

# Indian Federation of University Women's Associations

AFFILIATED TO GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL



# Voices of Hope

I have become my own version of an optimist. If I can't make it through one door, I'll go through another door – or I'll make a door.

Sarojini Naidu

Let the world see the power and resilience of Indian women.

Rani Lakshmibai

I believe that education is the key to every woman's liberation.

Savitribai Phule

The ability to think straight, some knowledge of the past, some vision of the future, some skill to do useful service, some urge to fit that service into the well-being of the community these are the most vital things education must try to produce.

Victoria Gildersleeve

Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this thing must be attained.

Marie Curie

Girls have to be toughened, so they can survive a world that presses harder on women.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni



## President's Message



Dear Sisters of the Indian Federation,

It is a moment of immense satisfaction and pride for IFUWA to be able to host this International Conference, 2024 originally scheduled to be held in 2020 had not the devastating pandemic took away from us the opportunity of hosting the same.

In August of 2020, IFUWA completed 100 years and began its journey to proceed with meaningful activities to keep our mission of lifelong education and empowerment of girls and women alive and active. Respecting the legacy of our past stalwarts who had sowed the seeds of quality performance, we were fortunate to bring into foray academic discussions through our richly-curated programmes helping to be involved and further their knowledge concerning the pressing issues of our society. At the national level, well-crafted projects dealing with women empowerment has paved the way for skill development along with financial acumen to help girls acquire self reliance. IFUWA crossed borders to establish partnership, functioning with the NFAs of Egypt and Canada to conduct projects on existing social issues of combating workplace harassment and eradication of plastic usage in daily lives. We are proud of our scholarship system which over the years has taken care to support the deserving meritorious candidates in different research pursuits primarily concerning crucial women-related issues.

IFUWA made an untiring effort and in cooperation with the GWI Board to bring back to

life UWAsia in 2021 and reconstruct the once installed SAARCFUW, now SAARCGWI back on its feet in 2023. IFUWA President thanks GWI Vice President Meera Bondre for being with me to achieve the same. The countries of SAARC, who are not GWI affiliates, became our partners in projects. As a way forward strategy, IFUWA installed the Facebook page and YouTube to enhance membership and visibility of our work.

The international seminar organised by IFUWA has been successful in bringing together members of the Asian region who are interfacing common issues related to women's status and sustainable development. It is true that each country of this region has its own set of problems specific to its geography, economy and culture for which erudite minds are working together to find innovative solutions in their own way. Considering Sustainable Development as an ever-evolving concept, we need to learn from each other at all levels and involve our stakeholders in the process of securing sustainability. Our mission is to work in cooperation, globally and locally, to face and overcome the myriads of challenges that we confront.

We are privileged to have with us eminent personalities who have delved deeply into concerns of sustainability. The learning arrived at will inspire IFUWA members who are best suited to take up the work as a mission with our century old institutional standing and a strong global network. Women as conservators can effectively promote sustainable development practices by making use of their rich education. The Conference is an ideal platform for candid discussions leading to fruitful actions confirming the idea that we stand for Working Together for a Sustainable Future.

Regards

**Ranjana Banerjee**

President

IFUWA/ UWAsia / SAARCGWI

## Message from GWI President



Dear President Ranjana and IFUWA family,  
Greetings from London.

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the GWI Board to wish you all hosting the IFUWA Regional Conference in Pune from 1st - 2nd March, 2024 every success in your endeavours. This is also the year that GWI celebrates its 105th anniversary in July. The Indian Federation has always played a pivotal role in GWI (formerly IFUW) with former Presidents such as Dr. Bina Roy and Dr. Chitra Ghosh as leaders, the latter I knew. More recently, the late Dr. Mehta's seed money has enriched GWI and of course we have the Bina Roy partners in development.

Pune is hosting an important event as it brings together the former UWAsia and SAARC now

renamed SAARCGWI for which we pay tribute to GWI VP Membership Dr. Meera Bondre who worked so hard to consolidate the blocs; an achievement for the current Board. With NFA members from Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Nepal and Bangladesh attending, this is both timely and relevant as is the theme.

'Working together for a sustainable future' dovetails with GWI's mission this triennium as we concentrate on SDG4 / Sustainable Development Goal 4 - quality, inclusive education.

Looking back on our history (I was Co-chair of the Centennial Triennial Conference in Geneva in 2019 as BFWG's President along with the Canadian and American Presidents as our 3 countries founded IFUW as it was then). We can be proud of how many women and girls we have empowered and continue to empower. 3 of our members have been Nobel Laureates. During this Board's tenure, we have been nominated to be finalists for the prestigious Earthshot prize established by Prince William.

It has been my privileged duty to serve GWI (then IFUW) as the youngest VP and first of African descent to be elected a VP in 1989, the first BFWG President of colour from 2017 - 2020 and the first GWI President of African origin elected in 2022 with the most diverse Board in GWI history. My Oxford College, St. Hugh's appointed me an Honorary Fellow as a consequence for which I'm most grateful. I have been deeply humbled by the confidence reposed in me. But this is a team effort for which I thank the GWI Board and Executive Director, Stacy. As Helen Keller remarked, 'Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much'.

Dr. Ranjana Banerjee and her Board deserve credit for organising what we're sure will be a productive and insightful Conference and we wish them the best of luck.

In solidarity,  
**Patrice Wellesley-Cole**  
GWI President



## Editor's Note



The century-old Indian Federation of University Women's Associations has a journey of its own, hardly ever told. Today, we put the journey across to you, for you to learn and comprehend the efforts of scores of women who have walked this path of women

empowerment. It is known to very few that many stalwarts over the years have worked together, tirelessly and seamlessly, to get this organisation going decisively forward, with a mission of empowering women, year after year.

IFUWA has, many University Women's Associations (UWA) under its umbrella, which are independent bodies working with the same mission and zeal. We put across their stories also and let you have a feel of what these NGOs have been doing for so many years, on a pan India level.

Generating funds for this noble cause is always an uphill task but these women never lost hope

but worked to keep believing in the cause and support women in need of education, shelter or guidance.

Every UWA has a story of its own. This is because every UWA has many years of activities behind it. Many stalwarts have given their quality time to these activities, milestones that have been crossed and there are achievements which, although in public domain, are not known.

So today, IFUWA together with the UWAs, share their journey through this Memoirs. The vast plethora of past, present and future, determines the depth and range of IFUWA and the UWAs that form the backbone of IFUWA.

Trust, you will enjoy reading of the journey as much as the members enjoyed taking the steps forward.

**Purobi Ghosh Mohan**

Convener – Communication  
IFUWA / UWAsia / SAARCGWI

## GWJ Executive Director's Message

Dear IFUWA Family,

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the "Memoirs" compendium for the Indian Federation University Women's Association (IFUWA) "Working Together for a Sustainable Future" Conference. For over 100 years, Graduate Women International and IFUWA have passionately advocated for education as the foundation of women's empowerment. The power of education and the role of graduate women as agents of social and economic change have helped uplift women in Indian society and worldwide.

Education is not just about accumulating our knowledge but also about unlocking our potential, breaking barriers, and achieving our

aspirations. Through GWJ and IFUWA's collective efforts in advocating for education at all levels, we have paved the way for many women and girls to live without fear of inequality, but the work is never complete.

I extend my sincerest congratulations to IFUWA for their outstanding efforts in organising the 2024 Conference and "Memoirs" publication. This compendium will inspire future generations, guiding them toward a future where sustainability and education are intertwined.

**Stacy Dry Lara**

Executive Director 2016 - Present  
GWJ

## Graduate Women International (GWI)

The IFUWA is affiliated to Graduate Women International (GWI) which has its Head Quarters in Geneva. It is working towards and advocating for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality secondary and tertiary education and training up to the highest levels. The vision is to ensure that girls and women in the world achieve education beyond primary school.

International Federation of University Women (IFUW) completed its hundredth year in 2019 with a celebration at the Geneva Conference. This Association saw its birth owing to the coming together of three accomplished women-Dean Virginia Guilder sleeve of Barnard College USA, Prof. Caroline Spurgeon of London and Mrs. Rose Sidwick of Birmingham, who had first conceived that a functioning women's organisation needs to be set up which will be internationally acclaimed and with national federations affiliated to it. In 2015, after 96 years, IFUW changed its name to Graduate Women International (GWI) to promote inclusivity.

Today, there are national affiliates in 60 countries, all of which join the international advocacy and grant programmes to learn as to how one can become part of an international network of women, working for change. Members volunteer their expertise in a wide range of community projects. Literacy, financial literacy and vocational training programmes/mentoring workshops to promote women's skills and learning/campaigns to increase women's awareness of their rights, to mention some. GWI enjoys an ECOSOC status with the



Commission on the Status of Women and has women working for the United Nations in New York, Paris, Geneva and Vienna. GWI focusses on (a) Projects, (b) Fellowship and Grants, (c) Advocacy and Policy, (d) Policy Papers. The motto of GWI and the IFUWA are –

- Promote lifelong education for women and girls;
- Promote international cooperation, friendship, peace and respect for human rights for all, irrespective of their age, race, nationality, religion, political opinion, gender and sexual orientation or other status;
- Advocate for the advancement of the status of women and girls.

GWIs Triennial Conferences invite and bring together members from different NFAs for academic discussions, strategic planning for women's empowerment through educational and the Bina Roy Partners in Development Program.

The Bina Roy Partners in Development Program supports projects that empower girls and women through education and leadership development. BRPID grants are awarded to GWI National Federations and Associations from developing countries on a competitive basis.

The projects are supported by donations from impact investors, personal contributions and our own member affiliates around the world. IFUWA members from the local chapters have time and again participated in the BRPID Projects.

BRPID was first named the Counterpart Aid Program in 1978 and later renamed BRPID in memory of Dr. Bina Roy. Dr. Bina Roy was the first Asian President of the International Federation of University Women. She believed that friendly and supportive links should be forged among GWI affiliates to provide strong international solidarity, while encouraging and aiding the creation and implementation of projects.



## IFUWA

More than 100 years in serving the cause of women empowerment.

Indian Federation of University Women's Association is the national body whose motto is to 'Serve Humanity' and thrives to provide better education and help women across the nation to build their own future.

### The journey

Federation of University Women in India, founded in 1920, was affiliated to the then International Federation of University Women (IFUW) in 1921. In 1952-53, the Federation became a registered body and in 1961-62, the Memorandum, Constitution and Bye-laws of the Federation were amended to introduce a federal structure. The name was changed to 'Indian Federation of University Women's Associations' (IFUWA) and all local chapters became 'Associations' with membership status. Since 1961, all member Associations of that before have been known as University Women's Association of (city). In some cases, the original name was retained for local reasons. Of all the Associations, the Mumbai Association, known as Women Graduates Union, has achieved the longest lifespan.

IFUWA commenced its activities with Ms. Prativa Chaudhuri as its first President and Miss Cornelia Sorabji as the first Secretary. Miss Sorabji was one of the first women lawyers in India and pioneered the opening up of the legal profession to women in India. The commitment of the pioneers to make IFUWA a central body guiding, advising and assisting the local Associations affiliated to it, saw the setting up of local University Women's Associations pan India. Since its inception, the mission of IFUWA has been to give opportunity to university educated women, to help them express their united opinion, to encourage cooperation in academic endeavours and independent research and above all, if need be, to voice their concern to government authorities seeking justice for women.

To establish the motto of IFUWA, the logo of a

lamp encircled with the words 'Enlightenment promotes Understanding' was made which till date is the identity with IFUWA vision.

IFUWA is proud to have had 29 distinguished women presidents who have led the parent Association till date and under whose guidance and concerted efforts the Association has grown from strength to strength. It has empowered women to enhance and establish themselves with better education. IFUWA believes in the effectiveness of voluntary work for the creation of peace and dignity for women.

### Marching forward

- IFUWA developed its public relations via representation on the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO through the then IFUW (presently GWI).
- IFUWA has undertaken Study Groups and organised conferences, forming the platform for exchange of diverse ideas in matters related to educational interests. Empowered members are therefore prepared to take action leading to policy formulations.
- Between 1962-1967 IFUWA under the leadership of Lakshmi Menon, directed studies on part-time employment for women and their impact on family life. She was consecutively president for three terms in which fifteen new local associations were formed.
- In 1978, the 'Bina Roy Partners in Development' (BRPID) Program commenced where a national affiliate wishing to benefit from the grant of the then IFUW (presently GWI) sends a project proposal to the then IFUW related to higher education or leading to advancement of women and girls, which if approved is matched with other suitable donor/s. Over the years, local chapters under the aegis of IFUWA has been the recipients of this project grant.
- In 1986 at Christchurch New Zealand, University Women of Asia (UWAsia) was

formally constituted within the framework of the then IFUW (presently GWI). This was done to ensure greater participation of the members from the Asian Federations of India / Bangladesh / Korea / Japan / Hongkong / Sri Lanka and Thailand.

- In 1987, the then IFUW President Dr. Ritva – Liisa Karvetti visited Project 5-O in Calcutta, a local chapter of IFUWA.
- In 1994, The Bina Roy Memorial Research Fellowship in Postgraduate Studies and Research in areas of Humanities, Social Sciences Education, Law and Women's Development studies came into being. In 2007, The IFUWA – WGU Scholarship was instituted in Bombay headquarters and in 2016, IFUWA introduced the Kumararani Meena Muthiah Scholarship in Chennai headquarters for doctoral and post doctoral research work.
- In 1995, SAARCFUW was established with the objective to foster a Federation of University Women associated with the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries who will promote understanding, friendship and cooperation irrespective of race, religion and nationality. It was set up for greater involvement of women of the region to encourage and reciprocate regional contacts in dealing with women related issues. Dr. Sudha Padhye and Dr. Panna Akhani from India were the founder members of SAARCFUW.
- In 1998-99, The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund (VGIF) provided funds to IFUWA to conduct Leadership Training Workshops which benefited a number of women from the cities of Bengaluru and Pune.
- 2001-2004, IFUWA held the charge of SAARCFUW.
- In 2009, IFUWA-VGIF celebrated the 40th year Anniversary Friendship Tour and Joint Conference in Calcutta (now Kolkata), hosted by the local chapter during the tenure of IFUWA President Mrs Enakshi Chattopadhyay.
- In 2013, at the Istanbul Conference, the past President of IFUWA, Late Dr. Mrs. Chitra Ghosh declared an Award for the best project conducted by any NFA that will have maximum sustainability and highest number of beneficiaries. The Award came to be known as the 'Chitra Ghosh Award for the Best Project on Women Empowerment'. It includes a Citation and a cash award of USD1000.
- From 1965 onwards, IFUWA members have served on the Board of the then IFUW and now GWI as Vice Presidents, Conveners and Members of different committees. IFUWA has contributed constructively in passing of significant country-specific resolutions at GWI.
- In 2019, Mrs. Swati Bedekar was awarded the Chitra Ghosh Award for the Best Project on Women Empowerment.
- In August 2020, IFUWA in her Centenary year instituted a new scholarship 'IFUWA Centenary Scholarship' and recognised the Icons who over the years have made the Association proud with their contributions.
- UWAsia was reinstated in 2021, under the leadership of IFUWA President Ranjana Banerjee, UWAsia Vice President Meera Bondre and the then GWI Board member Eileen Focke-Bakker.
- In 2022, Late Dr. Vinaybala Mehta kickstarted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Seed Fund of GWI by donating CHF 10,000 as 'seed money', with the hope that the fund will be used for pursuing of projects and education of trainers.
- In 2023, SAARCFUW was revived and renamed as SAARCGWI by President Ranjana Banerjee and Vice President GWI Member Meera Bondre. Today, SAARC countries which are no more affiliates of GWI, like Afghanistan, Maldives, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, are working with IFUWA as partners in projects.

