



## Neelam Kumar

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Neelam Kumar, received her Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her research interests focus primarily on the psychology of science. She worked as a scientist with National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies. Her research findings reveal the significance of gender in the structure of Indian scientific institutions and prompted her to write papers and edit two books: *Women and Science in India*, Oxford University Press, 2009 and *Gender and Science: Studies across Cultures*, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Kumar has also organized an international conference in India in 2004 called *Is the Glass Ceiling Disappearing?* Kumar has been member of editorial boards of several journals such as *International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology* and *Journal of Psychology of Science and Technology*. She has been Visiting Scholar/ Professor LSE, London and York University, Canada among others.

### ***Women's STEM participation in India and related policies: The current situation***

Gender inequality and segregation have characterized science for centuries. This exclusion can be understood from two perspectives, one on ideological grounds and the other through the development of science per se. Various ideological constructions of gender through different eras have served as barriers to women's access to science. The progress and development of science over the centuries too had a gendered effect. Universities became the home of science at the end of the twelfth century where women were denied entry, with a few exceptions, like Italy. Modern education for women in India began in the early years of the nineteenth century and by the 1880s universities started admitting them. Progress was extremely slow particularly until 1921 and a substantial advance in women's education came only after independence, i.e. 1947. The independent India depended heavily on the planning and plans were prepared for five years. The initial four plans took only a welfare approach for women. The later Plans talked of women's education, but did not stress the need for women's participation in STEM. Even the policies related to science has not given adequate attention to gender. The percentage of women in science career remains low, only approx. 15 percent of Indian R & D personnel are female. This paper will look at how the policies address (or do not address) the gender and science issues in India. It will also explore the consequences/ effectiveness of the schemes which aim to help women scientists to relocate or redefine their careers and achieve career-family balance.