with and collaborating on projects with organizations such as International Center for Research on Women, ASHA for Education, and YWCA to make our mission more effective and sustainable . We have also set up a research scholarship for graduate students whose research is focused on advancing women's empowerment.*

*For this special issue on social advocacy we requested our partner organizations, researchers and practitioners/activists to share their thoughts, research and/or talk about their ongoing projects as well as the challenges that remain ahead regarding social issues such as gender and empowerment; ameliorating the conditions of disenfranchised and uplifting the status of the marginalized people around the world. We are happy to bring you some of the exceptional work that is being done to understand, analyze and actively work toward bringing about positive social change. These articles are certain to provoke your thinking.*

*We invite you to stand with us.*

## Privilege and Advocacy: Case of HIV/AIDS

By Prof. Mangala Subramaniam

Sukhi: I'd like to invite you to an event that is slated for tomorrow in our area office.

Interviewer (the author): Thank you. I will definitely attend the event.

Sukhi: I'll see you tomorrow – pause – I don't know if I'll be dead or alive tomorrow [in Kannada she said, *Naale naanu saithino badkirthino, gothilla*]

The above excerpt is from an interview I conducted with Sukhi in 2014 as part of a larger project.<sup>1</sup> Sukhi's words are powerful. As a woman sex worker (WSW), she indirectly reveals her HIV status. In spite of my using an information sheet for interviews that focused on the purpose of the study, confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of participation, some WSW participants chose to reveal their HIV status. I often had to take a deep breath, console the participant, but avoid becoming a counsellor or raising false hopes. Irrespective of whether the revelation came at the beginning, half-way through, or in the end, the participant needed some time (and so did I) to calm down. To respond with empathy and yet not seek details about the participant's HIV status was complicated.

UNAIDS reports that as of 2013, there are 35.3 million people living with HIV. More than 10 per cent of people living with HIV in low and middle income countries are aged 50 years or above.<sup>2</sup> As of 2012, every minute, a young woman is newly infected with HIV. As a result of their lower

HIV transmission among women sex workers and their clients is one of the key drivers of the HIV epidemic in India. It is estimated that there are 1.26 million WSWs with 7.35 million male clients visiting them in a year.

economic, socio-cultural status in many countries, women and girls are disadvantaged when it comes to negotiating safe sex, accessing HIV prevention information and services.<sup>3</sup> This is true of India. HIV transmission among WSWs and their clients is one of the key drivers of the HIV epidemic in India. It is estimated that there are 1.26 million WSWs with 7.35 million male clients visiting them in a year (National Behavioral Sentinel Survey 2006).<sup>4</sup> Of the one million WSWs, only 56% are currently covered by Targeted Interventions. Only 34% of them know their status and only 38% know how to correctly identify ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and who reject major misconceptions about the HIV transmission (UNGASS 2010).<sup>5</sup>

Prevention efforts by the WHO and national agencies such as the National AIDS Control Organisation in India have focused on sex workers as a high risk group. In India, the HIV prevention initiatives of the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III, launched in 1992, 1999 and 2007 respectively, has transformed the landscape of interventions.

(Continued on page 6)

<sup>1</sup> In order to maintain confidentiality, all names are pseudonyms.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/infographics/20131120\\_aidsbythenumbers\\_03](http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/infographics/20131120_aidsbythenumbers_03) accessed on May 11, 2015

<sup>3</sup> As in footnote 2 above

<sup>4</sup> National Behavioral Sentinel Survey 2006. National Aids Control Organisation, India

<sup>5</sup> UNGASS India Country Report, 2010

In addition, other agencies such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and a multitude of non governmental organizations (NGOs) have been working on various aspects of prevention, care, and treatment vigorously. But as my research shows, there is a lack of coordination across international agencies, state agencies, and NGOs leading to mixed messages about HIV prevention and treatment.<sup>6</sup> Identifying and tracking WSWs to raise awareness about HIV is far from easy.