#### Moments of international and national glory

Members continue to present and participate in



innumerable paper and workshop presentations at the international conferences as well as in the local chapters keeping to the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). IFUWA encourages young members to actively participate at the Young Members Forum at international conferences. A number of accolades and honours are received by IFUWA members at GWI and at other conferences. The local and national projects, workshops and seminars have fulfilled IFUWA's mission of helping the society at large having opened new vistas for IFUWA. IFUWA continues to encourage meritorious women and helps them pursue research through her Scholarship programme.

The strength of IFUWA lies in the summation of

educated, empowered and enlightened members who have overcome barriers to make life more effective and meaningful for women.

#### Looking to the future

IFUWA has worked towards worldwide connection of women graduates who have come together to design measures for fostering peace at all levels and educate the girl child for her independence and self respect.

Looking to the years ahead, IFUWA needs to form pressure groups, promote interventions and take up advocacy work. In the years to come, IFUWA will continue to lead in several women-centric domains empowering women and encouraging them to be self-reliant. It will continue to be the harbinger of hope to all sections of women in India.

## South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

SAARCFUW was established on 17th July, 1995 by the Sri Lankan Federation of University Women with the objective of having closer connections for networking between the South Asian affiliates of the then International Federation of University Women. It was in response to the SAARC's call for greater involvement of women in the SAARC's activities and for personal contacts to strengthen the official SAARC process. It was framed to be a regional body that would engage in discussing issues of women of this region in the likes of women's access to managerial and technical employment, skill development avenues, empowerment strategies, constraints, challenges and support services. The first President was Jezima Ismail from Sri Lanka, and Vice Presidents were Selina Khaleque from Bangladesh, Dr. Sudha Padhey from India, Jamal Devi Shrestha from Nepal and Dr. Faarukh Ahmad from Pakistan. The CIR was Dr. Panna Akhiani from India with Munira Khan as the press and publicity officer from Bangladesh. India became the Headquarters of SAARCFUW from 2001-2004. However, with the passage of time, SAARCFUW went into oblivion and not much was heard of the same thereafter.

It gives me much pleasure to announce the

revival of SAARCFUW, the Charter of which had been redone with the new logo and has been ratified by GWI at their Board Meeting on 26th April, 2023, to be born as SAARCGWI with a new logo designed by Dr. Saira Bano of PFUW. I am thankful to Dr. Meera Bondre, VP Membership GWI who has worked relentlessly along with me to make things happen. It was an uphill task to restart a body that had practically ceased to exist. Today, the revived SAARCGWI has members from the National Federations of India / Nepal / Bangladesh and Pakistan in our executive committee being affiliated to GWI. As non-members of GWI, we have members from Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives who will be our project partners.

SAARCGWI has committed to work for promoting understanding, friendship and cooperation amongst all irrespective of race, nationality, religion and political opinion. To use education as an instrument of social change to establish equality of status, securing human rights and peace in the region and to promote leadership and decision-making skills for the women of this region.

Long Live SAARCGWI

## University Women of Asia (UWAsia)

At the 22nd IFUW Conference in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 1986, University Women of Asia was formally instituted with Professor Khun Duanduen Bisalputra became the first President of UWAsia. The Asian group of University Women, under the aegis of the International Federation of University Women was formed in order to ensure the participation of the members from the Asian countries in the IFUW activities. For those members who were unable to attend IFUW Conferences had the privilege of attending the nearer ones to home. UWAsia took over the broad themes under IFUW's Study and Action Programme which entailed literacy campaigns and reporting of the activities of the national federations and associations, preparing grounds for the future studies on professional activities of university women in decision-making programmes. India became the headquarters of UWAsia in Bangalore from 1995-1998 with Nellie Dwarknath as the President and had their first Triennial Conference in 1997 with eleven countries as UWAsia members.

Down the years, the activities of UWAsia were slowly dwindling, however, happy to say that UWAsia was revived in the May of 2021 under the leadership of Eileen Focke-Bakker, then Convener of Membership GWI, Meera Bondre Vice President UWAsia, and yours truly as the President of IFUWA taking up the presidentship of UWAsia. The Asian NFAs of India / Bangladesh / Hong Kong / Japan / Nepal / Pakistan / Singapore and most recently Thailand makes up the member constituents. UWAsia framed its own constitution and with the good offices of Glenda Hecksher, Vice President Membership GWI, the UWAsia Logo came into existence. UWAsia is now active and performing to its fullest capacity. The focus area of UWAsia is to deal with matters which are specifically pertaining to the Asian region as there exists common issues affecting women of this region. During the Pandemic times, UWAsia conducted webinars hosted by the Asian NFAs. The executive committee

is in place with Indian members in the Board and member affiliates in the committee. We have come together to promote understanding with women of the Asian region of their social, economic and historical backgrounds in common and with differences and to encourage university women of the Asian region to reach at decision-making positions at national, regional and international levels

Go ahead UWAsia !!

'I am hopeful that hand-in-hand working together, SAARCGWI and UWAsia will be vibrant bodies sincerely working towards the cause of women and girls of this region and be able to evolve action plans and strategies to secure leadership and decision-making skills for women and to be able to make use of their education to live in dignity as empowered women of this region'

President Dr Ranjana Banerjee.





## Bangalore

### Beginnings:

The University Women's Association of Bangalore (UWAB) was founded in July 1963 and registered under the Mysore Societies Act, 1960 as a non-profit NGO.

Ms. Lakshmi N. Menon who was then the President of the Indian Federation of University Women's Associations and also the Minister of State for External Affairs in Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet was visiting Bangalore and Dr. (Mrs.) Ashlesha Bedi, who knew her well, had invited a group of women graduates to meet Ms. Menon. At that meeting, a decision was made to form the UWA of Bangalore (UWAB), to be affiliated to the Indian Federation.

Dr. Ashlesha Bedi was the first President, two of her sisters were members of Mumbai WGU and they also encouraged her to start the UWA Bangalore.

### The Memorandum of Association (1964) outlines the following aims:

- To help needy students in Bangalore to pursue higher studies here and to give scholarships for other Universities in India, if necessary
- To organise a 'Working Girls and Students' Hostel in Bangalore
- To enhance the education of women through lectures, study courses, seminars and other allied activities
- To influence public opinion towards civic responsibilities
- To undertake any activity calculated to achieve the objects enumerated above

The main focus though was to start an -

- i. education scholarship fund, and
- ii. a working women's hostel for young girls coming to the city for their first job.

### Early Projects

In the early 1980's, the UWAB members

collaborated with the Head of Department of Social Work and Rural Development, Bangalore University and with a grant from NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) took up developmental activities in Lakshmipura village, approx. 20 kms from Bangalore.

Ms. Subhadra Venkatappa was inspired by a programme on Doordarshan that focussed on developing & transforming a rural area by establishing schools to empower both men and women through education, and by introducing rainwater harvesting techniques for growing vegetables and other crops.

Sri Anna Hazare was the anchor for this "Role Model Village" TV programme, who later became the iconic leader of the anti-corruption movement in India in 2011.

At Lakshmipura Village, UWAB constructed a multipurpose community centre with a big hall for meetings, a Balwadi (childcare centre) and an adjoining room for health check-ups; in addition to this, a kitchen, dining room, borewell and water tank were built. But most important of all, separate toilets were constructed for men and women, to train the villagers in proper hygiene habits. The design and supervision was undertaken by a PhD student Rajendra Kumar who lived in Lakshmipura; he later became a Professor at Bangalore University.

UWAB members got involved in a housing programme and 59 houses were constructed in Lakshmipura Village.

### Working Women's Hostel

The members at that time were very keen for UWAB to have their own hostel building. Along with many fundraising events, the biggest fundraiser event was Smt. Rukmini Arundale's (Kalakshetra Foundation) dance drama programme which was a resounding success.

At the same time, the Government of India announced a grant-in-aid programme for construction of Working Women's hostels.

Thus, the members were able to achieve their dream, and a 70-bedded hostel "Shramanjali" for working women and students in Sampangiramnagar was inaugurated on 5th February, 1978.

After the success of the first hostel, the UWAB members felt that they could run a second hostel in another part of Bangalore city and with committed efforts towards fund raising, design and construction on 18th August 2012, the second 100-bedded for working women's hostel was inaugurated in New Thippasandra, Bangalore by Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairman and Managing Director of BIOCON Limited. The second hostel is named 'SARAYU' after a former President of the UWAB who donated very generously for the building construction. Additional Govt grants was also received.

The construction of the 2nd hostel was a challenging project - Meera R and Geeta J worked tirelessly to raise funds and supervise the construction of the 100-bedded hostel Sarayu.

Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw's message on the occasion captures the essence of UWAB's goals and commitment -

"UWA's commitment towards instilling self-confidence in women, encouraging them to overcome social barriers and empowering them to script their inspirational stories for other women to emulate, is truly commendable.

India's growth story cannot be scripted in the absence of women who are playing leadership roles in various fields spanning business, politics, medical, legal, social work etc. I, for one, strongly believe that Indian women have an enormous opportunity like never before to bring about transformational societal change and thereby sustainable economic development. And with organisations like UWA to support women, we are witnessing an exciting and energising change. (2012)

The Managing Committee members of UWAB have successfully run both the hostels; both together can accommodate a total of 175 girls; the accommodation offered is double sharing, three beds, 5 beds and dormitory sharing; both

students and working girls can avail the facilities. One hostel has a catering/mess attached.

These hostels not only offer a safe and affordable place to live, but also provides an environment where young girls from the rural and small towns can be helped to find their niche in the big city.

Very nominal charges are being levied for accommodation; the residents are from around Karnataka and other States in India.

Both the hostels are well equipped with water supply, solar heating, 24x7 security and CCTV cameras for surveillance of entrance and exit. Resident Wardens take care of the day-to-day running of the hostels.

The hostels are self-financing and run as per the guidelines of the Department of Women & Child Welfare, Govt. of Karnataka. A quarterly report of list of women residents and other activities is submitted to the State Dept.

#### Prominent Members of the UWA Bangalore and their Contributions

Dr. Ashlesha Bedi was the founder and first President of the UWAB; she motivated and inspired the new members to undertake a variety of activities and work towards fulfilling the goals of the UWAB.



Sarayu Sarangapani was one of the earliest members of the UWA of Bangalore, and played an important role in the early years of the Association. Born on 19th August, 1923, she obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree with distinction from Calcutta University and won a medal in the Diplome de Langue Française, of the Alliance Française of Calcutta.

An ardent Bridge player, she won the Babuka Challenge Cup Bridge Tournament in August 1958. As President of UWA Bangalore, she used to organise many interesting programmes, and one of these was "Brides and Mothers-in-Law".

IFUWA LOGO - When Dr. Bina Roy had asked the IFUWA members to suggest a phrase to go with the Federation's Lamp logo, it was Sarayu's

suggestion of "Enlightenment Promotes Understanding" that was selected and adopted by the IFUWA after 1972.

Shantha Raghavan (UWAB Member) and Ram Mohan, Sarayu Sarangpani's children donated more than Rs. 66 Lakhs towards the construction of this hostel.



P. Gangamma Bopanna, also called 'Gangu' by her friends and family, in 1955, she completed her law degree from Madras Law College, and became the first woman lawyer of Kodagu (Coorg).

In 1957, she married P. P. Bopanna, a lawyer practising in Bangalore, who became a Judge of the Karnataka High Court in 1977. Gangu had many social interests in Bangalore, and never failed to promote the culture of her home district, Kodagu. She always dressed in the native Kodava-style of sari, and also published a book, 'The Essential Kodava Cookbook' in 2000, along with the retired Indian Foreign Service diplomat, Ms. C. B. Muthamma.

Gangu Bopanna was one of the earliest members of UWAB, who served the Association for 38 long years. She was the UWAB President for three terms, during 1979-80, 1982-83 and 1995-99, and also served as an IFUWA Central Committee member. As the Treasurer, she managed the Association's finances and Government grants during construction of the Working Women's Hostel at Sampangirama Nagar. As President, she steered the UWA's activities and carried her teammates along in the various tasks to achieve the goals of the Association. She was also the Chairperson of the Hostel Committee, and worked closely with the Hostel Warden to maintain high standards for the hostel residents.

Unfortunately, she passed away unexpectedly in 2001 and could not see the completion of the second Hostel.



Nellie Dwarakanath was born in Mercara, Coorg (now Madikeri, Kodagu), and grew up in Bombay. She completed a Postgraduate Diploma in

Business Administration from St. Joseph's College, Bangalore.

After moving to Bangalore in 1969, she joined the University Women's Association of Bangalore in 1971 and did part-time voluntary work, besides holding a full-time job. At UWA Bangalore, she worked her way up as Hon. Secretary, Scholarship Committee Chair, Association Representative and finally, President of UWA of Bangalore in 1990-92.

She was elected as one of the six voting delegates from IFUWA to attend the XVIII Triennial Conference of IFUW in Kyoto, Japan. Later, after being elected as President of IFUWA (1995-99), she led the IFUWA delegation to the 26th Triennial Conference, which was held at Graz, Austria, in 1998. In addition, she has held the post of IFUWA Newsletter Convener for two terms, during 1975-79 in Dr. Bina Roy's team, and in 1991-95 in Dr. Goocheher Coyaji's team.

