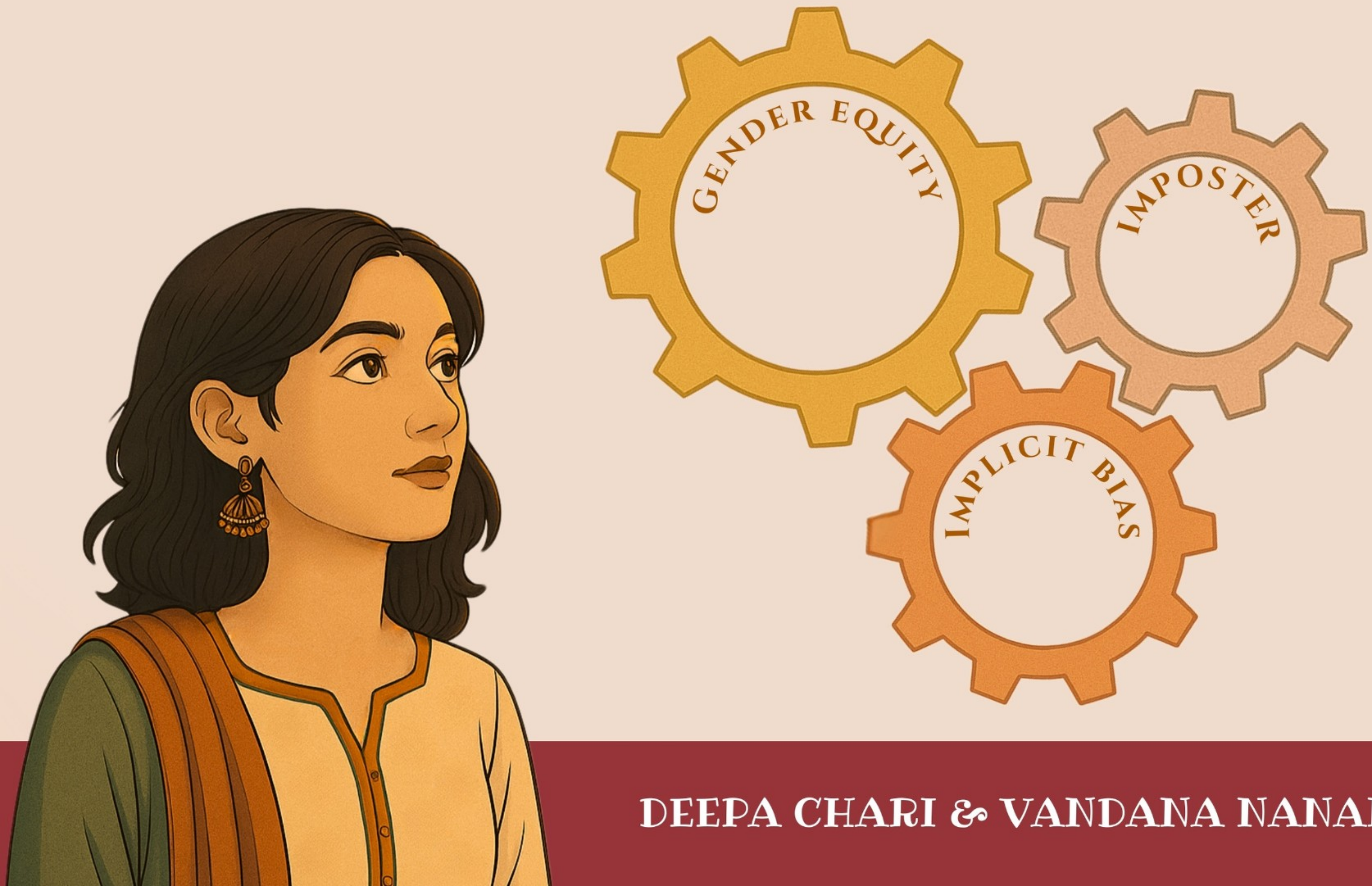


TUNING MENTAL FRAMEWORKS



DEEPA CHARI & VANDANA NANAL



TUNING MENTAL FRAMEWORKS

Genesis of “Tuning Mental Frameworks”

Hello everyone !!!

Life is full of challenges, right?

Is your decision/choice ever presumed because of your gender?

Have you doubted your competence because of someone's comments?

Do you feel other classmates have more clarity than you?

Rest assured - you are not alone....

The first step towards overcoming such challenges is to become aware of issues like imposter syndrome (self doubt), conscious and unconscious prejudices/biases- of your own as well as of those around you.

The book “*Tuning Mental Frameworks*” is a collection of cartoons depicting some common situations like the feeling of imposter syndrome, implicit biases, and microaggressions (i.e. biases which may lead to subtle hurtful actions). Some of these may be familiar to you, while some may be new... When you read these stories, peep into your lives and observe your surroundings/ friends. Can you spot some of the hidden traits in and around you?

We also encourage you to reflect on the impact of these stories. Do you think some of the situations can be roadblocks to someone's success? What can be done to address such challenges?

The book is mainly aimed at science students at the graduate level. It has its roots in interactive workshops conducted as a part of TIFR *Vigyan Vidushi (Physics)* programme and the Gender in Physics Working Group (GIPWG) activities.

We hope these stories will pave the way to overcome the imposter syndrome and to eliminate biases, thereby collectively fostering a positive environment.

Happy reading!!!