Mapping WSWs in some regions of India is challenging. For instance, in Karnataka, after soliciting and negotiating, the client is taken by the WSW to a lodge/garden, open field or other space depending on his paying capacity. Many WSWs are home based (and some are street based) and the non-disclosure of their identity in public makes it a challenge to bring them to access testing/treatment facilities. These challenges are compounded by the stigma attached to WSWs and other high risk groups associated with HIV although most people, particularly in India, know little or nothing about how HIV is transmitted. Consider for instance, the taxi driver who drove me around over several days for my research in a major city in India. Driving me to state agency offices and NGO office that focused on HIV, the driver began to ask me questions about whether I was a newspaper reporter or a magazine writer who plans to write a piece on HIV. When I said I'm a researcher, he said he had a suggestion to offer me. He suggested that I inform the various agencies working on HIV related issues to not spend money putting up posters or hoardings in the city. "If anyone saw me reading an HIV poster, they'd assume I'm HIV positive," he said. He was referring here to the stigma and marginalization of people who may be suspected of having HIV.

What does all this mean for advocacy? Advocacy implies advocating for change. As most sociologists would note, advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or pleads on behalf of others. Advocacy encompasses a variety of actions. The one that I think would be relevant to the readers of this newsletter is educating the public – both about HIV and the need to address stigma by addressing privilege. As Peggy McIntosh notes, "To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects."<sup>7</sup> So as you think of advocacy I urge you to consider educating and raising awareness so that others may learn what you know about HIV.



*Mangala Subramaniam is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Purdue University. She has been instrumental in helping IWA set up the scholarship award for Masters and PhD students pursuing research in areas of gender and empowerment.*

<sup>6</sup> Subramaniam, Mangala. 2013. "The Medicalization of HIV/AIDS Policy: The Case of India." Pp. 177-202 in *Global HIV/AIDS Politics, Policy and Activism*.

*Persistent Challenges and Emerging Issues* edited by Raymond Smith. Praeger Publishers

<sup>7</sup><https://www.isr.umich.edu/home/diversity/resources/white-privilege.pdf>

## Communicatively Constituting Careers: Paradoxical Design Processes of Women Entrepreneurs in China, Denmark, and the United States

By Ziyu Long

My dissertation research investigates how women entrepreneurs from three different political-economic systems — China, Denmark, and the United States — communicatively design their entrepreneurial careers from an intersectional perspective. The project explores how women entrepreneurs and various nonhuman and human agents design agents (e.g., technology, policies, cultural norms, values, funding, previous work experience, and family) frame the choices involved in entrepreneurial careers, accomplish the practices of entrepreneurship in material-symbolic intersections, and derive design principles to manage their organizations, emotions, identities, and relationships. This project explicates the gendered communicative constitutions of careers from a design perspective, and responds to calls urging research to explicate the complexities and nuances in entrepreneurship and understand women's everyday entrepreneuring process in diverse social-material settings. Moreover, the project has important practical implications for developing initiatives and policies to enhance the development of women's entrepreneurship, and strategies to inform women's everyday career praxis. More specifically, findings of the dissertation project contributes to the sustainable development of women's entrepreneurship by proposing a design-driven career theory. It responds to calls urging research to explicate the complexities and nuances in entrepreneurship and investigate women's everyday entrepreneuring in diverse contexts (Jennings & Brush, 2013). It also contributes to research on the political formations of contemporary careers, and the design of entrepreneurship from a gender perspective (Sarasvathy, 2003).

Findings of the project can also help (a) debunk the dominant entrepreneurial career model that

is disproportionately associated with masculinity (Ahl, 2006), (b) develop education programs that prepare women entrepreneurs to manage tensions in their career and life and enact leadership to sustain venture growth, (c) tailor institutional support, policy, funding opportunities, and mentoring programs to better suit the needs of entrepreneurs in their specific contexts, and (d) inform the design of strategic initiatives to facilitate women and immigrant/ethnic minority entrepreneurship.

The IWA's research funding offered me financial support to conduct "passing organizational ethnography" in China in order to complete the dissertation. This ethnographic data analysis is critical to the success of this dissertation project as it offers a viable method to record how women entrepreneurs do entrepreneurship and how the everyday episodes of communicative practices constitute entrepreneurial careers in their local contexts. These processes have rarely been studied but are essential to understand gendered performance of entrepreneurship and everyday empowerments and constraints associated with this career form. Ethnographic data collected in China is of particular importance given the existing empirical research and theorization of entrepreneurship has been dominated by Western perspectives. As a developing state and transitional economy with rich and long cultural heritage, findings about women's entrepreneurship in the Chinese contexts offer important transferrable values to address gender equality and sustainable development of women's entrepreneurship in other eastern developing countries such as India.