The Headquarters of UWAsia was located in Bangalore for the 3-year term of 1995-1998, under the Presidentship of Ms. Nellie D. Nath (Bangalore), and Vice-Presidentship of Kumararani Meena Muthiah (Chennai). The 4th Triennial Conference was held on 3rd and 4th January, 1997, at Bangalore, with the theme of Peace and Environmental Development. The session on Environmental Law and Policy was chaired by Dr. N. R. Madhava Menon, Director of the National Law School of India University. Ms. Gangu Bopanna, President of UWA Bangalore, presented Justice Bopanna's paper on "Environmental Laws", a paper which gave a brief history of environmental protective legislation in India and similar laws in developed countries.

The Workshop on Peace, was conducted by Prof. Chitra Ghosh, past President of IFUW and IFUWA, she was ably assisted by Ms. Chonira B. Muthamma, Indian Foreign Service and Ms. Mina Singh of UWA Delhi.

Ms. Sarah John, Vice-President of UWA Cochin, read a paper on her study of perceptions and responsibilities of women as peacemakers. On this complex and interesting subject, one thought was persistent that peace-making should be the joint responsibility of both men and women.



Nellie D also received funding from the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund for University Women to carry out Leadership Training Workshops for young members at Bangalore and Pune, thus contributing to capacity building and skills development to prepare the next generation of women leaders.

### IFUWABOOK

In 2017, Nellie D Nath also authored a book titled 'Indian Federation of University Women's Associations' Origin & Growth - Published by UWA of Bangalore. She felt privileged to receive a message from Kumararani Dr. Meena Muthiah and a 'foreword' from Dr. Chitra Ghosh, both of which have been published in the book.

Leela Chandrasekhar served as a member of UWAB for over 40 years and was also the President; she contributed immensely to the smooth running of the association over the years. Her serene personality and spiritual outlook to life served to diffuse heated differences of opinions and quell discord on numerous occasions. Leela C served on numerous social service organisations in Bangalore.

Subhadra Venkatappa a longstanding member of UWAB led the rural development project and actively participated in all the programmes and fund raisers. She served as President and also played a supportive role in running the hostels.

Dr. Sudha Rao, a doctor by profession, was a committed member of the UWAB and was very practical and down to earth in her approach to any challenge faced by the association. She was very involved in her role as Treasurer.



Geeta Jaisim (born 1947) has a Post Graduate degree in Political Science and Public Administration with a B.A. in English Literature. She has vast experience as a working professional in banking, corporate and IT sectors. Prior to retirement she was the Executive Secretary of the American Chamber of Commerce, Karnataka Chapter, until 2006.

Geeta has been a member of the UWAB since 1992. She was Gen Secretary of IFUWA (during the Presidentship of Nellie D. Nath) from 1995 to 1999, and was a member of the delegation to the International Conference at Graz in 1995.

During her tenure as President from 2009 to 2013 was instrumental in conceiving and executing the construction of Sarayu hostel along with the other members. She continues to be active on the Managing Committee.



Meera Ramchand (born 1944) joined UWAB in 1987 the year UWA B was celebrating its Silver Jubilee; she was CIR during Nellie D Nath's tenure as President of IFUWA.

Meera R has a BA in English Literature & Political Science and a Bachelor of Law Degree.

She is also actively involved with the Association for the Mentally Challenged where she worked as a Principal for 10 years and later joined the Management Committee and worked as Secretary and is now Vice President. She continues to be an active member of the UWAB and is a guide and mentor to the new members.

Mrs. Sashi Malpe and Smt. Ambujakshi Reddy as Presidents during their tenure continued the work of running the hostels.

### UWAB NOW

- i. Two hostels 'Shramanjali' and 'Sarayu' for working women and students are running under the management of the UWAB committee members.
- ii. Education scholarships are being given to girls pursuing college education; at present around 10 students are receiving support from UWAB.  
We hope to increase the nos. each year with support from generous donors.
- iii. Free computer training is offered to the residents at the hostel through NICT, which runs its computer centre adjacent to the hostel premises.
- iv. Mentoring and skills development activities are held regularly as we believe it is the need of the hour.

## Chidambaram



*Mass rally for cleanliness of campus*

Women empowerment is to promote women's sense of self-worth, their ability to determine their own choices, and their right to influence social change for themselves and others. The University Women's Association Chidambaram Chapter is conducting several programmes for the empowerment of women and the girl child.

The following are the list of activities periodically conducted to empower the girl students of our University:

- Our University is in rural background (Annamalai University - Annamalai Nagar, Chidambaram) where most of the students are first generation graduates and whose parents are working force involved in construction, agriculture, cattle rearing and small farmers.
- Provide scholarship to the deserving students to complete their Ph.D.
- Conduct competitions on special days so as to bring out their hidden talents.
- Provide computer training for 3 months so that the girl students are familiar with MS Word, MS Power point, MS Excel and how to use internet safely the students are able to carry out their own project works and some are working parttime as data entry operators on contract basis for the government.
- A cyber security awareness programme was conducted to sensitise about the safe use of internet and how to avoid cyber bullying and online frauds.
- A financial literacy awareness programme

was conducted by the post office people regarding the various savings programmes that are available for the girl child and women.

- Organize sensitization programmes about health, hygiene and menstruation by the doctors of Government Medical College.
- Provide awareness programme on gender sensitization through invited lectures by

lawyers, and police personnel.

- Visit the inmates of the physically challenged, school located at Chidambaram on special occasions, distribute sweets and snacks, sing songs and spend time with them which they relish.
- Periodical visits to the old age homes on members birthday and wedding anniversary and distribution of food, clothes and soap.



*Visit to the Physically Challenged School*





*Children's Day Competition for the Girls Students*

- Tailoring classes conducted for the 20 school dropouts, out of which 2 are having their own tailoring unit and the rest of them are working in tailoring shops.
  - This is the first batch of tailoring class conducted.
  - Celebrate women's day every year by conducting competitions like rangoli, food without fire to bring out the creativity among the students, elcoution and essay writing competitions to bring out the literary skills.
  - Spoken English class is being conducted 3 days a week where the students are trained for loud reading, to improve conversation and write error free.
- Some of the photographs of the activities of the UWA – Chidambaram Chapter.



*Visit to Old Age Home*





*Prize Distribution by Syndicate member*



*Honouring the President of UWA Chidambaram Chapter*

## Calcutta

The University Women's Association of Calcutta was established in 1921. Let us recall the journey of women of Bengal towards this goal.

The early years of the Twentieth Century found women of Bengal coming out of family seclusion and gradually taking their places in society. Needless to say, this was possible only with the advent of women's education, which earlier, had been limited only to the women of the rich and aristocratic families.

It is indeed ironic that the very power group that dominated the country gave the impetus for women to educate and organise themselves. On 7th May, 1831, William Carey started a girls' school in Sreerampur. In 1822, the Calcutta Ladies Society, run by British ladies, opened a few schools for native girls. But the real turn came with the starting of the Bethune School in 1849, by John Drinkwater Bethune. When the students of the Bethune School completed their school studies, the Bethune College was founded to enable them to continue their education.

In 1878, Kadambini Basu was the first girl to appear at the Matriculation Examination and in 1880, was the first girl student for the Bachelor of Arts degree along with Chandramukhi Basu. In 1884, Chandramukhi Basu was the first female student to successfully pass the M.A. examination of the Calcutta University, which was the first University to be established in India.

The reformist movements inspired women to revalue themselves as human beings in the new social order. The leadership was taken up by urban, English educated and emancipated middle class women.

A number of associations were formed, the Hitasadhini Sabha in 1878, the National Social Conference in 1887, the Bharat Shree Mahamandal started by Sarada Devi Chaudhurani in 1910, to name a few.

In the awakening and reformation, the contribution of the illustrious Tagore family was

outstanding. The women of the family were Path Breakers in many fields. Swarna Kumari Devi was the first woman editor of a magazine - the Bamabodhini Patrika. She was also one of the first female delegates to the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in 1904.

The National Council of Women, later to be affiliated to the International Council of Women, was formed in 1926. The All India Women's Conference was formed in 1927.

It makes us proud to mention that the Indian Federation of University Women's Association was incepted in 1920, in Calcutta. Later, in 1921, it acquired affiliation of the International Federation of University Women, which was started in 1918 by two western academics - Caroline Spurgeon and Virginia Gildersleeve. A woman of the Tagore family, Pratima Choudhury, was at the helm of this association as the first President of the Federation of British Women in India, as it was thus named at that time.

When Chandramukhi Bose and Kadambini Ganguly (nee Bose), successfully graduated from the Calcutta University, a new vista was opened for women.

After a hiatus of a few years, the UWA of Calcutta was revived in 1958. New members joined and Book Banks were started at schools and colleges. Money was raised for scholarships. Seminars, discussions, musical and literary evenings, panel discussions, educational excursions were held regularly.



Dr. Bina Roy, elected as the President of IFUW in 1974, passed through Calcutta on her way to the Triennial Conference in Kyoto. A meeting was called by the UWAC to felicitate her.

Mrs. Chitra Ghosh was the youngest member to join the delegation to Kyoto, under IFUWA President Daisy Gopal Ratnam.

Prof. Chitra Ghosh, fondly called Chitradi by UWAC members, reported her experience at the conference as "fantastic". It was



inaugurated by the Crown Princess Mitchiko of Japan, and was precise, spectacular and glamorous". She goes on to record that "the garden city of Kyoto was the perfect setting and the Japanese contingent, under the leadership of Prof. Fumi Takano was marvellous in their punctuality, orderliness and attention to details.

Incidentally, when Prof. Chitra Ghosh took over as the second Indian and Bengalee President of the IFUW, the Conference was once again held in Japan, in the city of Yokohama and was inaugurated by the Empress Mitchiko, who came over from Tokyo specifically for the occasion.

The year 1975 was the first International Women's Year declared by the UNO and delegations from all over the World attended the conference held in Nairobi. Prof. Chitra Ghosh was a member of the IFUW delegation.

In 1981, when IFUWA celebrated its Diamond Jubilee, Prof. Chitra Ghosh was the IFUWA President and Prof. Fumi Takamo of Japan was the IFUW President. Prof. Chitra Ghosh and Prof. Takamo met at the Mid Decade Conference at Copenhagen and there 5 International Women's Organisations decided to start a project jointly in a Third World country, where welfare programmes for women and children were badly needed.

Prof. Takamo came to Calcutta at Chitra Ghosh's request, to join the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Clare Fulchar from USA attended the celebration, as did a large number of delegates from Thailand, Korea, Japan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh, all affiliated to the IFUW. A spectacular inaugural programme was held at the Vivekananda Hall of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture in Kolkata, the theme of the two-day-long seminar was "The Role Of Women In Media". It was presided over by the Governor of West Bengal Mr. B.D. Pande, who also gave a tea reception in honour of the delegates at the Raj Bhavan. At the dinner the same evening at the Calcutta Club, Shri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal, was present.

The same delegates were present at the inauguration of the Project 5-O, a multipurpose welfare scheme for depressed class of women

and children, at Thakurpukur, which is still running even after 4 decades.



Another landmark event was the Asian Conference held in Calcutta. The meetings and seminars were held at the Great Eastern Hotel and was largely supported by the Government of West Bengal. Delegates at this meeting came from all countries of Asia which were affiliated to IFUW.

During her tenure as the IFUWA President, Prof. Chitra Ghosh initiated the BRPID Fellowship (Bina Roy - Partners in Development) to perpetuate the memory of Dr. Bina Roy.

The first conference of University Women's of Asia was held in 1987 at Hongkong and Leena Chatterjee and Rekha Sen from UWAC attended.

In 1995, Prof. Chitra Ghosh attended the Beijing Conference on Women's Rights, initiated by the UNO. This was the fourth and the most important conference of a series of four.

UWAC awards scholarships and stipends based on need and merit. Noted social workers,

writers and creative artists were felicitated. Discussions, seminars were an intrinsic feature of the UWAC, which helped to keep the dialogue going between people of diverse views.

Dignitaries like sitting judges of the Calcutta High Court, Sahitya Academy Award winner poets, theatre personalities, noted singers of various genre have been felicitated by the UWAC, where they have also performed or spoken.

Legal Awareness Camps held periodically help the less privileged women to be aware of their rights and also to seek help and guidance when required.



During the tenure of Mrs. Enakshi Chattopadhyay as President (1993-1995) of UWAC (who later served as the President of IFUWA), Platinum Jubilee of IFUWA was

celebrated by a seminar and an exhibition on "Women of Substance" which highlighted the life and works of two pioneer women activists of the early 20th Century, Sm. Hementabala Debi and Sm. Shanta Debi. A panel discussion on "Evolution of Women's Position in Society", with Prof. Sukumari Bhattacharya, celebrated Indologist and Polyglot, as the lead speaker.

During the tenure of Mrs. Enakshi Chattopadhyay as the President of IFUWA, 90th year of its inception was celebrated by screening of 3 documentaries by Satyajit Ray. These included -

- 1) Rabindranath Tagore
- 2) The Inner Eye - about Sri Binod Behari Mukherjee, the pioneer painter
- 3) Sukumar Ray - writer and Satyajit Ray's father

Mrs. Enakshi Chattopadhyay attended the 24th Triennial Conference of the IFUW at Palo Alto, where Prof. Chitra Ghosh was installed as the President of IFUW.

The 80th Anniversary of UWAC and IFUW was celebrated during the tenure of Mrs. Prathama Sen as the President of the association. There was a C.C. meeting, a seminar and a photographic exhibition showcasing the various activities of the two organisations and their



members over the years. This was held at the Calcutta Club and followed by a grand dinner for all attendees.

Dr. Ranjana Banerjee, current President of IFUWA / UWAsia / SAARCGWI has been on several committee of IFUW, now GWI, and in VGIF's project committee too. Mrs. Gomathy Venkateswar has been on Fellowship committee of IFUW now GWI and project committee of VGIF.

Dr. Baishakhi Banerjee, UWAC member, now also the Hony. Secretary of the SAARC - GWI, has attended several international conferences and is the recipient of Scholarships from the Japanese and the Norwegian federations.