Deepa Chari and Vandana Nanal

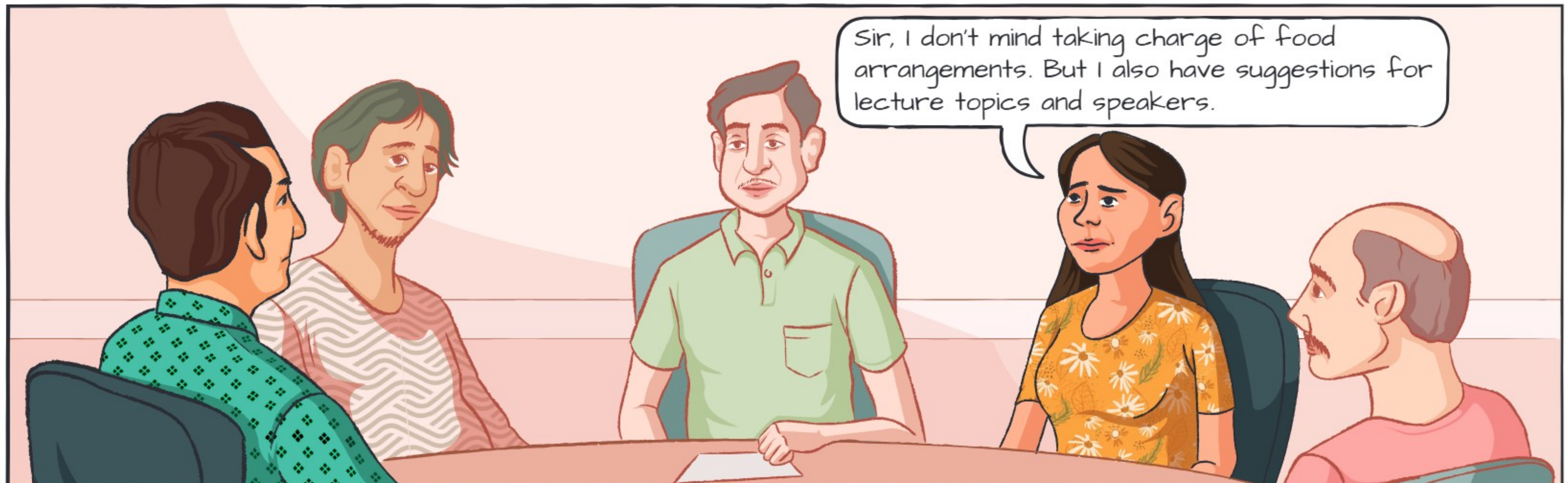
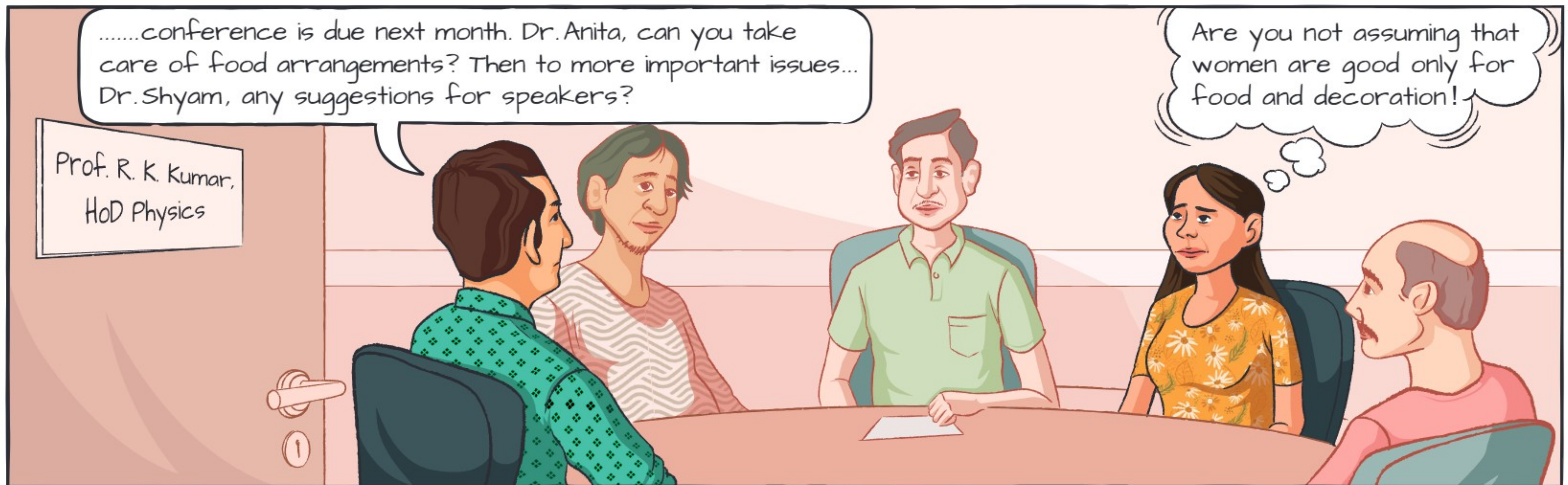
When one thinks of a professor...