*Ziyu Long is the first recipient of the IWA Research Scholarship Award. The Award supports research and analysis on issues of concern that are common to women globally.*

## Learning to Challenge Violence in Schools across Jharkhand

*Report by ICRW*

In the naxal belt of the Khunti district of Jharkhand, it never occurred to students, parents, and teachers that violence should be a topic for discussion or contemplation, despite the fact that stories about murder, brutality, and despair were so commonplace across the district.

For the past year, however, students, families, and school officials in 40 schools in the Ranchi and Khunti districts of Jharkhand have been questioning the prevalence of violence – especially gender-based violence – through ICRW’s Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) program, which facilitates dialogue meant to disentangle gender inequality, including gender-based violence.

In a short time, students have gone from avoiding the topic of violence, to engaging in difficult discussions, including conversations that start to trace the causes and effects of violence. They’re also taking part in conversations around highly-politicized topics, such as ‘power’ and ‘patriarchy’, which now come as easily to them as any topic in their syllabi, like the Newton’s Law or multiplication tables.

Because of their interactive nature, GEMS sessions are a hit with the students. It is, however, important to ask: Have they brought about a change? Kartik, a student, responded to this very question emphatically: “Of course. Now I have completely stopped all hitting and beating.”

Ajay Kumar, a 30 year-old teacher who has been teaching in Kartik’s school since 2008, has watched his growth over the past year, which he described as remarkable. “When we started to talk about violence in GEMS sessions Kartik was the first one to share that in the past he had beaten his elder brother in retaliation to an argument.



Kartik may not have promised overtly during the GEMS session that he would never hit again but his actions and involvement in GEMS sessions symbolized his conviction against violence”, said Kumar.

The students of class 6 and 7 who attended the GEMS sessions have collectively become a force to reckon with. During a discussion, visitors posed questions to students to test their conviction and stance on violence.

“Teasing, calling names - that’s all in fun- but when there is hitting, beating kicking, that is what is violence right?”, asked the visitors.

“No, No Madam. That is also violence”, the class erupted in unison.

“Oh, so how many types of violence are there?”

“Physical, emotional and sexual”, children shout together almost emulating choir singing.

While getting conversations around violence started was at first difficult, the sessions are modeled in a way that the children and teachers are able to reflect on individual behaviors and then move to collective change within a safe space. GEMS, which is supported by the **Indian Women’s Association**, is ultimately helping students challenge deeply-held beliefs and will help them grow into an adult who understands that girls and boys are equal, which will be a guiding principal that carries them through the rest of the lives.

## Congratulations Class of 2015!



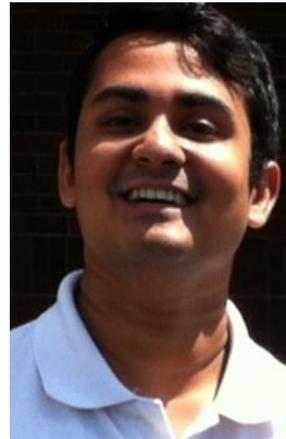
**Name: Nisha Dave**  
**Graduating From: West Lafayette Jr./Sr. High School**  
**Future Plans: Undergraduate at Purdue University**



**Name: Nikita Prabhakar**  
**Graduating From: West Lafayette Senior High School**  
**Future Plans: Undergraduate at Purdue University**  
**Major: Computer Science**



**Name: Rani Iyer**  
**Graduating from Phillips Academy, Andover, MA.**  
**Future plans: NETS program (Computer Science) at University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.**



**Arvind Raghothama**  
**B.S. - Food Science (college of Agriculture)**  
**Future Plans: Hormel Food Inc., - Product Development/Quality Assurance Supervisor**