The VGIF - named after Virginia Gildersleeve is a sister organisation of the IFUW, now known as WGI. Dr. Virginia Gildersleeve was the Dean of Columbia University's Bernard College, and one of the signatories of the iconic Human Rights Charter in 1919 in San Francisco, that followed the great Armistic Treaty signed in 1918 that ended the World War I. It was set up with the grant of one million dollars from philanthropists. The aim of the organisation is the same as IFUWA and GWI, which being empowerment of women through education. It was established as a Funding organisation to help women in small countries across the world to set up grassroot projects that would educate women in the rural areas to become literate and learn income-generating skills. It is project based. The original name was VGIFW. Now it has separated itself from the Geneva-based IFUW and has its own office in New York.

All National Federation of Associations, who are subscribing members of the GWI, can apply for a project grant to VGIF, when they receive applications for funding in mid June every year.





Mrs. Gomathy Venkateswar of UWAC, was a member of the Board of VGIF in 2009, and at her suggestion VGIF decided to celebrate its 40th Anniversary by a visit to its different project sites, one being India.

The VGIF Friendship Tour and Conference took place in Calcutta on 18th-20th November, 2009.

Over 25 delegates from the USA, UK and other countries of Europe arrived in Calcutta, via Delhi and Nepal on 19th November, 2010 for a two-day conference / seminar, 2 days of visit to projects.

The American Consulate in Calcutta, on a briefing from the US Embassy in Delhi, let the VGIF delegates use the Lincoln Room at the American Centre as the venue of their two-day meet.

Thus IFUWA, with Mrs. Enakshi Chattopadhyay at its helm, with logistical support for the UWAC, hosted a unique conference with International and also National speakers from other cities, with a very relevant theme of "Women Being the Central Factor in the Role She Plays for Water and Food Security for her Family". The guests were then treated to a brilliant cocktail and dinner at the Hotel Hindustan International on the day of their arrival, with a Kathak dance performance by a reputed dance troupe as a visual entertainment.

The guests were taken around to educational institutions in the city. On the last evening, a sumptuous dinner was hosted by the IFUWA President Enakshi Chattopadhyay.

As a member of the VGIF, Gomathy attended the first session of the newly formed UN-WOMEN, where the theme was "WIDOWS OF THE WORLD UNITE". Gomathy spoke about the Indian widows in Vrindavan and Benaras. Later, she was invited to attend the two-day seminar at Udaipur by the UN - WOMEN and found out that a project study of the Indian widows had been made and the Rajasthan Govt had donated a tract of land to rehabilitate the widows. She had also travelled with grants from the VGIF, to remote villages in the Agartala to visit and activate projects.

At the IFUW Conference in Mexico in 2010, where Enakshi Chattopadhyay, as the President, led the IFUWA delegates, a special mention was made of the successful VGIF Conference in Calcutta. A Certificate of Appreciation and a medallion was given to Enakshi.

In July 2019, about 409 delegates attended the GWI Convention, where Mr. Nelson Mandela's daughter (her middle name is Swati), gave the Key Note address. As the next President of IFUWA, Dr. Ranjana Banerjee put down the ground plans for reviving the defunct SAARC-IFUWA and the GWI-ASIA organisations.

Having experienced mentors, who are dedicated to the cause of IFUWA and IFUW/GWI, UWAC has conscientiously and actively held up the ideals of the organisation. It has contributed to the IFUWA and GWI, by sending efficient and dedicated members, and to the lives of the less privileged women by making a difference through help, guidance and grants / scholarships.



Mrs Kajal Sen - Past President UWAC, Past Vice President IFUWA, Mrs Enakshi Chattopadhyay - Past President UWAC and IFUWA, Mrs Gomathy Venkateswar - Vice President IFUWA and member of GWI Committee, Dr Ranjana Mukherjee - Past President UWAC, have contributed the material of these pages from their personal collections.

We pay our homage to our beloved Chitradi, the late Prof. Chitra Ghose - (past president, UWAC, IFUWA, IFUW) by including excerpts from the various pieces she had written for UWAC over the years.





## Dehradun



*Members of UWA Dehradun celebrating Children's Day with the students of Sauda Saroli Government School. A cultural programme was held and sweets and stationery were distributed.*

### Sixty Years' Journey (1962-63 to 2022-23)

A sixtieth year milestone is a major landmark in the life of an individual or for that matter an organisation as we are in the midst of our golden years. Thus for an organisation such as University Women's Association (UWA), Dehradun is a matter of much pride to have reached this important high point. It is certainly an event worth celebrating and commemorating.

The current team consists of President Mohini Sharma, Secretary Veena Sharma, Treasurer Sindhu Gupta under the kind patronage of Indu Singh, Manoshi Deb, Saroj Oniyal and chairperson Dr. Daljeet Kaur, Vice Chairperson Surindar Kalra. Assisted by Association Representative Shevata Rai Talwar, Jt. Secretary Madhu Madan and the conveners of various departments.

A majority of our members voluntarily undertook many additional responsibilities of doing something that was satisfying both socially and academically. This was all the more remarkable and creditable since many of them have had professional responsibilities, while others were busy 'homemakers'. Let it be noted that all these activities were carried out by our members, who raised funds from among themselves with the help from other agencies, and sources including generous philanthropists of the town.

Interestingly, Dehradun's University Women's Association is the only branch in northern India, other than Delhi, that took birth as early as 1962. For this, much of the credit should go to revered Leela Biswas who then along with A R Srivastava, Sumati Bagchi, Premmayee Mehant, Yashoda Lal, Sushila Khanna, Dr. S R Srivastav, Niharika Das, Manoshi Deb and other eminent ladies took up the initiative to set up this

branch here. 13th February, 1962, (the birth anniversary of Bharat Kokila Dr. Sarojini Naidu) in a way, became a landmark of sorts for women of Dehra Dun when Mrs. Laxmi Menon, the then Union Minister for External Affairs and President of Indian Federation of University Women's Association (IFUWA) formally inaugurated the Dehradun branch. In keeping with the aims and objectives of IFUW (now GWI) and IFUWA, the Dehradun Association was formed primarily to provide a platform to the ladies of the town with University education.

Accordingly, the basic aims and objectives of the Association are:

- To stimulate and further interests of UWA in academic, cultural and civic life
- To provide a forum for an exchange of views on educational and socio-economic problems
- To promote understanding and friendship between university women throughout the world
- To acquire, maintain and transfer property in furtherance of the objectives of the Association.

Throughout the years UWA Dehradun has held many meaningful programmes. These include socio-economic programmes, interesting talks, discussions, seminars, workshops, celebrations of important days, adoption of villages and schools, exhibitions, cultural programs, job oriented vocational



*World Environment Day and planting of trees with children at Government School at Parade Ground Dehradun.*

guidance/training, counselling, adult literacy campaigns and providing financial assistance to needy senior ladies and honouring women who have excelled in various fields.

Scholarship distribution to needy and meritorious girl students has been a major annual activity of UWA amounting to more than Rupees One Lakh of UWA and it has now introduced two new scholarships in the name of its founder President late Smt. Leela Biswas (one beneficiary in women studies) and its ex-Chairperson late Mrs. Sushila Dhobal (Vice Chancellor of Garhwal University) with four beneficiaries for study and research at the Post graduate level. 50 scholarships in the general categories are also given every year. 'Arati Sen Special Award' is being formulated to the most meritorious applicant of the year doing PG Course in humanities for which Ms. Sen herself has donated a sum. Noor Jahan Sarokar Yojana was formulated to give scholarship to school girl students by Chairman of Himalaya Drug Company Dr. S. Farooq in the memory of his mother.

Literacy centres have also been the focal point of the Association's other activities like short or long programmes for free vocational training and skill development for women such as cutting, tailoring, knitting, block printing and embroidery work, bag making, beauty grooming, as well as free workshops on waste management, water management for the benefit of basti - slum dwellers. Recently, a one year programme was run at an orphanage Apna Ghar, examination was conducted and certificate were awarded on successful completion of the course. Initial working items like gadgets, beauty chair, sewing machines, bales of fabrics, threads blocks, dyes and other goods were provided to flag off enterprises of these ladies. Vocational Training Centres have been running all over the town and some of our members provided space for the centres to run in their own premises.

Similarly, yoga classes, health camps for women and children have been a regular activity sometimes with the help of the Indian Medical Association.

Diploma Courses in Computer Applications



were held with the help of the Government. Needy girls selected by the Association benefited and many of them could make their career in computer-associated jobs. Girls from Government BEd college were trained in traditional Appan Art and Tie and Dye in the ONGC Polytechnic, Dehradun. Project in hand is to obtain Corporate Social Funding (under CSR scheme of ONGC) to hold vocational training in Basics of Computer, Fashion Designing and Communication Skills for two hundred women and girls at the Mahila Polytechnic O.N.G.C.

Another very important activity started by UWA was the adoption of the most neglected Government Primary and Junior High Schools, with the aim of arranging for some of the basic facilities for the children studying there. Many schools were adopted for the said purpose and the Association was successful in arranging for the basic necessary facilities like providing electricity connection, drinking water and construction of boundary walls, toilets, play area with swings, fans, furniture, cupboards, benches, rugs, stationery items from time to time, books, dictionaries, warm woollens, uniforms for both summer and winters.

Sanitary pad vending machines and a consistent supply of pads was provided in many girl schools.

Another noteworthy, non-stop activity of the Association has been its 'Clean Doon Green Doon', Environment Protection Program launched on the occasion of Indian Independence Golden Jubilee in August 1997. Besides, planting trees in and around its Adult Literacy Centres, adopted schools and in the campuses of other Educational institutions, places of worships, road-sides, close to schools and colleges. Segregation of waste, ban on plastic, polythene use was propagated and the initiative was flagged off by the Mayor of the city. Cloth bags were made and distributed in large quantities. Recently, trees were planted in the memory of our senior members who have departed from this world in a forest reserve named 'Mitra Van'. These trees are protected and nurtured by our association regularly.

Offering monthly monetary assistance to needy



*Display of Tie and Dye Dupattas by the Students undergoing Vocational Training by UWA Dehradun at ONGC Polytechnic.*

senior ladies for medical and personal needs was taken up for many years. War widows, and other young widows were provided financial support to start small businesses and for the education of their children.

Inmates of institutions like Old Age home run by the Catholic nuns, Chesire Home, Raphael Home, Home for the Destitute run by The Missionaries of Charity have all benefited in various ways from UWA Dehradun.

Medical assistance in the form of monetary help for treatment, has been provided to persons in need including sick, needy students and financially handicapped persons.

Some high-level talks and discussions have been taking place on important and relevant subjects, which are the need of the hour. A few of which are enlisted below:

- Chinese Aggression and the Role of Indian Women in the crisis (Lakshmi N Menon, National President of IFUWA and Minister for External Affairs, Govt. of India).
- New Scheme for visually impaired
- Education with the Government of India for Experimental Purposes at Dehra Dun (Mr. Turner of ILO),
- 'Women of other nations (Begum Hamida Ali, noted social worker), 'Sarojini Naidu' (Padmini Sen Gupta, noted author and member ILO),



- 'Role which Educated Indian Women must play at Home'(Late Sri Prakash, author, statesman and Governor of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu),
- 'Health and Chromosomes'(Mrs. Amala Choudhury), 'International Book Year'(Mrs. Vijay Laxmi Pandit),
- Meaning and Measurement of Human Progress'(Dr. Bina Roy, International and National President IFUWA and IFUW),
- 'Image of Women through Media' (Indira Kohli). Jan Lokpal Bill, Growing Violence against Women etc.

A good number of subject experts, professors, lawyers, representatives from public life took part in these along with our members.

Highlights of the cultural activities over the years have been "Kaviyatri Sammelans", enacting of plays like 'Lalquila' and 'Jahanar', 'Puppet shows', 'Film Shows', 'Intelligence Quiz', 'Pradeshik Sangam Mela', 'Celebration of important days like Sarojini Naidu's birthday, UN Day, Women's Day, World Health Day, Environment Day, Independence and Republic Day etc. and important years like the International Women's Year, 'International Book Year', 'International Children's Year'.

During Corona lockdown period, free meals were provided to patients and care givers in Government Hospitals. Thousands of masks in bulk were made by Women self-help groups and distributed along with free rations for the jobless. These self-help groups supported by UWA also prepared diyas, lamps during The Festival of Lights (Deepavali) to raise funds for themselves.

Donations were made for renovation of the building of the oldest library of the state, Mahatma Khusi Ram Library, where thousands of students take benefit from rare, classical, educational and other research books. Book shelves, storage racks too were provided to the library.

UWA hosted several Central Committee meetings of IFUWA on various occasions. During the recent one, Governor of Uttarakhand, Her Excellency Baby Rani Maurya had accepted to be the Chief Guest.

With the help of funds raised by its members, UWA has contributed generously to many causes, such as the National Flood Drive, Bangladesh Refugees, National Defence Fund, formation of Independent state of Uttarakhand, earthquake in Bhuj, major devastation in Kedarnath due to cloud burst, in Uttarkashi and the disastrous Himalayan Tsunami in the hills of Garhwal.

Some of our landmark achievements have been:

1. Protest against joint taxation of the income of the spouses with their husbands. A strong delegation of UWA headed by Rushda Ahmed and members submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India. The movement gathered momentum and the Government of India had to listen to the voice of its women citizen.
2. Much to our Pride, the Song written by Late Veena Pani Joshi, our executive member is now a state anthem.
3. Publishing of five souvenirs, and a special Golden Jubilee edition.

It is said that the final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him or her, in other men and women, the conviction and the will to carry on... UWA Dehradun has introduced and inculcated many new, young members who are academically-inclined and scholarly-motivated and are desirous of carrying on the good work initiated by the stalwarts.



*Widow of a Soldier in the Pulwama attack by terrorist in Jammu and Kashmir was given financial assistance. She has three young children studying.*

## Delhi



*Workshop on Financial Literacy at Gargi College*

UWA Delhi (UWAD), a non governmental organisation was founded by 10 members from academia in 1949 and registered in 1950 as Association of Women Graduates of Delhi, changed later to Federation of University Women in India and again in 1964 to University Women's Association of Delhi. Membership is broad-based including not only college and school teachers but also lawyers, doctors, social scientists, journalists, social workers and homemakers. Graduate Students are Associate Graduate members and Scholarship awardees are Associate members. Membership of UWAD which was more than 200 at one time is less than 50 now including 10 Life members. UWAD was affiliated to International Federation of University Women (now GWI) through Indian Federation of University Women's Association (IFUWA). UWAD has its office at All India Women's Conference (AIWC) hostel 6 Bhagwan Das Road, New Delhi.