...When one thinks of a professor



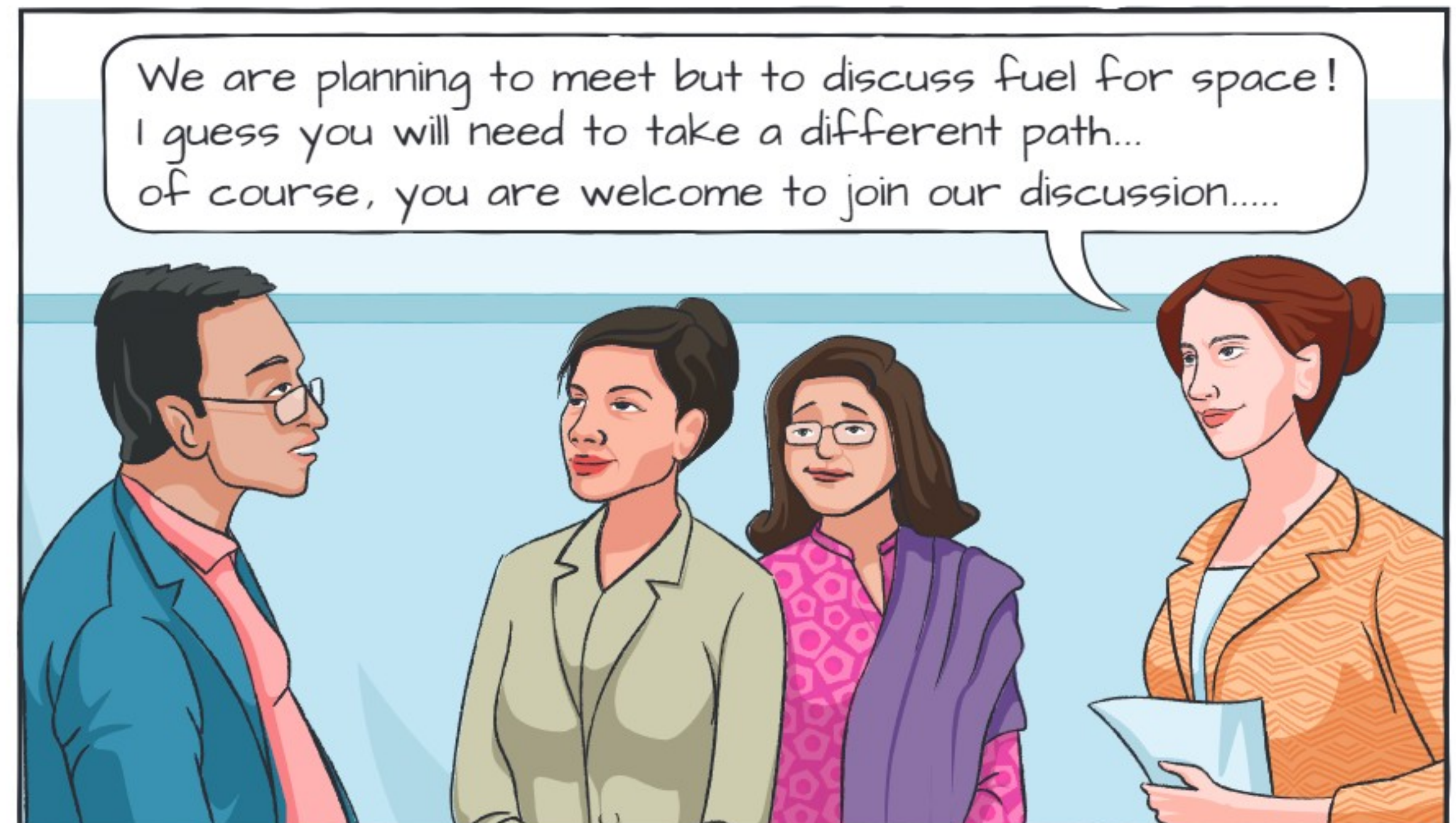