## Congratulations Class of 2015!



**Name: Sejal Sheth**  
**Graduating from: Indiana University, B.S. degree in Psychology and minor in Spanish**  
**Future Plans: Heading to Chicago to work as a case manager in counseling services**



**Name: Vinya Sagi**  
**Graduating From: Purdue University**  
**Degree in Organizational Leadership and Supervision from the College of Technology and Entrepreneurship Certification from the School of Krannert.**  
**Future plans: Entrepreneur**



**Name: Kaveri Sheth**  
**Graduating from: West Lafayette Jr./Sr. High School**  
**Future plans: Emory University, Biology and Spanish**



**Name: Abhimanyu Sharma**  
**Graduating From: West Lafayette Jr./Sr. High School**  
**Future Plan: Undergraduate at Purdue University**



**Name: Priyanka Santhapuram**  
**Graduating from: Harrison High School**  
**Future Plans: Undergraduate at Purdue University**



## Engineer, Painter Gardener

Meet Anisha  
Singhal

*By Sujatha Ramani*

*Picture: Sujatha Ramani and Anisha Singhal*

One of IWA's 2015 board members, Anisha Singhal grew up in Ranchi and Haridwar in Northern India. She completed her Electrical engineering degree and joined Bharat Heavy Electrics Limited (BHEL) at Haridwar, where her father was also working. She hails from a family of engineers, where all the men including her dad, both younger brothers, and later husband and older son, all took up the same profession. She had a traditional arranged marriage with Manoj Singhal who was from Kurukshetra area. As she laughingly said "Both my maike (hometown) and sasural (in laws place) were religious centers. So we never had to travel far for any religious pilgrimage".

She was reminiscing about her honeymoon in Nepal which was in the news when we met.

After marriage, Anisha transferred to the New Delhi branch of BHEL. She shared an interesting anecdote. "Some one read Manoj's hand and said he would never go abroad. But the same week he went on his first overseas trip to Dubai". Manoj who works as a consultant in the IT sector travels widely all over the world."

Manoj said give me 6 months and I will be back. But that did not happen". Instead she left her job and along with the boys joined him. From 2001, the travel bug hit the Singhal family and they all moved first to Singapore, then Bay Area, back to Delhi, then to Nashville and finally settled down in West Lafayette, IN. Anisha who had been taking a sabbatical from her job finally decided to quit and move to the US.

Employees in public sector companies in India seldom leave their well paying secure jobs, and if they do, don't join again. But Anisha resigned from the 'same' job not once but twice. She was reinstated and hired back, after she quit the first time to join her family overseas. But she made sure she got not one but two farewell parties in her honor.

She has two young sons - Manik who is a junior at Purdue, and Jatin a sophomore at West Lafayette Jr Sr High School. Both boys whom I have met and interacted with, are very pleasant and fun to talk to. They are very adaptable to new situations having moved to a different school and house every couple of years since 2002.

Their eventual move here had a very interesting background. " When Manik finished his 12th he applied to many universities in the US, but finally decided on Purdue. Jatin accompanied his dad to

**(Anisha Singhal Continued)**

Japan the summer after his 8th grade and both decided to visit Manik who was in Purdue. Jatin liked this town and the area so much, that he never went back and in fact Anisha moved over to set up house and enroll him as a freshman in West Side. As Manoj worked for a US company with offices all over, this transition was done very

smoothly. They had visited this area before to settle their older son, so were easily able to finalize their home in Amberleigh Village.

She shared her impressions of life here in West Lafayette, " Both WL and my hometown of Haridwar have a similar lifestyle - small close knit community where everyone is there for each other. There it was the BHEL family and here it is the Indian community". She keeps herself busy by volunteering at 'The Foundry' a business development center at Purdue. She has taken courses at H&R Block to familiarize herself with US tax system. Besides that, she is an avid painter and the walls of her beautiful home are adorned with paintings that she has done. Gardening and decorating her house are her new interests this summer.

Welcome to WL, Anisha. It was a pleasure chatting with you!