Many eminent women - Mrs. Tara Bai, Ms. Das

Gupta, Dr. D.P. Bali, Miss V. Thakur Das, Mrs. Pushpa Hidayatullah, Mrs. Lakshmi Menon, Mrs. Violet Alva and Mrs. Meher D. Wadia contributed greatly to the development of the Association during its formative years.

#### Looking Back

- Five members - Pilo Jungalwalla, C. K. Kesavan, T.S. Rukmini, Kiran Datar and Manju Jain received International Academic Awards
- Our second rural project on 'Awareness Generation Training for Rural and Poor Women' was one of the prize-winning projects in IFUW's 80th Anniversary Challenge Program at IFUW Triennial Conference in Ottawa in August 2001
- Dr. Bina Roy was the first woman from Asia to become the President of IFUW during 1971-74 and Vice-President for 2 terms
- Sushil Bhardwaj was the Vice-President for 1





*BRPID Project Training Workshop in Personality Development*

term and Convener Resolution Committee

- Dr. Avtar Pennathur and T.S. Rukmini in Academic Awards Committee
- Mina Singh in Status of Women Committee

#### National Level

- Suman Jain - Project Convener in IFUWA 2011-14
- Jyotika Kalra - Project Convener in IFUWA 2014-17
- Sushil Bhardwaj - Member of Constitution Advisory Committee
- Manjushree Singh - Member of SAARCGWI Committee 2023
- Vandana Parashar - Member of Project Committee of IFUWA Project "Swayamsiddha"



*Block Printing Skill Development Workshop at Gargi College*

#### Activities

##### Annual Commemorative Functions

UWAD organises Commemorative Functions every year. They include UN Day, Human Rights Day, International Women's Day and Bina Roy Memorial Seminar and Teachers' Day.

##### Scholarships

One of the prime concerns of the Association has been to ensure access to higher education for girls who may be discouraged or prevented from going to college due to financial constraints. To address the issue of this constraint, the scholarship committee was set up to give financial support to under-graduate, post-graduate and vocational education students on a merit-cum-means basis. We had been awarding 25-30 scholarships every year. Sushil Bhardwaj, Suman Jain, Shashi Khurana, Chandra Prabha Pandey, Manjushree Singh and Sadhna Arya carried out this programme successfully in different years.



*UWAD Managing Committee members at work*

#### Projects

BRPID project on 'Women's Economic Empowerment through Education and Income Generation' approved and financed by GWI, was successfully carried out by UWAD in 2016. Team consisted of S. Almelu (Convener), Suman Jain and Anita Malhotra. UWA Madras and UWA Pune also participated in this Project. The project endeavoured to impart income generating skills to girls and women of low income groups, to increase their income and





*Members attending AGM 2016*

impart skills in personality development and leadership for self reliance. Nearly 150 women and girls from low income groups from different states of India were covered in this project.

The project on "Creating Awareness in Urban Women about Waste Management" was carried out by Suman Jain in schools and colleges and neighbourhood communities. The main objective of the project was to sensitise the participants about segregation and minimisation of waste through the practice of 3 R's - "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" and composting of kitchen waste and garden waste in their daily lives. The project aimed to improve the working conditions of women waste pickers and enhance their income through the sale of segregated recyclable, non-bio-degradable waste.

The project on "Improving health and nutritional



*Block Printing Workshop at Gargi College*

status of the adolescent girls" was carried out by Anita Malhotra, and Iksha Chhabra in schools, colleges and in underprivileged communities. The objective of the project was to spread awareness about maternal nutrition, infant and young child nutrition, sanitation and hygiene as well as healthy cooking through interactive activities.

Workshops on "spreading awareness on legal issues facing women" were carried out by Jyotika Kalra.

UWAD organised programmes in collaboration with different colleges of Delhi University and schools and other institutes.

A seminar-cum-interactive workshop on "Entrepreneurship: Key to Empowerment of Women" was organised in collaboration with Swami Sivananda Memorial Institute (SSMI) in March 2016.



*Seminar on 'Health and Nutrition' 2015*

A motivational and interactive workshop on "Organ Donation" was organised in collaboration with the local National Service Scheme unit of Gargi College Resource person was from All India Institute of Medical Sciences. In the past, medical check-up camps had also been organised for the weaker sections of society specially women and girls.

Three webinars were organised in May-June 2023. Role of AI (Artificial Intelligence) and Women Today, Wellness/Menstrual Leave for Women in the Corporate sector - A Privilege and women harassment, protest, suppression-specific reference to the plight of women wrestlers.

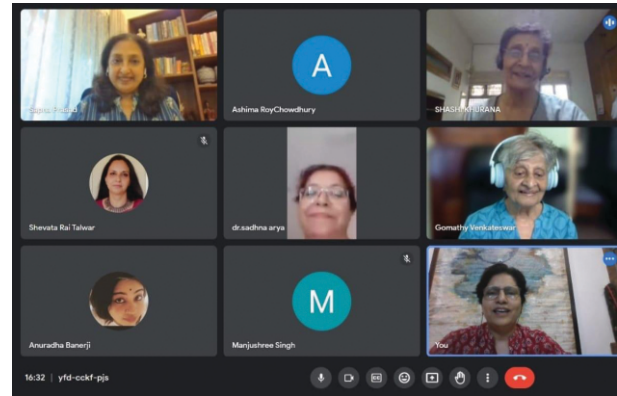
In its Golden Jubilee year, the Association held a series of lectures on various aspects of law pertaining to women and speakers included Justice Ranganath Mishra, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Over the years, the members of UWAD have conducted several workshops and programmes on topics of general interest. Some of the important areas include adult literacy, financial literacy and entrepreneurial skill development. UWAD is committed to promote community development.

### Newsletter

Newsletter is the mirror of any organisation. A Quarterly Newsletter was published by UWAD every year. A new way of presenting UWAD activities, events and news on a monthly/regular basis was thought of by Suman Jain and Anita Malhotra. Hence, issues of UWAD Update were brought out which updated members on events, issues and other related information 'on time'. Also Members' Corner gave opportunity to members to express themselves in various ways.

### Upcoming NFA to NFA Project 2023-24



*Webinar on Women Harassment,  
Protest and Suppression 2023*

India is part of a project based on the GWI Policy Resolution No. 10, 2022, on "Single Use Plastic and Plastic Packaging". This resolution was proposed by Canada and seconded by the Indian Federation of University Women's Association (IFUWA).

From IFUWA – Team consists of Convener Suman Jain (UWA Delhi), S. Poongothai (UWA Chidambaram) and Vandana Parashar (UWAD). Vinita Hoon (UWA Madras) and Manjusri (UWA Pune) are also part of the team. Meera Bondre (GWI) is the motivator and guide.



*Members with scholarship holders*



## Madras

The incomparable radiance that was born from all gods and pervaded the three worlds came to one place and took the form of a woman. (Devimahatmyam 2.13)

The University Women's Association Madras established in the year 1921 has completed a century and is forging its way ahead with a focussed mission 'Empowerment through Women's Education'.

Over the years, we have had dynamic women from different fields who have been members of the UWAM and contributed their might. Dynamism is a quality women have always possessed.

Women were held in great regard and worshipped as Shakthi. Women wielded power and demonstrated prowess in all fields – education, culture, administration, spirituality, fine arts, martial arts, economy and home. Education gave women that stellar position. Somewhere down the ages, forces of suppression and restriction snatched away her independence and versatility. Recognising education as indispensable for a woman to be self-reliant, the University Women's Association emphasises on higher education for women. From being self-reliant, an educated woman can contribute much to the community. In fact, the Rig Veda affirms that the greatest gift that parents should give their daughter is intellectuality and power of knowledge.

The versatility in women that ancient India claims can be true of all ages through appropriate tutelage. A stable society rests on strong, free and independent women. As an organisation that is functioning at the grassroots and the international level, UWAM can make the change.

### University Women's Association, Madras 100 and counting.

As University Women's Association, Madras, hits a century, here is a look at its momentous journey. Dr. Yashoda Shanumgasundaram goes down memory lane to chronicle the growth of an organisation that started in a small way.

UWAM is affiliated to the Indian Federation of University Women's Associations, part of the Graduate Women International.

### The Beginning

On 2nd July, 1920, the Federation of University Women (FUWI) was inaugurated in Calcutta at the initiative of the British University Women in India – a national body of 'intellectually elite women'. Its objective was improvement in the general status of Indian women. The first President of the organisation was Mrs. Prativa Choudhuri and the General Secretary Mrs. Cornelia Sorabji. FUWI was affiliated to the International Federation of University Women in 1921. Five other Indian associations were affiliated to FUWI at that time. One was the Madras Women Graduates Union. In 1961, FUWI changed its name to Indian Federation of University Women's Associations.

### Firm footing

University Women's Association, Madras, was first established in 1922. The names of Presidents for the years 1922-1929 are not known. In 1930, Dr. H.E. McDougal (Principal, Women's Christian College, 1915-1938) was President. She also presided over the Indian Federation of University Women's Associations (IFUWA) between 1929-1931.

Doctor, feminist, social reformer and recipient of Padma Bhushan Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy was president of UWAM from 1931-1935. Between 1935 and 1950, there aren't many written records of the activities of the association. The Silver Jubilee of UWAM was celebrated in 1947. Lady Rama Rao, founder of the Family Planning Association of India, held the reins of IFUWA from 1950-1953. She was perhaps the president of UWAM too.

UWAM was revived in 1952 by Mrs. Alamelu Govindrajan who became its President. The next President was Miss Brockway, Principal, St. Christopher Training College, Vepery (1923-1953). Mrs. Raksha Saran, wife of a leading industrialist, followed her. The main activity of the association was to raise funds for



scholarships awarded on a merit-cum-means basis to students of local women's colleges. Every President at that time held a fund-raising event. Slowly, the association started building its funds. All members had to donate Re.1/- (one) each towards scholarships, apart from the subscription. Meetings of the executive committee were held every two months and the major area of work was women's education and the celebration of landmark events during the year. Another activity of interest was discussion of Bills pending in Parliament, such as the Adoption Bill, the New Education Policy and taxation laws. Seminars were held frequently to enable members to listen to experts in the fields of health and education. The Golden Jubilee celebrations of UWAM took place in 1972 and was presided over by eminent social worker Ms. Sarojini Varadappan. The chief guest was economist Dr. Devaki Jain. The Platinum Jubilee of UWA and IFUWA was celebrated jointly along with the Asian Regional

Conference in Madras in 1995. Dr. Gulcheher Coyaji of Pune was the IFUWA president and Ms. R. Vijayalakshmi Bharati was UWAM president. The chairperson of the Jubilee Committee was Kumara Rani Dr. Meena Muthiah and the convener Dr. Mano Baktavatsalam.

#### Building of its Own

It was during the Platinum Jubilee in 1995 that the association started raising funds for its building. At the celebrations, Chavali Krishna of Messrs Shastri and Shah presented the UWA Madras with papers of the land that Ms. Sivabhogam donated to the association. Ms. Sivabhogam was the first woman Chartered Accountant of India and a partner at Shastri and Shah. A prominent member of UWAM, Ms. Sivabhogam was a past President. She motivated Chavali Sastri to donate a piece of land for a women's hostel to UWA Madras. The





land, measuring about two grounds, is situated at Pallikaranai, a suburb of Chennai.

Once the land was gifted to UWAM, the members raised and contributed funds to put up a building to serve as a working women's hostel. The herculean task of raising the building was achieved with many members pitching in with handsome donations. Slowly, steadily and surely the building became a reality without any outside assistance. Some of the prominent donors were Kumararani Dr. Meena Muthiah, Mrs. Saroja Guruswamy, Dr. Mano Baktavatsalam, Dr. Malathi Rangaswami and Mrs. Vaijyanthi Bhashykarlu. The task was successfully completed in 2011. Dr. Sushila Mariappan, as President, Dr. Haripriya as Honorary Secretary and Mrs. Mallika Viswanathan as Treasurer oversaw the building completion.

The imposing building today houses working women with low income. A portion of the hostel is used to carry out activities of UWA Madras and store its records. The hostel has eight small rooms and two large rooms. The large hall is used to conduct programmes. UWAM plans to expand the building as and when it is confident

of raising funds for the same.

#### Activities & Projects

At the annual Women's Day Celebrations every year in the first week of March, UWAM honours women achievers from within the association and among prominent women of Chennai.

UWAM continues to support women's education. It provides annual scholarships to deserving girl students. UWAM conducts seminars and workshops from time to time to educate women and girl college students, and to enable its members to stay abreast with the latest in the field of law, health, economy, gender issues and education. The topics are wide ranging and include subjects like human rights, waste management, health issues, women's entrepreneurship, gender and peace. The association's continuing projects include block printing, spoken English programmes under "teaching the teachers' initiative, skill development programmes for students of nursing, Neuro Linguistic Programme for specially-abled students, and the Rs. 50-a-girl-child project". Some of the informative seminars conducted by UWAM include "Women in Higher Education"; "Violence against Women;"



“Challenges for Single Women”; “Scope for Entrepreneurship”; and “Challenges to Women in Covid times”.

UWAM collaborates with the University of Madras, city colleges, the Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, Chennai, and Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) from time to time to conduct its projects and programmes. It jointly celebrates the Madras Week along with WVS, WIA, Dignity Foundation and Aabla. In 2017, the All-India Women's Conference was held at University of Madras. Many UWAM members participated.

#### IFUWA connection

The following UWAM Presidents have been IFUWA Presidents:

Mrs. McDougall (1929-1931); Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy (1931-1935); Lady Rama Rao (1950-1953); Dr. S. Sridevi (1955-56); Mrs. Mona Hensman (1957-59); Miss V. Koman (1959 - 1961); Mrs. Lakshmi Menon (1961-1967); Mrs. Daisy Goplaratnam (1971-1975); Miss. Maithreyi Ramadurai (1987-1991): and the most recent IFUWA headquarters at Chennai was between 2014 and 2017 when Kumararani Dr. Meena Muthiah was its President and Mythili Sundar Secretary, Ms. M. Vijayanthi Basyakarlu Hon. Treasurer and Ms. Vinita Hoon was CIR. Dr. Meena Muthiah instituted an IFUWA scholarship during her tenure.