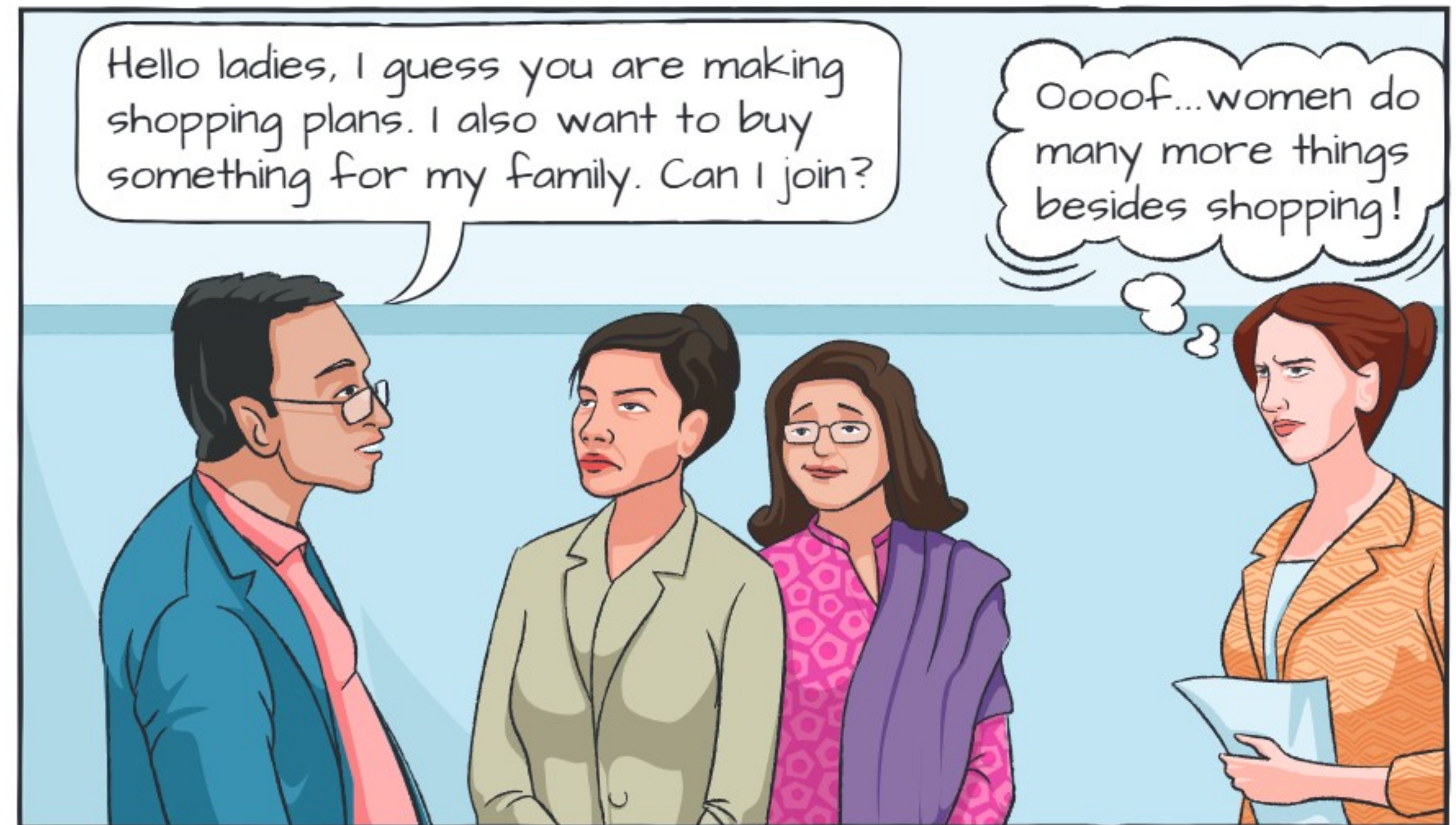
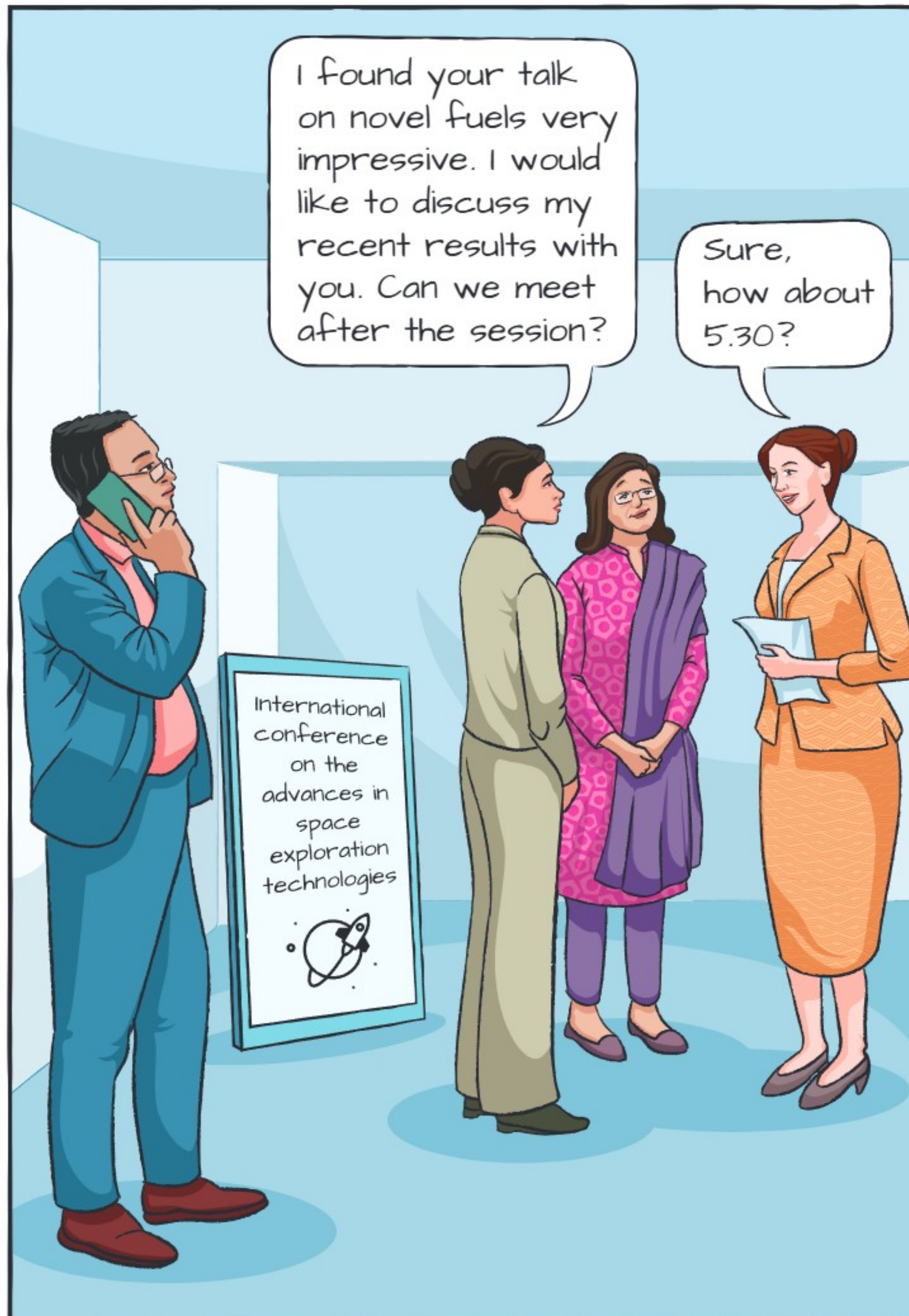
Breaking typical conventions...