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## Rang Barse: Holi 2015

*By Sangita Handa*

On the evening of April 4, 2015, it was as if hundreds of glittering stars had descended at BTCCGL. The glitter appeared to be from women wearing brightly colored sarees and ornate jewelry, and from children running around in their bright lehanga cholis or kurta pajamas. The air was thick with anticipation and excitement as guests munched on snacks while waiting for the cultural program to begin. The spirit of Holi was evident in the animated conversation and laughter emanating from different groups of people at frequent intervals.

How do I define the spirit of Holi? In my book, the spirit of Holi prevails when friends or strangers meet each other with mirth and exchange Holi greetings while smearing each other's faces with color or dousing each other with colored water. To examine why elements of love goodness and general happiness envelope people on this day, it might be worth looking briefly at how Hindu religion and mythology have shaped this concept of Holi.

Most of us are aware of the story of demon king Hiranyakashyap who considered himself a god and wanted everybody to worship him. Much to his great dismay, his own son Prahalad had different ideas about God. Rather than bow to his own father's wishes, Prahalad chose to worship Lord Vishnu as the Universal God. Despite repeated attempts, Hiranyakashyap failed to persuade Prahalad to change his thinking. Out of frustration, Hiranyakashyap made several attempts to kill his own son, just as he had killed others who had opposed him. When repeated attempts to kill Prahalad failed, Hiranyakashyap asked his sister Holika to carry Prahalad into fire, confident that since she had a boon to stay unscathed in fire, only Prahalad would be destroyed. Much to his shock and amazement, Prahalad was the one who stayed unharmed while Holika burnt to cinders.

Thereafter, Lord Narsimha appeared and destroyed Hiranyakashyap. Every year, the burning of fire at Holi symbolizes the victory of Godliness over evil as exemplified by the destruction of evil forces-Hiranyakashyap and Holikaevent- and protection of the good prince Prahalad

Holi also celebrates the legend of **Radha and Krishna** which describes the extreme delight that naughty Krishna took in teasing and applying color on his friend Radha and others, typically known as gopis. These antics of Krishna have captured the imagination of people of Northern India where people celebrate this festival by gleefully throwing wet or dry colors on each other. In a way, this act appears to cement bonds between friends and family members. Strange as it may seem, since the act of throwing colors is traditionally accepted as a light-hearted, fun gesture, it actually helps remove any misgivings between people while strengthening existing bonds. In a way, this festival is an equalizing force between rich and poor, old and young. Any barriers between members of different castes or social status are readily forgotten on this day. A few more legends of Holi festival exist in other parts of India; however, the two legends described here are prominently remembered and followed annually at a time dictated by Hindu calendar, usually in late spring.

The Holi festival celebrated by IWA on April 4, 2015 successfully portrayed these traditions through dance, drama and food. Little children, ranging in ages 4 to 8 years illustrated the winning of good over evil by enacting a play based on the story of Hiranyakashyap. This was a challenging exercise for these kids, given their young ages; although the task of remembering their lines was arduous, the children were successful in conveying the message of this story to their audience. Moreover, acting in this play gave these children, and others watching them, insight into their own cultural roots and traditions.

(Holi: Continued from page 13)

The spirit of Holi was played out in many other ways throughout the evening especially through dances depicting various moods of Krishna while interacting with his 'gopis'. These sentiments, were exquisitely expressed in at least three different dance forms including Bharatnatyam. The performances were presented by dance groups comprising women and children who had been given crash courses in these dance forms. Other dances showcasing devotion (to Shiva or Krishna), or simply joy and abandonment (Bollywood dancing) added to the ambience of the event. All the dances were characterized by superb choreography and near flawless performance by members of IWA and children, most of whom were amateurs. It was heartening to note the enthusiasm of our youth, especially little boys, in Bollywood dancing. The entire cultural program was so enjoyable that the two and half hours of it, interspersed with spicy banter by emcees, passed by rather quickly.

*Continued on page 16...*

## From The Board's Desk: Inspired Actions... leading up to a summer break

It has been an exciting activity filled spring for IWA and its members.

We welcomed the New Year with our members at our Annual Welcome Party with great food, conversation and a new resolve to make 2015 as exciting and meaningful for our members as the previous year... if not more!

And soon after, got almost the whole community participating in the quintessential Spring Festival of India... Holi. Performances by children, teens and

adults were central to the enjoyable evening. And of course good food, bonfire and playing with colors were the other highlights enjoyed by one and all. Our thanks go out to all the IWA members and volunteers who helped to make this show possible.