#### Assuming the Mantle

The University Women's Association, Madras, returned to its robust self, post-pandemic and started with a bang in 2021. Several talks, seminars and webinars were organised to bring about an awareness on several topics related to Women's Legal Rights, Employability, Mental Health, Physical Fitness, Achievements etc. Several competitions like poster making, essay writing, oratory, painting were conducted among college students to promote Women's empowerment. UWAM website was launched in February 2021 ([www.uwamadras.com](http://www.uwamadras.com))

The University Women's Association, Madras under the leadership of Dr. Latha Rajendran celebrated its centenary by organising a seminar on 20th August, 2022 on the theme

“Women Power: Changing Dynamics”. The event included talks and discussions by eminent personalities from various fields across India, inter college competitions and cultural programme. Dr. Vaidehi Vijayakumar, Vice Chancellor, Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal, Hon'ble Ms. Bhamathi Balasubramaniam, IAS (retd), Secretary to Government of India & Former Member, Central Administrative Tribunal and Hon'ble Justice Prabha Sreedevan, Retd. Judge, Madras High Court were some of the eminent speakers. Dr. Ranjana Banerjee, President, Indian Federation of University Women's Association, released the newsletter commemorating the 100 years of service of University Women's Association Madras. Services of the Patrons like Kumararani of Chettinad, Dr. Meena Muthai, Dr. Mano Baktavatsalam, Dr. Malathi Rangaswami, Mrs. Sheelavati Ranganathan and Dr. Sarasa Bharathi was acknowledged by honouring them on the occasion. The UWAM Centenary Scholarship for women pursuing research in the fields of science, commerce, arts and sports was established.

In 2023, Mrs. Vijayanthi Bashyakarlu took over as President and Dr. Shanthi Lakshmi was elected the Association Representative the term will continue till 2025.



*Atulam tatra tattejah sarvadevasarirajam \ Ekastham tadabhunnari vyapalokatrayam tvisa*



## Nagpur



*Women Empowerment*

### Preface

In the spirit of empowerment and academic enrichment, it is with great enthusiasm that we present this preface to articulate the mission and objectives of the University Women's Association Nagpur (UWAN). Our journey is guided by a profound belief in the transformative power of education, and we consider it the foundation for creating empowered and capable generations of women with unparalleled opportunities. Leadership development is a foundation of our vision. UWAN is devoted to nurturing the next generation of women leaders by providing leadership training, mentorship programmes, and avenues for career advancement. We aim to break the glass ceiling and contribute to gender diversity in leadership positions,

recognising that empowered women leaders are instrumental in fostering inclusive and innovative decision-making processes. This preface serves as an introduction to UWAN's tireless efforts to create meaningful change in the lives of women. As we embark on this journey, we extend our gratitude to all those who share in our vision – a vision of a society where education, economic empowerment, health, leadership, and community engagement converge to shape a future where every woman can flourish and thrive.

### Introduction

The University Women's Association of Nagpur (UWAN), established in 1951, is a non-governmental organisation of women graduates. It is affiliated to the Indian Federation

of University Women's Associations (IFUWA). The Indian Federation of University Women's Association is the national body whose motto is to 'Serve Humanity' and strives to provide better education and help women across the nation build their future. UWA Nagpur is a dedicated advocate for social change and gender equality and is proud to champion the cause of women's empowerment. With a deep belief in the transformative power of education, we invest in targeted programmes, scholarships, and mentorship opportunities, laying the foundation for a more empowered and capable generation of women.

Recognising the significance of economic independence, our active support for initiatives such as entrepreneurship workshops and vocational training equips women with the tools necessary for success, contributing to resilient and self-sufficient communities. UWA Nagpur extends its commitment to addressing the unique health challenges faced by women through healthcare awareness campaigns, essential services, and advocacy, ensuring informed decision-making about well-being. We are not just an organisation; we are a catalyst for positive change, dedicated to creating a future where women are empowered, self-reliant, and integral contributors to every aspect of society.

### Objectives

The primary objective of the University Women's Association (UWAN) is to facilitate comprehensive educational opportunities for women and girls. The objectives when working for the cause of women empowerment can vary based on the specific context, goals, and priorities of an organisation or initiative. The core mission of UWAN is to nurture women and girls, equipping them to become knowledgeable, resourceful, and empowered individuals capable of addressing the needs of their society. The organisation strives to promote the development of competence, commitment, and skills, empowering women to take up leadership and decision-making roles in both public and private spheres. Through research initiatives and the implementation of academic programmes, vocational training, and

skill-based education, UWAN seeks to devise relevant strategies that enable women to adapt effectively to a changing society, ensuring lifelong sustenance and active participation.

### Focus and Scope

The heart of our organisation lies in an unwavering commitment to empowering women and fostering holistic community development. We firmly believe in the transformative power of education, and our focus on educational initiatives encompasses scholarships, mentorship programmes, and targeted educational programmes designed to equip women with essential skills and knowledge. Recognising education as the key to breaking barriers and enabling individuals to realise their aspirations, we extend our efforts to support economic independence through initiatives such as entrepreneurship workshops and vocational training in crafts like cloth bag making, phenyl & detergent making, diya making, and fabric jewellery making. Our commitment to economic empowerment further extends to organising exhibitions showcasing and selling products crafted by women and specially-abled young adults, promoting economic independence within communities. UWAN strives to empower women with the knowledge and skills necessary to break barriers and achieve their aspirations. This investment in education serves as the foundation of a more empowered and capable generation of women. By fostering economic empowerment, UWAN not only enhances individual prosperity but also contributes





significantly to the development of resilient and self-sufficient communities. Skill development, especially for women, is celebrated on occasions like International Women's Day, where workshops specifically focus on fabric jewellery and cloth bag making. The objective is not only to commemorate women but also to underscore the importance of creating employment opportunities and alternative income sources for them.

Health and wellbeing initiatives form another crucial aspect of our focus. Addressing the health challenges faced by women is a core commitment of UWAN. Through robust healthcare awareness campaigns, ensuring access to essential services, and advocating for women's health rights, the organisation aims to ensure that women are not only physically healthy but also empowered with the knowledge and agency to make informed

decisions about their overall well-being.

Through medical camps, haemoglobin checkups, and demonstrations of nutritious recipes, we aim to promote overall health awareness and lifestyle improvements within the adopted villages.

Environmental consciousness is actively encouraged through workshops on the hazards of plastic on the environment. Our participation in initiatives like Majhi Vasundhara underscores our commitment to spreading awareness about environmental issues and encouraging sustainable practices. Community engagement is also one of our focus areas. This involves donating utility items, distributing foodgrains, raising awareness. For example, COVID-19 preventive measures, and actively participating in events to promote women entrepreneurship for economic empowerment. We extend our



*Block Printing*



focus to societal issues through participation in panel discussions on gender-based violence, National Voters Day, and stress disorder management through yoga. Special camps inaugurated by Vice Principals focus on health, hygiene, and nutritious recipes, while visits to Panchvati Old Age Home exemplify our commitment to spreading joy and awareness in the broader community. UWAN, a steadfast advocate for women's empowerment, employs a comprehensive strategy across various domains to bring about positive change.

In the domain of Community Engagement, UWAN actively collaborates with communities to promote gender equality. Through impactful awareness campaigns, workshops, and open dialogues, the organisation strives to challenge stereotypes, dismantle biases, and create an environment where women feel not only supported but also encouraged to pursue their goals. Recognising the significance of community involvement, UWAN seeks to build a society that genuinely recognises and values the contributions of every individual, irrespective of gender. This integrated approach reflects UWAN's unwavering commitment to creating a world where every woman can unleash her full potential.

Looking ahead into the future, UWA Nagpur envisions a continued and expanded role in shaping the destiny of women in the region. Building on the foundation of IFUWA's global initiatives, UWA Nagpur sees a vital role in forming pressure groups, advocating for women's rights, and actively engaging in interventions to address the evolving challenges faced by women. The focus will be on amplifying the organization's impact through targeted advocacy work, aiming to create an environment that fosters peace and promotes the education and independence of the girl child. UWA Nagpur recognises that much work has been accomplished, but there remains a substantial amount yet to be done. In the years to come, the organisation aims to lead in various women-centric domains, emphasising empowerment and self-reliance. Embracing technological advancements, UWAN plans to integrate innovative solutions to enhance its

educational programmes, economic empowerment initiatives, and health awareness campaigns. Leveraging technology will enable UWAN to reach a broader audience and create scalable, sustainable impact. The future scope for UWA Nagpur involves not just sustaining its current efforts but also expanding its influence, reaching more women, and playing an instrumental role in shaping a more inclusive and empowered future.

### Conclusion

UWA Nagpur's unwavering commitment to empowering women is demonstrated through its multifaceted approach, addressing education, economic independence, health, leadership, and community engagement. In conclusion, UWAN stands unwavering in its commitment to women's empowerment, recognising the transformative impact it has on individuals, communities, and society at large. Through our dedication to education, economic empowerment, health and well-being, leadership development, and community engagement, we aspire to create a world where every woman can break barriers, realise her full potential, and contribute significantly to shaping a more equitable and inclusive future for all. We invite everyone to join us in building a society where the diverse strengths and contributions of women are not only acknowledged but celebrated, fostering a world that truly thrives on the principles of equality, justice, and shared empowerment. Together, let us continue the journey towards a brighter and more inclusive tomorrow.



## Pune

UWA, Pune was established in 1949 as a result of the efforts of Ms. Shanta Bhandarkar. She believed in women's emancipation and along with like-minded educated women in Pune, started this organisation by the name Women Graduates Union. In the early years, a library was started in a school and story-telling sessions were conducted for children. Also Scholarships were given to support the education of some of the students as the aim of this organisation was to educate and empower women and girls from the disadvantaged classes, this programme still continues. The commitment of these pioneers was matched by their determination and sensitivity.

Then came the time when the world of work began changing and women from several parts of the country started coming to Pune for work. The far-sighted members soon realised the need of a safe place for these new entrants to the city, to stay safely. Thus, in 1975, a project of building the Working Women's Hostel was taken up, as our ambitious Silver Jubilee Programme. Dr. Prabha Deodhar, Ms. Kausalya Sangtani, Ms. Sulochana Kalyani, Indira Maydeo, Tehmi Grant, Nalini Gera, Ratna Khemani, Shanta Kirloskar, Veena Naik, Shobha Deshmukh, Dr. Zainb Poonawala, Meera Ubhaykar, Yamuna Bhagwat, Sheela Kirloskar, Manda Kirloskar, Tara Vaidya, Aloo Ben Driver, Nirmala Kapadia, Dr. Usha Bambawale, Dr. Gulcheher Coyaji, Seeta Sahani, Kishori Velkar, Ambika Digvi, Dr. Banu Coyaji and many more were the members who actively worked on this herculean task. Today we proudly remember their important role in building this lifeline of UWA, Pune and continuing to help it flourish. The hostel was opened on 7th February, 1979, at the hands of Ms. Shantadevi Sadique Ali, wife of the Governor of Maharashtra.

### Working Women's Hostel

Today this hostel stands as a living testimony of UWA Pune's contribution to women's safety in the society and provides a home away from

home to 74 working women for whom Pune is a new city.

Here is a testimony from one of our resident.



Hostelites share their experiences: A place for amity and serenity.

UWA, the Working Women's Hostel is a heaven for women who want to achieve their professional goals by also

experiencing a nurturing and secure environment. As a resident of UWA Hostel, I can attest to the exceptional experiences and a sense of community that thrive within its walls. From its ideal location for evening walks to the unwavering support system among its residents, UWA is a testament to the empowerment and solidarity of women in the workplace.

Nestled near the Tekdi areas of the city, UWA benefits from the strategic locations that offers numerous advantages to its residents. One of the most remarkable aspects is the opportunity for an evening walk in the area. The peaceful and picturesque surroundings provide a much-needed respite from demanding work demands of the workday, allowing the residents to unwind, reflect and rejuvenate.

The hostel is also home to a vibrant community of women from all walks of life. All of us women come together to support each other in our professional and personal endeavours. We share meals, laugh and tears, and create a sense of belonging that is truly special.

UWA is more than just a place to live, it's a home away from home for women who are striving to achieve their dreams. It's a place where women can be themselves, grow, and thrive.

One of the most appreciated elements of life at UWA is the resident's strong sense of camaraderie and support. Living with other working women fosters an environment of understanding, empathy, and encouragement.

The relationships developed within these walls go beyond housemates to become lifelong friendships and professional networks. The female residents look out for one another, creating a space to share stories, seek advice and celebrate accomplishments. UWA's collective strength and unwavering support system enable women to face problems with confidence and resilience.

The common areas allow inhabitants to socialise, exchange ideas and build a sense of community. UWA Hostel is more than simply a hostel; it's an incubator that recognises women's potential and equips them with the tools they need to flourish in all facets of life.

Prajwal Wadettiwar (Hostelite)

Activities done in the last two years

- Environment Cell:

Convener of the environment cell Ms. Manjushri Parasnis organised a webinar under the joint auspices IFUWA and UWA for a lecture by Dr. Gurudas Nulkar, the Trustee, Ecological Society of India on 30th April, 2022 on the topic of Biodiversity, Ecosystem and Human Health.

It was an insightful talk he gave through the topic of his choice addressing the issues of impacts of consumption-driven lifestyles on the natural environment. As economist and engineers have their own perspectives to solve this problem, he dwelt on whether human beings ought to save nature for the sake of nature as from common man's viewpoint or is there a deeper connection yet to be revealed. He further explained the role of biodiversity on the planet and how ecosystems connect the human economy and human existence.

Members news

- Jeevitnadi participation:

Jeevitnadi is Pune citizens' movement that firmly believes that river revival is possible through active participation of the citizens.

Inspired by prominent ecologist Late Shri Prakash Gole, alumni of Ecological Society came together in 2014 to work for revival of rivers in Pune. This was a group of individuals from diverse professional fields who were

passionate about environment conservation and their focus is on changing perception of people about the rivers and bringing back the lost connection particularly in the urban areas.

This initiative to protect rivers evolved into Jeevitnadi. Since 2016, it is a section 8 company, registered under the name Jeevitnadi – Living River Foundation.

Jeevitnadi works on various projects and is associated as one of the founders of Ramnadi restoration mission. It is also on advisory panels and recipient of many accolades and awards. UWA members are actively involved in this initiative.