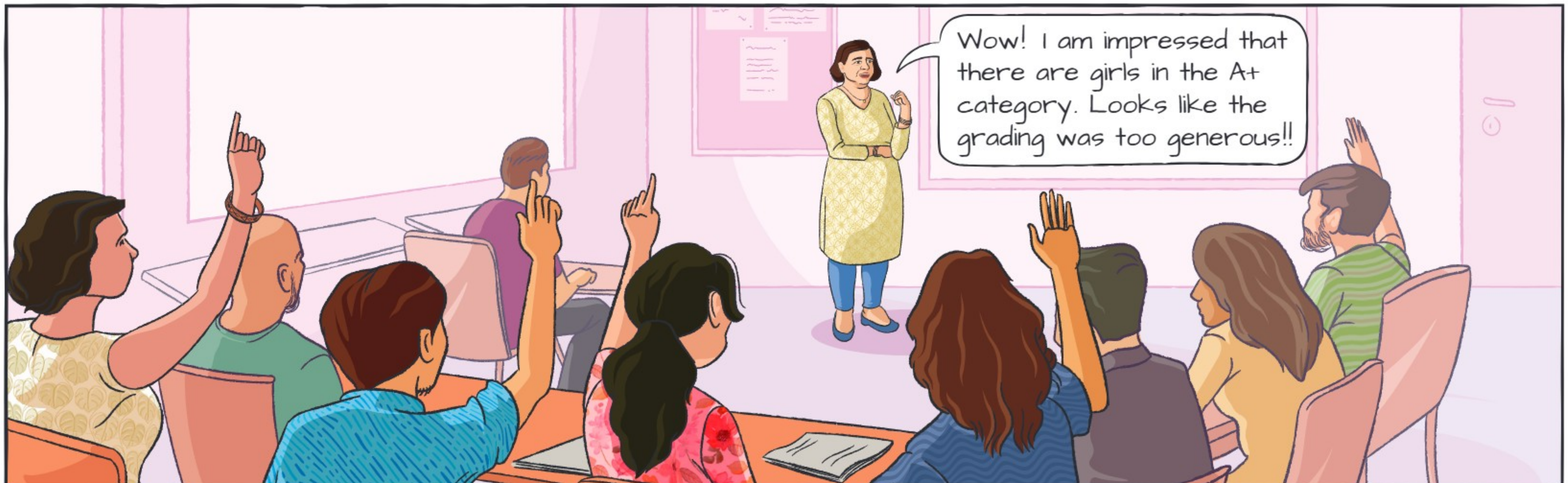
...Breaking typical conventions



Presumptions can land you in soup...



