The Web World Women

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In a class of 100+ students, I along with 21 others (belonging to my category of Homo sapiens : The Female) sit each day to study various topics of Information Technology. We're instructed upon the different domains that fall within the parameters of IT. We read numerous textbooks, conduct several laboratory experiments, design computer programs, and show up for online lectures as well. There was one thing that I found common in all these sources of learning. Gender Neutrality.

None of the classes that I attended or the course-books that I've read were segregated on a gender basis. They are COMMON for all. Moreover, the capability of the human mind to gain knowledge, learn about new fields is not barred by distinctions amid the genders. When none of the factors that are responsible for making a career in IT or Computer Science segregate us based on who we are, then why do we create superfluous gender marked boundaries ?

In India, the country to which I belong, there is an upsurge in the number of girls taking up Computer Science or Information Technology as a major for their higher studies. Numerous reasons can be associated with this increase. Here are several drivers which made me take up IT has my field of study :

(1) The IT sector in India is flourishing and there seems to be no upcoming barricade which will affect this growth. Opting for a career in IT will surely be financially advantageous.

(2) An affection towards computers which arose while using computers since childhood.

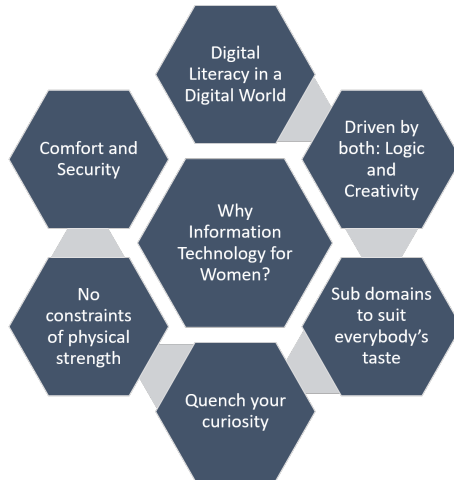1. Institute of Information Technology & Management, Gwalior, India.

FIGURE 1. The hexagon of motivation for a career in IT

(3) Mathematics is taught as a subject since the elementary level of education. By the time a student reaches Senior School, she has fairly enough mathematical background including several concepts of advanced mathematics as well. Although I did not have much prior knowledge regarding computer programming, I was sure that my level of acquaintance with Mathematics will surely be beneficial for developing "logics" used in computer programming. CS or IT is all about how strong your logics are ; how wide your vision is.

(4) Jobs in IT are usually office based and offer a sense of security and comfort. There is no much field work involved. A lot of women in India desire such traits in their profession.

(5) The field of Computer Science / Information Technology is perceived as a reputed dominion.
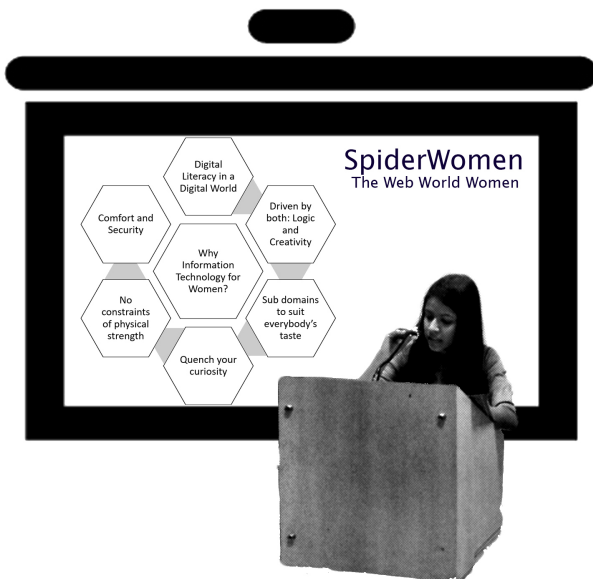
Having mentioned the rise in the feminineness which the Digital Sector in India has witnessed, I certainly do not deny the point that IT is presently a male dominated field. But, it surely marks a wave of change—a change for good ; a change towards equality. Throughout the years that I have spent as a student of this subject, my fondness for it is increasing and I have started realizing the importance of this subject for everybody. IT is not a separate subject—it is application oriented with applications which are incorporated in all other fields of studies. IT enables making various other fields of study interdisciplinary. It simplifies lives.

In this world, where technology is taking cartwheels and moving forward with such a pace, it is imperative that each of us is Digitally Literate ! Moreover, in the

patriarchal society that we live in, it is all the other more important for us, women, to be acquainted with The Thing which is ruling the world—Computers. This is necessary for us to lead a self-sustained life without being left behind. Talking by experience, Computer Science is Fun, believe me for once.

As a member of the Technical Forum (AASF) of my institute, each year we organize sessions for the freshmen to introduce them to various possibilities in the field of IT—be it programming, development, designing or any other upcoming field. While conducting the sessions, I observe that the girls are more inquisitive. They are more willing to learn. Over the course of time, there remains no difference in the level of skills attained by everybody. The girls are at par (sometimes even lead !).

It is time that we break all inhibitions that we hold regarding "women in computer science". Computer science is nothing but putting into a structured manner the things that we usually do in our routine work (called Algorithms, in the CS lingo !). Don't get exasperated by the image of the computer geek/nerd that you hold in your mind—that is not what CS is only about. It is a beautiful domain incorporating fields suiting everybody's interest. You just have to pick up what you enjoy doing ! It is time to conquer this digital web ! Enter into the web world. SpiderWoman, eh ?

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