UWA women have decided to show their solidarity with this movement by their active participation to the Save our Hills movement and participated in the Protest March also.

- Members Shining Bright:

It is a proud moment for UWAP whose member Padmaja Jalihal was recently felicitated for a distinctive achievement. Her enterprise Indic Inspirations, a Pune-based Culture Startup, has won the Maharashtra Startup Award 2022 during the Maharashtra Startup Week. She has been the founder director of Heart for Art Trust. An MBA in Finance, she earlier worked with CRB Capital Markets and was part of the team at Sivan Securities that launched the initial Café Coffee Day.

Startup Week is a flagship initiative to provide opportunities for startups to work with the government and bring innovation to governance. Indic Inspirations was selected as a winner from the top 100 finalists amongst 1,100 startup applications from around the country. Indic Inspirations narrates stories of







India's tradition, culture, heritage, and achievements through its products. Padmaja loves arts and crafts and has been a collector of artifacts from around India and the world.

- Sanyukta Stree Sanstha:

At the local level, UWAP was felicitated by the Pune-based Sanyukta Stree Sanstha for having served the area of women empowerment and providing a safe habitat for girls to live and work for over 50 years. UWAP was chosen to be one of the ten organisations picked by this institution that had served women in the city for over fifty years. This was indeed a recognition for UWA for having consistently worked for half a century keeping a good institution going.

- Movement of Positivity is an activity started by Ambassador Mr. Dyaneshwar Mulay through his NGO. Our ex-president Ms. Neelam Jagdale gave a talk on Women Empowerment Role of UWA's in India while specifying the work done by UWA-Pune over the half century in the service of empowering women. This event was shared live on the Facebook platform where several viewers from all over the world had logged in.
- Other stalwarts working in the field of Education are Malati Kalmadi, Dr. Anagha Lavekar, Dr. Suvarna Gokhale. While the entrepreneurial ventures are run by Manini Gujar, Shabnum Poonawala, Neelam Jagdale and many more.

- UWAP members have also been active at the National and International levels, taking up posts as Conveners at IFUWA Committees, and some others at the GWI committees. In this Triennium two of our members are serving at the GWI Board as Vice Presidents. And three as members on other GWI committees.
- Dr. Vinaybala Mehta through a donation created a project-fund at GWI because of her passion for Education. We are very thankful to her generous gesture. Through this fund, support money will be provided to some selected projects by GWI.

### Research and Development

- Research and Development Cell started in 2021, is yet another important activity through which many research projects of short durations are undertaken. Collaborative research is also encouraged, along with other institutions like for example ICMR, Symbiosis, Indian Institute of Education, Kirloskar Brothers Ltd., and so on.
- At the international level also, joint projects are being conducted between India and Egypt on Sexual Harassment at Workplace for the past five years. These are the programmes initiated at Pune and are going on under the Graduate Women International NFA to NFA Membership Marketplace under the guidance of Dr. Meera Bondre.
- Our efforts in the research work for the POSH programmes continue strongly. We will be having a skit for the street plays to be conducted in and around Pune City.
- Preparations for the upcoming IFUWA Conference is going on very well with active participation of our managing committee and other members.

### Other Activities under the current management

- The first event under the new Managing Committee was the Monsoon Mela in July 2023. The immediate Past President of IFUWA, Ms. Swati Bedekar had requested

UWAP to help women artists from Gujarat and Rajasthan who were visiting Pune, to showcase their handicrafts. UWAP organised the Monsoon Mela with the combined aim of hosting these women artists as well other women entrepreneurs from Pune and nearby places. This was a one-day event and received good response.

- UWAP celebrated Garba on 17th October, 2023 on the suggestion of the Youth Wing Convener, Madhavi More. The event took place with great enthusiasm and energy. Dr. Kalyani Bondre choreographed and conducted the Garba workshop which was free for our members and hostel girls senior members match the energy of the young members in the dance. Ms. Mini Grant was the judge for selecting the best dancers of the evening. Ms. Suchita Shroff was selected for the first prize,
- As per the long tradition at UWAP, the Diwali Mela was held on 4th and 5th November 2023 at our hall. Around 35 stalls were booked and various items like handicrafts, apparel, jewellery, millets, foodstalls were showcased.
- Diwali Pahat is a rich tradition of the cultural landscape of Pune. On the initiative of the Open House convener, a classical singing program was organised.
- Chhand Rang activity is on in full swing at Darode School. 45 students from 5th to 7th standards are being taught skills like painting, crochet, knitting, rangoli, macramé, etc. Just before Raksha Bandhan in August, the students were taught to make

rakhis and before Ganapati festival, they learnt to make eco-friendly Ganapati idols and painted them.

- The Scholarships Committee has started work of screening and shortlisting the forms. Around 66 forms have been shortlisted from the 116 received. Interview procedure will take place in January 2024.

Our senior members who have completed 90 years of age and were still active in UWAP, was organised. These members were Mini Grant, Dr. Zainab Poonawalla, Dr. Vinaybala Mehta and Freny Tarapore. UWAP also felicitated its own members for their selection on the GWI committees.

#### Obituary:

We lost a few stalwarts who have been very active in the past and always guided us through the journey of UWAP. Ms. Vinaybala Mehta and Dr. Zainab Poonawalla passed away due to old age. Our deepest condolences.

UWA Pune is like a movement. It keeps changing; takes notice of needs of the society, and finds solutions to meet them successfully. This is both, the secret of its 75 years of fruitful existence and an inspiration to the members to do even better in the future!

Dr. Ujwala Shinde... President UWAP





## Thiruvananthapuram



*Executive Committee members at Govt. College for Women with Principal, after awareness programme*

### The Genesis

The University Women's Association of Thiruvananthapuram was founded in 1963. Along with a small group of women graduates including the revered Lakshmi N. Menon, the initiative was taken by Mrs. Mary Mathai, who became the first President in her term from 1963-66. The aims of the organisation were formulated "To stimulate and to further the interests of University women in accordance with academic and cultural life and to promote and foster understanding and friendship between University Women throughout the world."

Under the able leadership of Mary Mathai and succeeding Presidents, the Association grew considerably, enhancing memberships and

enlarging the sphere of activities. The main activities centred around the academic and included talks, debates and seminars on related topics.

In 1973, the Kerala Government sanctioned twenty cents of land on a long lease to enable the Association to put up a building as a permanent venue for carrying out their activities. The royal family of Travancore helped with a generous donation for its construction which was done under the renowned architect Mr. Laurie Baker. The Association celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1988.

The hall has since been named Lakshmi N Menon Memorial Hall, after this exemplary lady, the founding member of UWAT and who is the pride of our nation.





*Poster on Elimination of Violence against Women*

### Earliest Members

Some of the earliest members included many women of substance, such as Indira Ramakrishna Pillai, Dr. Pushpita John, Dr. Chitra Gopalan, C.K. Revamma, Dr. Rachel Mathai, Susamma Chacko, Mrs. P.R.S. Pillai and Lakshmi N Menon among others. Some of our members, including Dr. Pushpita John and Princess Gouri Lakshmi Bayi have served as Convenors of Committees of IFUWA.

### Initial Projects

Among the early academic projects, the vocational guidance programme for women, which also include personal guidance were noteworthy. This proved to be very useful for hundreds of aspiring young women of those days. Classes for spoken English were also held and this too proved to be of great use. From its beginning, the State Literacy Programme was supported by the Association, which was proud to be associated with this flagship programme of the State of Kerala, which later became the most literate state of India. The Association also donated a lot of teaching and learning materials for this programme. Lakshmi.

N. Menon received the prestigious Tagore Memorial Literacy Award for her efforts. Dr. Pushpita John, a stalwart and an authority in the field of education, with her writings and active work, also proved to be of great service.

### Projects in the Recent Past and Ongoing

Over the years, our projects have extended to Women's Empowerment. This includes creating awareness of the rights and potential of women, vocational training, support to earn a livelihood and developing their personalities with training in skills and talent enhancement.

Talks, seminars and discussions on relevant topics at women's colleges and institutes continue to be on the agenda. Career guidance for students is being done regularly.

International Women's Day is observed every year, with talks or Awareness programmes marking the occasion. A talk on the topic 'Educate a Girl, Invest for the Future', was



*Planting Saplings on Environment Day*





*Flag hoisting on Independence Day at Lakshmi N Menon Memorial UWA Hall*

presented at the meet organised by the Women and Children department.

Help by way of study materials, like mobile phones and laptops for online classes, etc. and financial support, is being given to students, regularly. Also being conducted regularly under the auspices of our organisation are talks by medical professionals, to create awareness on health issues affecting women, children and adolescent girls.

Our organisation associates with sister organisations in observing events like Human Rights Day, Environment Day and International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women. The same was observed by UWA Thiruvananthapuram on 25th November, with a poster campaign that was shared widely over the social media.

Under the auspices of UWA Thiruvananthapuram, several educative courses are currently being conducted. The classes are held in the UWA Hall and are taught by reputed teachers in the respective fields. These include Karate class and Drawing & Painting class for ladies by the recognised artist Sri B.D. Dethan. A Thiruvathirakali class is being conducted by our member, the renowned Guru Girija Chandran, to benefit ladies, young and old. A matter of satisfaction and pride is the fact that these ladies have been able to present their art at several venues, which has boosted their confidence and positive spirit.

A catering unit started in the side room in our Hall premises provides some employment and income for a few needy persons. The UWA Hall is being made available free of charge to deserving women for marriage and other functions. Recently, on humanitarian grounds, the dead body of a lady who donated her organs to Medical College, Bangalore, was permitted to be kept in our hall, while it was brought to Thiruvananthapuram for cremation.

#### Upcoming Projects

Projects that are on the anvil are an ongoing Awareness programmes on Drug Abuse for college students. With the frightening use of drugs among the younger generation, it is the





*Thiruvathira Students of UWAT*

need of the hour to take preventive measures. Along with continuous awareness programmes, we hope to provide counselling to the youth, on a regular basis.

It is a matter of pride and honour for us that our honorary member and Past President of UWAT was decorated with the Padmashri, announced on the occasion of Republic Day 2024. We hope to get her to address at a series of motivational talks for girl students.

A career guidance programme and an assessment programme for students is being planned in the course of the current academic year.

A Personality Development Workshop for youngsters will be held in our hall.

A Medical camp and cultural events where members can showcase their talents are other events that are being planned for the near future.



*Awareness Programme at College*

## Vadodara



*Members of the Association*

### The history

The history of University Women's Association Vadodara (UWAV) began in 1969 when IFUWA President, Dr. Bina Roy requested Dr. Sushma Merh to start a chapter in Vadodara. With the help of Dr. Justina Singh, the then Dean of Home Science Faculty, Maharaja Sayajirao University (MSU), Dr. Merh took the pioneering 'First Step' and later went on to become the President. A conference of Graduate Women of Vadodara attended by over 200 Women Graduates welcomed the idea of UWA in Vadodara. Later in early 1970, the constitution was formulated, UWA got registered and membership drive was initiated. Dr. (Smt.) Mrunalini Devi Puar, Chancellor of the M.S.U., a member of the erstwhile royal family of Baroda, was one of the patrons of UWAV. A series of lectures on Science Education and Role of Women, and activities to aid the handicapped were initiated. Most of the major activities covered Guidance and Counselling for girls

from Rural areas. By mid 1972, Dr. Merh left for USA to pursue her doctorate & unfortunately UWAV could not be sustained. In 2005, the association was revived under the able Presidentship of Prof. Parul Dave. Since then it has been an uninterrupted fruitful journey. UWAV is proud to have members from industry, judiciary, academia, NGO, field of art and culture.

### From then to now: The journey

#### Seminars and Symposiums :

Keeping in mind the mission of UWA, several seminars were organised over the years.

-Ageing in the 21st century; Empowering Women at Grass root level; Sexual Harassment; Women in different cultures; Child welfare; Women with disability; Women empowerment: Past, Present and Future; Mainstreaming the differently abled people.

-to list a few.



### Milestones At The National Level

- UWAV hosted a National Seminar at Parul University with the theme, “Pathways to Development” with the participation of all chapters of UWA.
- In 2018 UWAV hosted another CC meeting during which Mrs. Geeta Desai President GWI, inaugurated a seminar.

### Celebrations, Workshops, Visits

UWAV celebrates festivals, international days, organises picnics that help members bond. We conduct workshops, organise field trips, and hold talks that disseminate information and spark interest.

To mention a few: Heritage site visit; Rehabilitation sites of Sardar Sarovar Dam; Jewel Brush Factory visit; Panel discussion on 'Layman and Law' where the topics of discussion were Family Law and Consumer Law; Celebrating Navratri with the traditional 'garba' dance; Screening women-oriented films; performing Bhavai (a folk dance drama) on female foeticide; and Workshops on mental health and stress; The “Maths Yes We Can” program was introduced in India through the efforts of UWAV. Designed to introduce concepts in a fun and easy way, several

students are currently benefiting from it.

Imparting training in income-generating activities to rural girls.

- Clay lamp painting and paper lantern making activity for rural girls.

### Talks by Guest Speakers and Experts

- Talk by Amy Peake, founder of 'Loving Humanity'.
- Devjani Soraibin from Manipur shared her experience on 'Life through Militancy'. The stirring talk on the travails people go through served to make us realise how fortunate we are to be living in safe environs.
- Veteran actress Reema Lagoo: An interactive session.
- UWAV and Vatsalya Foundation jointly organised a talk 'From Scars to Stars' by wellknown author Princess Marie Claire about her journey.
- In collaboration with Community Science Center, UWAV arranged a talk on 'DNA and Biotechnology'.
- Dr. Deepali Tewari, an Organ Donation facilitator, spoke on 'Organ donation: 'the importance, facts, myths'. The legal, social,





*Visit to Sayaji Baugh*

medical and emotional facets of the complex process of Organ Donation left us in awe of the tremendous dedication involved at every step of this invaluable gift of life.