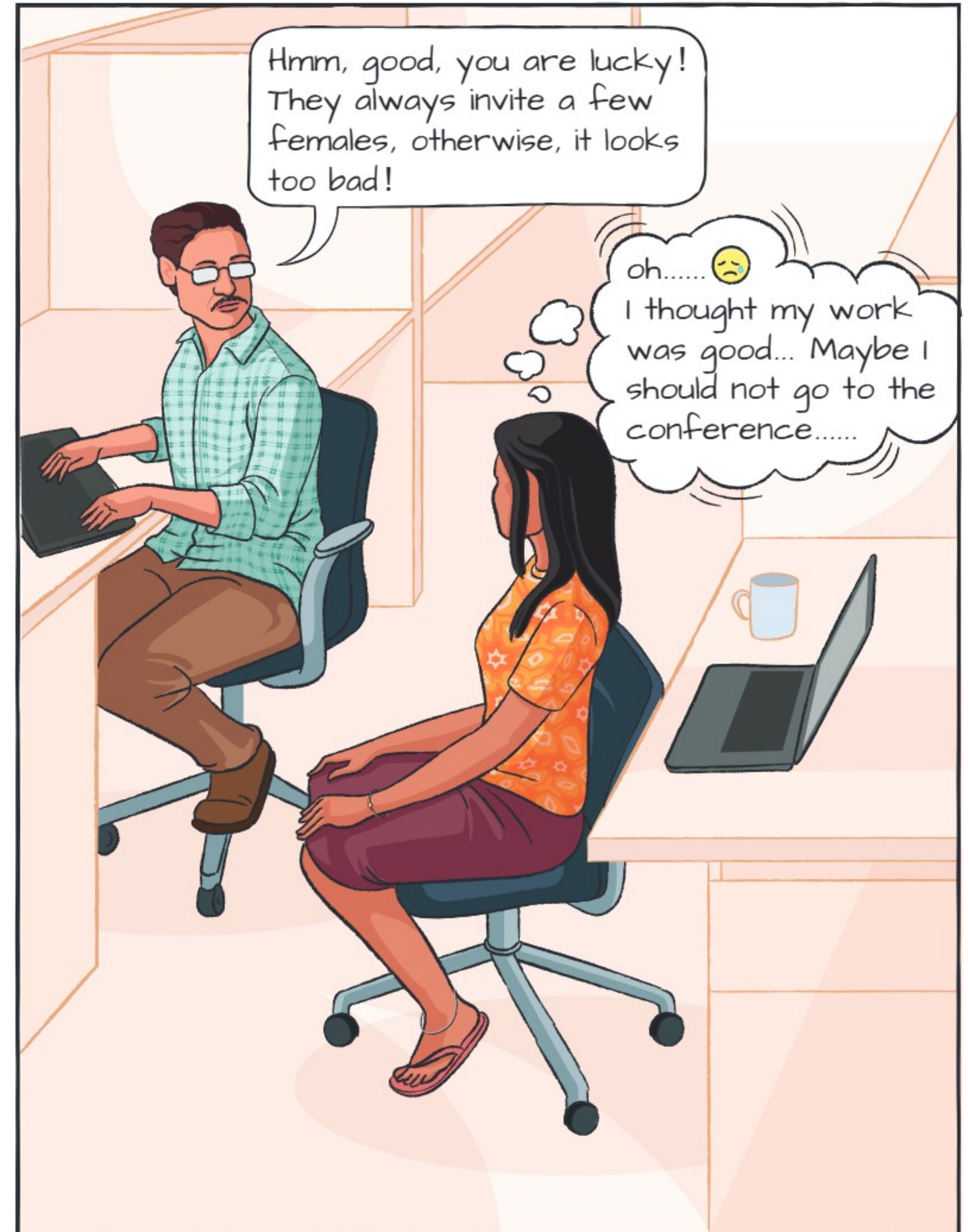
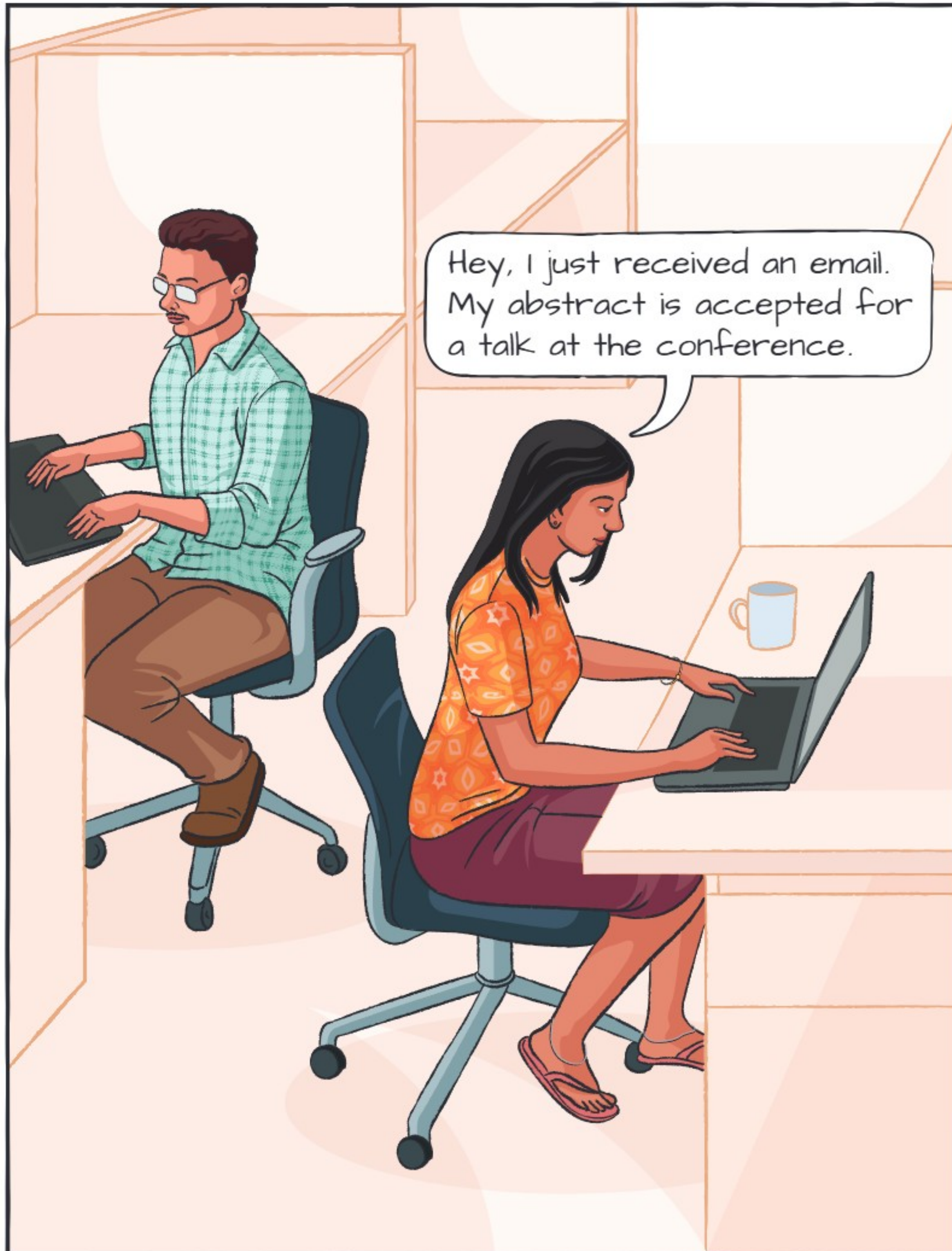
...Presumptions can land you in soup



