

Report on
PowerBio-CHG-IBAB Workshop
titled
“Thriving in Science: Skills, Careers and Well-Being for PhD Scholars”

Date: Jul 4, 2026

Venue: Centre for Human Genetics and
Institute of Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology, Bengaluru, India

Overview & Intent

On July 4, 2026, the Centre for Human Genetics (CHG) and the Institute of Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology (IBAB) hosted the PowerBio-CHG-IBAB workshop, titled “*Thriving in Science: Skills, Careers and Well-Being for PhD Scholars*,” in Bengaluru. Organised by Radhika Nair, Shruthi S. Vembar, and Anjali Karande, the single-day event aimed to provide early-career research scholars with structured mentorship, actionable strategies, and peer discussions to address core structural and personal challenges in academia.

Key Themes & Structure

The workshop was divided into three core sessions combining panel discussions, audience Q&A, and interactive round-table exchanges:

- **Gender Bias, Equity & Institutional Culture:** Addressed systemic discrimination, lab culture, institutional accountability, and practical grievance mechanisms.
- **Mentorship, Leadership & Networking:** Focused on navigating student-supervisor dynamics, developing self-advocacy, emotional intelligence, and scientific communication.
- **Work-Life Balance & Mental Health:** Explored burnout, financial stress from fellowship delays, family responsibilities, and non-academic career opportunities.

The event concluded with a cultural playback theatre performance by a Bengaluru-based group *Threads & Tales* to facilitate creative reflection.

Participation & Outcomes

10 Bengaluru-based panelists (from IISc, NCBS, NIMHANS, PES University, CHG, and IBAB) and 35 registered attendees, primarily from Bengaluru, participated in the workshop. Participant feedback was highly positive (average rating of 4.64 out of 5), with attendees reporting significant post-workshop gains in confidence regarding recognizing gender bias, handling difficult supervisor conversations, and managing stress. Most participants expressed intent to prioritize mental well-being and proactively build professional networks.

Key Learnings & Future Recommendations

Overall, the PowerBio-CHG-IBAB workshop successfully created a crucial platform for early-career scholars to engage with complex topics surrounding academic culture, mental health,

and career development. While logistical challenges such as high registration drop-outs highlighted key administrative lessons for future events, such as introducing refundable registration fees and extending the event across multiple days, the high satisfaction ratings and measurable boosts in participant confidence underscored the initiative's overall success. By leveraging local institutional support, cost-effective resource management, and interactive dialogue, the workshop established a sustainable model for empowering PhD researchers to navigate professional challenges and thrive in their scientific careers.