The same month we partnered with ASHA for Education for the Annual 5K run. Our members put on their jogging shoes and came out in support. Our thanks to all members who continue to support this all important task of educating underprivileged children.

This year too we supported YWCA's Clay Bowl Giving Project--one of YWCA's biggest fund raising event for rehabilitating victims of domestic abuse. We also supported BTCCGL in promoting a concert by Pt Saniiv Abhayankar in April.

Our Yoga sessions are in their second month conducted by yoga experts Malathi Balachander and Veena Sagi.

Now that summer is finally here IWA activities will take a short break.

We wish you a great summer break too!!! ... With the promise to see you on the other side of the break with delightful new news and activities!



(Continued from page 3)

### Somali Chaterji's Story

Somali Chaterji has completed a Ph.D. and a Post Doctoral Fellowship while parenting a child, often singlehanded due to living in a different city from her husband. In Somali's words, "one of the things that help with fast-tracking careers is networking and traveling and I made a conscious decision not to travel much and have more lunches at my desk so I can save time to cook up dinner for my family and read to our son and play with him and very importantly also portion in some time to go work out/run. I involved him in almost everything, had him nap when I had some weekend meetings. Competing with men who work 60-ish hours a week is a reality but one has to prioritize and sometimes not go the oft-traveled route, not be very socially active, and still "lean in" in one's own way to make a difference. A couple things that I have learned from my mentors is "you don't have to be perfect, you can aim to do things about right", "you compete with yourself not with everybody else around". Both of those are hard, especially the first one for me personally." While a word of caution about managing expectations was definitely something that all participants emphasized, Rani Naik emphasized that every challenge we face in our lives, can be overcome through hard work, both at home and in academics.

### Rani Naik's story

Rani who came to the United States as a child has a unique experience of being a first generation immigrant and seeing her parents' struggle first hand while also assimilating into the U.S. educational, social and professional system earlier in life. In Rani's words, "for all of us first generation immigrants, the main reason why our parents chose to come to the U.S. was to ensure that they gave us the best chance at success in terms of education and professional opportunities. Our parents went through many of their own

struggles no matter how small or big and their one focus was a better life for us. And in many cases, getting here was only the first of many hurdles. Growing up I have watched, learned and have been amazed by what all is possible with hard work. So to at any point to say this is not possible or I should not try has never been something I could accept :) The more challenging something is, this only tends to motivate and energize me." Rani .” Rani completed a master's degree as her first child, Anish was born and earned an MBA when her second child, Riyan was born. She talks about how her children served as an inspiration as all she was working towards would help make their lives better. "I guess my take away when I hear all these great stories that everyone shared, anything is possible and any limitations that are put on us are only in our mind," Rani signs off.

Sociology assistant professor, Gail Markle in a 2015 in an Adult Education Quarterly study on factors influencing persistence among non-traditional students; found that "interrole conflict" led many women to consider quitting, yet, most exhibited a *will to persist* that enabled them to overcome obstacles and ultimately graduate. IWA salutes all you inspiring women who have taken on the challenge of academics and raising a family and are working towards your goals.



*This article is second in the series on work-life balance. We would like to acknowledge and thank all who have so generously shared their thoughts in this online interview/survey.*

## *Holi: continued from page 14...*

The cultural program was followed by a sumptuous dinner catered by Indian Palace restaurant West Lafayette. A special feature of the dinner was the surprise addition of “Pistachio” ice-cream prepared by enthusiastic IWA board members.

Much to the delight of all, the Holi festivities did not end with dinner. A bonfire symbolizing the burning of Holika was lit outside the event venue. Powders of various colors were distributed to guests who smeared it on each other gleefully. This activity was particularly fun for children although adults seemed to enjoy it too. Lighting of bonfire which symbolized the dispelling of evil through fire and people shouting out “Happy Holi” to each other in true Indian style provided a happy conclusion to this fun-filled evening.



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**Sanskriti**

710 Noble Court

West Lafayette, IN 47906

[www.myiwa.org](http://www.myiwa.org)