Respect the boundaries - Professional vs Personal...

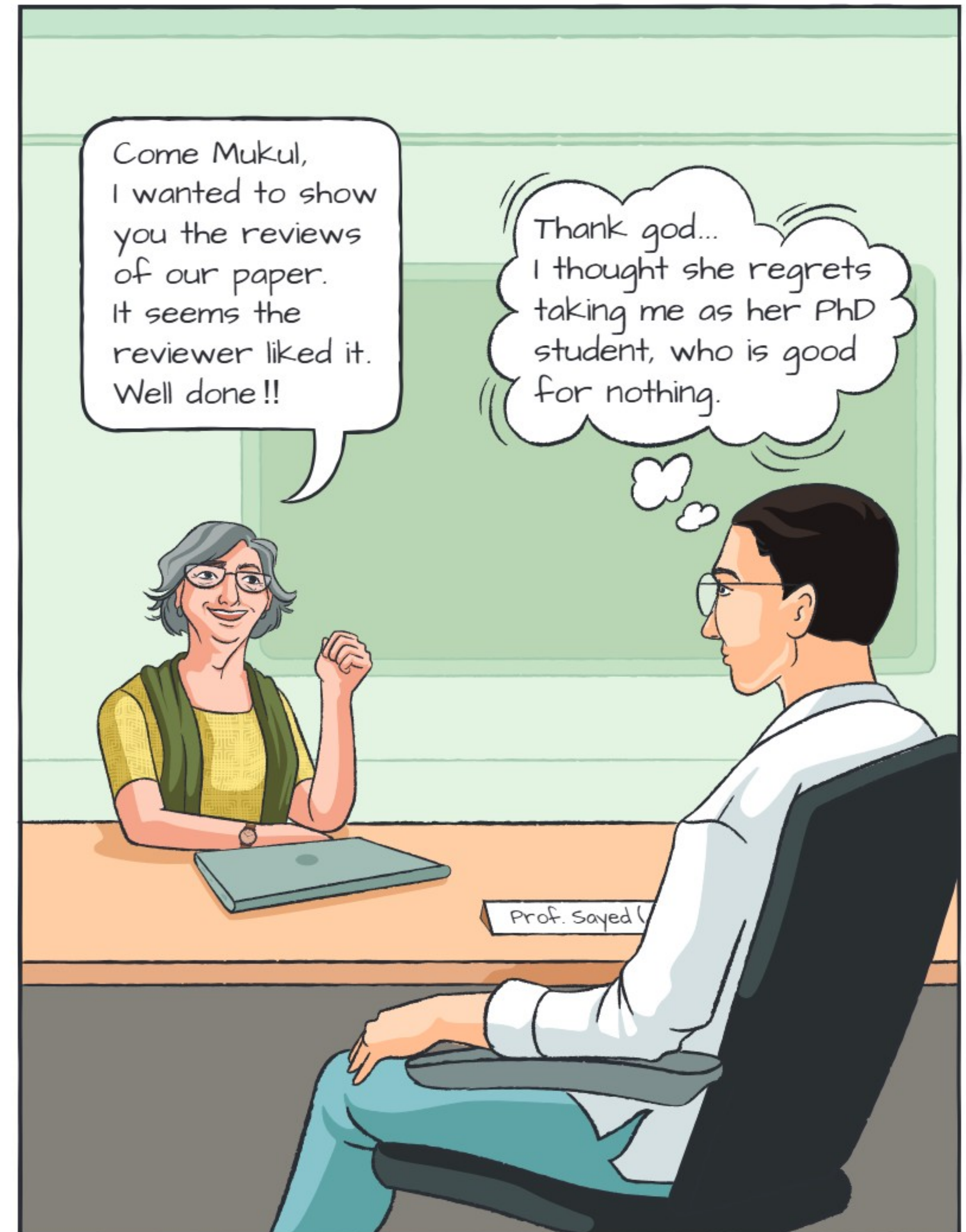


...Callous comments can be harmful



Fear within...





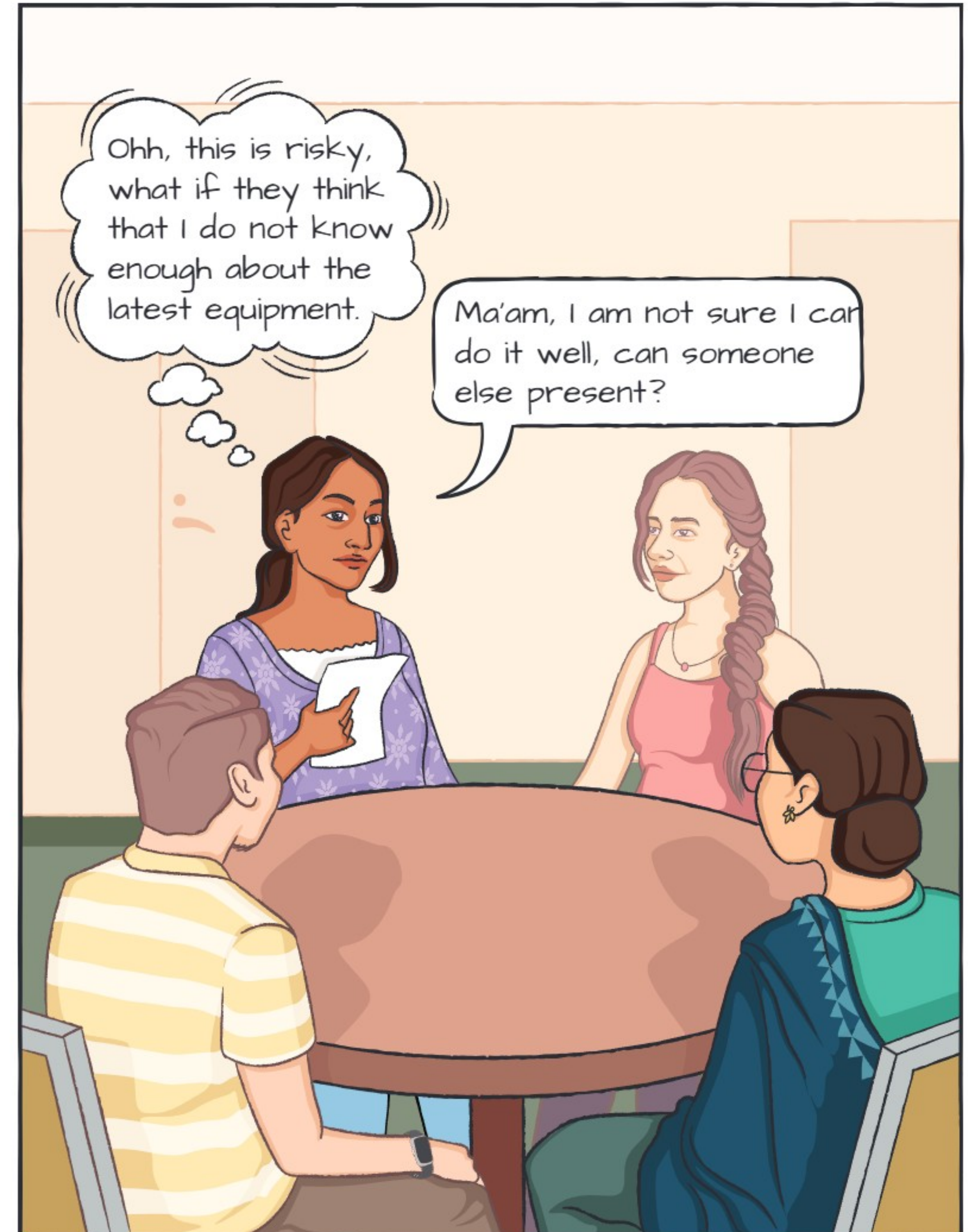
Value yourself...