- How to invest, Opportunities and Precautions: A Wealth Management professional, gave pointers on various avenues of safe and wise investment.
- Laws to the aid of women: Women's rights and guidance on how to make a will.
- Nutritional needs of women above 50 years: On maintaining a balanced diet

Activities under the 'Coming close to Nature' series

- Visit to Sayaji Baug where Dr. Jitendra Gavali, Director of Community Science Center, explained the origin, special features, and the symbiotic relationship between species of trees.
- A visit to Savitri Urban Food forest which is unique experiment in traditional farming, was a great learning experience.
- A workshop on "grow your own vegetables" using Eco-friendly pots.
- Artists, authors, business tycoons, professors, home-makers, doctors etc. bring great diversity to UWAV. Taking advantage of their rich experiences, varied perspectives and spheres of influence, we organised International Women's Day celebrations by kickstarting "Eye-opener" talks on socially relevant subjects, painstakingly prepared by our members. Be it a legal perspective, an emotional angle, medical awareness or information about the day-to-day business of life, every talk was a learning experience.
- NRI marriages - a legal perspective : The do's and don'ts and the pitfalls were discussed and caution was advised.
- Safeguard your kidneys : Surprising and interesting facts were brought to light during the talk on causes and prevention of kidney diseases.
- Government schemes for women and Banking frauds : Other than information about schemes for women the speaker alerted the audience to modern day frauds.
- Dance Therapy workshop: Dance as a stress-relieving therapy was demonstrated



by Mrs. Nikita Bedeker.

### The Pride of UWAV :

- Nilam Patel Bahushrut Foundation, founded by UWAV member Nilam Patel, encourages mainstream education and inclusion, providing scholarships for higher education to Hearing Impaired for the last 30 years. 350 beneficiaries were girl students.
- Late Ms. Aruna Lakahani, one of the patrons of UWAV, was a women's champion. She worked to empower women by providing health care and livelihood opportunities, so as to improve maternal and child health and build capacity to earn livelihood in her capacity as Director of Deepak Foundation.
- One of the leading NGOs today, Disha Charitable Trust was founded in 1999 by UWAV member late Ms. Prabha Mehta for children with autism and other disorders. Mrs. Alka Smart, again a UWAV member, manages Disha's activities as Vice President of the Trust that works towards women empowerment through giving training in income-generating skills to poor and disabled women from slums.

Members who have brought UWA-V into the limelight:

- Swati Bedekar, former UWAV & IFUWA president, is recognised 'as the Pad Woman of India'. Contribution in terms of time and money by our members ensured a successful launch of the project that ensures women "safe and hygienic periods". Women were trained and empowered to run the sanitary pad manufacturing units across India and abroad. More than 5,000 women earn their livelihood through this venture.
- Dr. Arti Bhati, M Sc., M Ed., Ph.D, Triple gold medallist from the MSU, DAAD scholar, Germany, was awarded the Dorothy Lee Grant for her research project on "Influence of globalisation on challenges faced by ethnic women students in higher education", at UCL, London. The same year as a guest speaker at the University of Germany she spoke on "Globalised London-voice of

International students". In 2019, her paper on "Inter cultural learning & academic challenges: Empowering International women students of London", was selected for presentation at the ANGEL Conference, UCL, London.

- IFUWA-icon awardee Sharmila Divatia, has brought laurels to UWAV through her work and recognition at the national level. She does not allow her disability to be a hurdle while working tirelessly for the betterment of the disabled & for inclusiveness.
- UWAV member, Shruti Sonathalia, was appointed as the 'V.P. marketing' for GWI in November 2022.



### An Eye to the Future

UWAV will continue with various activities in line with the vision of IFUWA to provide women and girls the means to realise their full potential. It will be our endeavour to bring greater awareness about women's rights, thus empowering them.

Email address: [uwa.vadodara@gmail.com](mailto:uwa.vadodara@gmail.com)

## Women Graduates Union



*Women Graduates Union  
Purshotamdas Thakurdas Hostel*

### Overview

The Women Graduates Union (WGU), a Non Governmental organisation, was formed in 1915 on the initiative of the Association of British University Women in India. It is an association of educated, forward-looking women that works towards empowering women by providing education opportunities to them. This uplifts the women economically and holistically improves the growth of the nation. It brings to the fore educated women's perspective to social, educational, cultural and civic issues. It offers redress to many unique issues that impact women and their families.

Investing in women's growth and development, today, the Union undertakes several projects/activities. Main project being the establishment of Hostel for Working Women. In 1960, WGU took steps to act on the long standing need for a secure, affordable hostel for working women. The Government of India,



*Trustees & Managing Committee of WGU - 1975*





*International Women's Day with Maharashtra United Nations Association*

helped finance this venture. WGU members approached the Governor of Bombay, Sri Prakasa, who spoke to Mr. J. C. Jain, then General Manager of the Times of India to plan for the funds. In later years, other stalwarts who headed the adhoc fund-raising Committee were Mr. S.K. Wankhede and Mr. K.M. Chinappa.

#### First Woman Bachelor of Arts in India

In 1888, Miss Cornelia Sorabji from Bombay Province passed the Bachelor of Arts examination in first class. She became the first Secretary of the Federation of University Women in India in 1921 and later its President. By 1915 there were two hundred of them in the Presidency.

#### Marching forward

##### a) Initiating women into Public Life

The Union created opportunities for women graduates to attend meetings to exchange ideas in social and educational matters.

##### b) Introduces women into positions of power

In 1925, the first three women Justices of the Peace were appointed from the members of the Union – Dr. Turner Watts, Dr. Kashibai Naorange and Miss Bhicaijee Engineer.

##### c) In civil liberties and fundamental rights legislation

From 1950, the Union devoted time to legislation, concerning itself with civil liberties and fundamental rights.

##### d) In socio-economic studies

During 1962-65, WGU carried out socio-economic studies on the education, training and employment of women graduates. Another piece of legislation which has engaged the attention of the Union was the Adoption of Children Bill, 1972.

##### e) Educational Activities

- l) In 1938, two members of the Union, Miss Amy Rustomjee and Miss Godavari Gokhale, were members of the Adult Education Committee (1938). For the decade 1929-39, the Educational and Social Reform Committee devoted special attention to schools, scrutinising the curricula, reviewing the standard of teaching, and keeping a vigilant eye on textbooks. WGU, at the instance of the Government gave its views on the proposals relating to adult education of women.

ii) WGU attached great importance to arrangements for the care of women studying in colleges. When the provisions of the Karnataka University and the Gujarat University Acts were under consideration, WGU put forward recommendations relating to hostel accommodation for women, the appointment of a woman graduate, who could be expected to understand students problems, as warden in such hostels, college retiring rooms with sanitary arrangements for women, and the inclusion of a department of Home Economics.

iii) Five 'O' project offered to underprivileged girls – 3 months course on personality development, training in housekeeping, geriatric and child care.

f) Scholarships

Scholarships are given for higher education in need-cum-merit basis. Disbursement of scholarships commenced in 1934 with grants of Rs. 50/- and Rs. 25/- to deserving students to fulfil their dreams of completing their education. Today, the amount has grown considerably.

g) Eminent Personalities

i) In 1965, WGU celebrated its Golden Jubilee with an exhibition on "The Role of University Women in a Developing Economy". The exhibition was inaugurated by Dr. Zakir Husain, Vice President of India, he stated "The competence with which the exhibition



*Centenary Celebration in 2015*

was organised impressed me greatly. The choice of themes, the collection of material, the graphic skill in representation and above all the very efficient way the exhibits were explained by members of the Committee made it a pleasure to go through the Exhibition".

ii) In 1970, to celebrate International Education Year, an exhibition was held to illustrate the progress of education in India with the co-operation of the Union Ministry of Education and Youth Services. The Minister, Mr. VKRV Rao inaugurated the symposium held at the same time. A section of the exhibition was devoted to the activities of the Indian Federation of University Women's Associations which celebrated its Golden Jubilee in the same year.

iii) In 1975, WGU held a show of creative work of women and the eminence achieved by them in this field.

iv) Over the years, WGU had several eminent personalities visiting on different occasions. Senior Counsel, Mr. Iqbal Chagla, Justice Shri Vishnu Sahai, Dr. Anil Kakodkar, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission & Secretary, Dr. Karan Singh, MP, Rajya Sabha and Chairman, Committee of Ethic & President of Indian Council of Cultural Relations, Dr. Vijay Khole, Vice Chancellor, University of Mumbai, amongst others.



*Womens Day 2023*





*Oration at Raj Bhawan*

#### h) International Affiliations

WGU was affiliated to The Indian Federation of University Women's Association (IFUWA) in 1921. Founded in Kolkata in 1920, IFUWA is also an affiliate of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) now Graduate Women International, based in Geneva. WGU, as the affiliate of IFUWA and GWI, is also a member of the 'University Women of Asia' (UW of Asia) and SAARC Federation of University Women (SAARCFUW).

The following Iconic women namely Dr. Sudha Padhye, Mrs. Swarn Kohli and Late Mrs. Tannaz Tarapore received the Iconic Women Award on the occasion of IFUWA Centenary.

One of the advantages derived by WGU members being affiliated to IFUWA and GWI is the access to foreign scholarships awarded to sponsored candidates of sister associations from all over the world.

WGU has, historically, hosted at least one of the Central Council meetings of IFUWA during all the Biennials and Triennials, whenever the headquarters was at any other UWA of India.

#### Present scenario

The 108-year-old Women Graduates Union, today, has the Working Women's Hostel which accommodates 103 residents from different states.

WGU disburses annually Scholarships amounting to Rs. 15 Lakhs to deserving students from different fields.

WGU also imparts computer knowledge to students, generates consumer & civic affairs awareness. Offers counselling & guidance to those who require help. A Balwadi and Study Centre are run on a day-to-day basis by trained teacher.

#### Address panel - Women Graduates Union

Women Graduates Union Road, Near Colaba Bus Station, Mumbai - 400 005

Website URL :

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

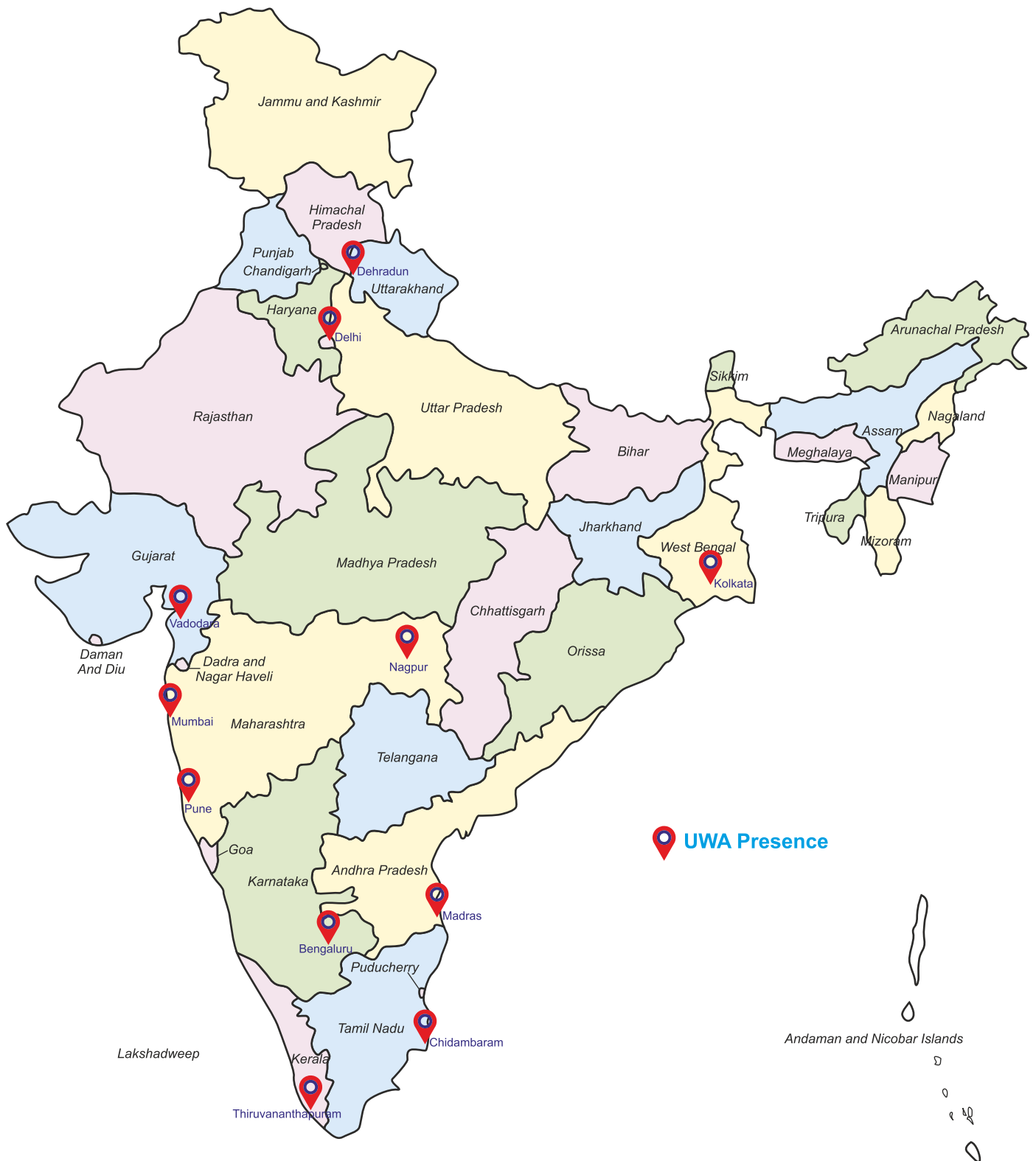
Website URL : [Women Graduates Union](http://Women Graduates Union)

## Past Presidents of IFUWA (as on 01.03.2024)

Name	Tenure
Lady Rama Rao	1950-53
Ms. Amy B H Rustomjee	1953-55
Dr. S Sridevi	1955-56
Ms. Mona Hensman	1957-59
Ms. V Koman	1959-61
Ms. Lakshmi N Menon	1961-67
Ms. Mary Agnes Saldanha	1967-71
Ms. Daisy L Gopal Ratnam	1971-75
Dr. Bina Roy	1975-79
Professor Chitra Ghosh	1979-83
Ms. Minal Saran	1983-87
Ms. Maithreyi Ramadurai	1987-91
Dr. Goolcheher Coyaji	1991-95
Ms. Nellie Dwarkanath	1995-99
Ms. Devyani Sircar	1999-02
Dr. Panna Akhani	2002-05
Dr. Sudha Padhye	2005-08
Ms. Enakshi Chattopadhyay	2008-11
Dr. Vinaybala Mehta	2011-14
Dr. Meena Muthiah	2014-17
Ms. Swati Bedekar	2017-20
Dr. Ranjana Banerjee (present)	2020-25



# OUR FOOTPRINT



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