...Persistent self-doubt is injurious to progress



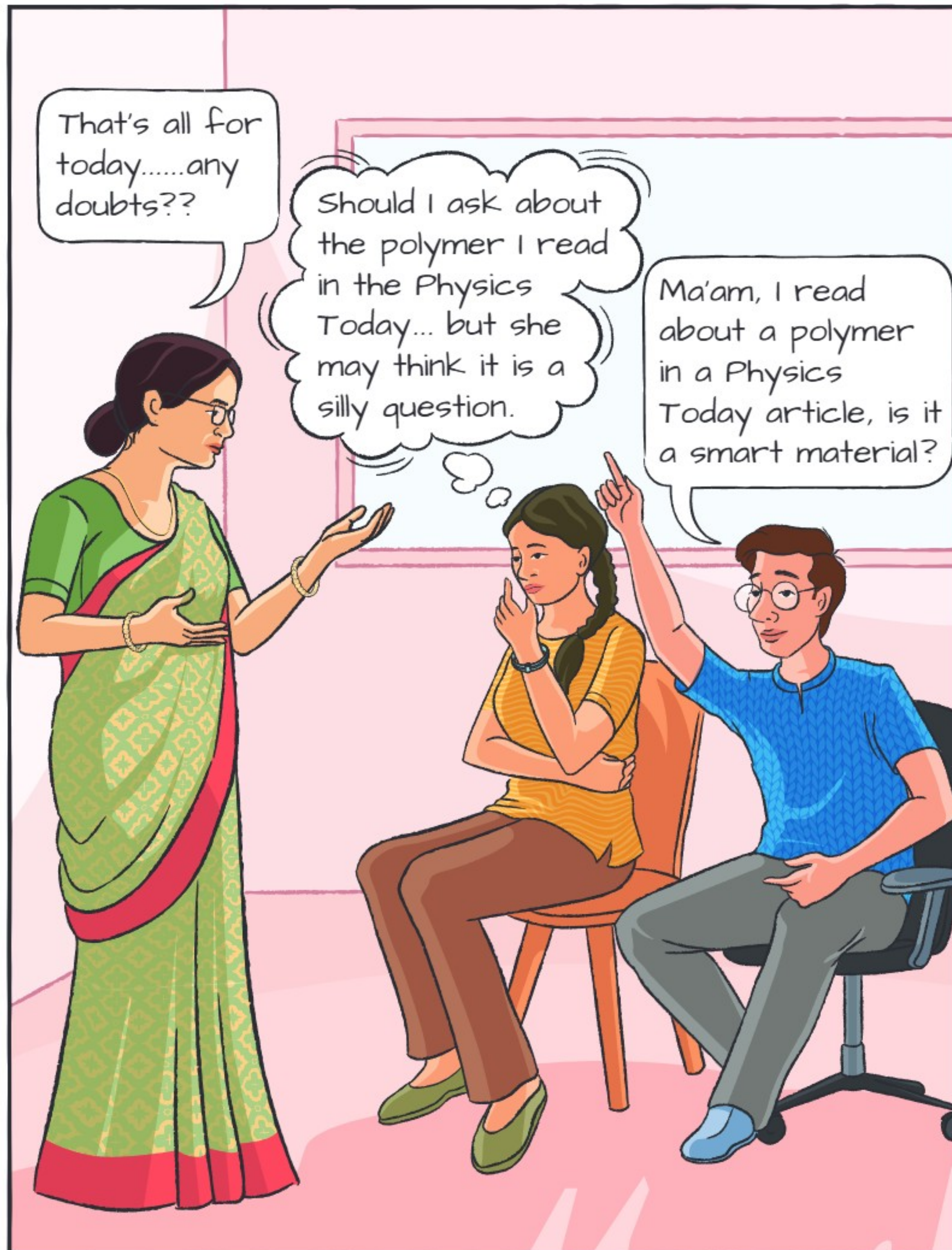
Climb all the mountains...



...Interventions are necessary



I shall overcome...



Reflections....

Did some of the stories appear familiar to situations you encounter in college/ workplace?

Let's understand a bit more about these hidden demons and how they impact our lives:

The feeling of **imposter** or self-doubt is associated with how one judges one's successes and failures differently in comparison to those of others. Such feelings of self-doubt can lead to a belief that one is less competent and, consequently, can result in erosion of confidence. Everybody can suffer from the imposter feeling sometimes or the other. However, studies have shown that women/gender minorities are more prone to this syndrome.

How to overcome it? Don't let the thoughts of self-doubt clutter your mind. Remember that you can achieve whatever you desire, if you put your efforts in the right direction. Also, have trust in the thought that 'your success is your own achievement!'. You can talk about your feelings with friends and build confidence.

Implicit bias is a negative feeling about an individual or group. The person with implicit bias is generally unaware of or can't pinpoint where these feelings are coming from. But the bias can lead to hurtful behaviours, making judgments, and passing subtle negative comments in the form of microaggression. The biased behaviour can adversely affect the person(s) at the receiving end and may fuel the feeling of imposter.

Can one shift the mental framework? It is important to be aware of our biases and how they can impact others. We should be sensitive about what we say to others. Importantly, be vocal about biases.... If you are a witness to or are subjected to biased behaviour, try to correct it to the extent feasible. Remember that the remedial measures will be situation dependent - can be prompt or can be a corrective action/reaction at a later point in the form of protest/counselling. *Also, note that there is no "readymade" or "one-for-all" solution.*

We hope that these stories will prompt you to think about some situations and have stimulating conversations with your friends, increasing awareness all around.

Tuning Mental Frameworks

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Dr. Deepa Chari

Deepa Chari is a faculty member at the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, TIFR. Passionate about physics teaching, she is one of the lead coordinators for Vigyan Pratibha - a national level student nurture and teacher capacity building programme in high school science and mathematics. Through various institutional programmes, she works towards increasing awareness about gender equity and necessary interventions. She worked as a member of the Gender in Physics Working Group (GIPWG) of the Indian Physics Association during 2021-22.



Prof. Vandana Nanal

Vandana Nanal is a senior professor working in experimental nuclear and accelerator physics at TIFR. Her research covers very broad, yet focused problems from neutrinos to nuclei. She has been associated with the Gender in Physics Working Group (GIPWG) of the Indian Physics Association since its inception and served as its Chair during 2023-24. Featured in "She is – 75 women in STEAM" as an exemplary role model, her rigorous work for promoting gender equity in science is evident through many avenues.

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