



# Indian Federation of University Women's Associations

AFFILIATED TO GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL



## President's Address

IFUWA (2020 – 2023) is completing its first year of this Triennium. For the past one year, keeping with the Vision and Mission of IFUWA, we have had quality and impressive Webinars, with eminent resource persons from the field of education, health, law, etc., handling issues which primarily concern women.

It gives me joy to say that all that has been made possible with members' cooperation along with the sincerity, dedication and untiring efforts of the Conveners, who have worked along with me. The highlights of the first year were the holding of the BFGW – IFUWA Solidarity Program and the revival of UWAsia. With a Committee framed with representatives from some of the Asian Federations, UWAsia came back to life in 2021. UWAsia, which had become defunct since 2007, had its first event on August 7, 2021, in conjunction with the Pacific Region on Peace and Conflict Resolution, with 97 members participating from many NFAs.

It is a happy occasion that UWA of Delhi is back on its feet with guidance delivered and efforts taken by the members. The year also witnessed the successful completion of the National Project, the revamping of the IFUWA Website, initiation of the Face Book page and a concerted effort to look into the prospect of setting up of new UWAs. IFUWA is also working hard to revive SAARCFUW in the near future.

My belief that disciplined democratic functioning whilst respecting member's views and involvements has taken the organisation to heights. There is more to be done for IFUWA and 'I have miles to go before I sleep.'

Long live IFUWA!

**Ranjana Banerjee**



## Editor's Note

Dear friends,

This is our second e-newsletter for the Triennial of 2020-2023. We will endeavour to bring to you collated information regarding the activities that have been undertaken by IFUWA within the last six months.

The IFUWA Website is going to be active on August 28, 2021. The IFUWA Facebook Page called 'IfuwaIndia' is now followed by many members of other NFAs. Our YouTube channel is 'IFUWA Events' has all the Talks uploaded, with the links available on the IFUWA Website as well.

Please feel free to send in some interesting news of your activity or of your UWA, with good quality images, for incorporation in the next e-newsletter. It will be easier for me to put the pages together when we plan the next e-newsletter. Please use the email id ifuwa.hjournal@gmail.com for all IFUWA correspondence, addressed to me.

Happy reading!

**Purobi Ghosh Mohan**

## IFUWA Central Committee 2020-2023

|                                        |                           |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>President</b>                       | : Ranjana Banerjee        |
| <b>Vice President</b>                  | : Gomathy Venkateswar     |
| <b>Coordinator International</b>       |                           |
| <b>Relations</b>                       | : Shyamasree Sen          |
| <b>Secretary</b>                       | : Sakuntala Ghosh Hazra   |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                       | : Sreemoyee Ganguli       |
| <b>Joint Treasurer</b>                 | : Sanghamitra Dutta Gupta |
| <b>Joint Secretary</b>                 | : Mita Mukharji           |
| <b>Convener Education</b>              | : Nandini Sonthalia       |
| <b>Convener Membership</b>             | : Dechamma Banerjee       |
| <b>Convener Projects</b>               | : Malati Kalmadi          |
| <b>Convener Scholarship</b>            | : Sheela Kulkarni         |
| <b>Convener Resolutions</b>            | : Mythili Sundar          |
| <b>Convener Communications</b>         | : Purobi Ghosh Mohan      |
| <b>Officiating Convener for UWAsia</b> | : Meera Bondre            |

## International News

### IFUWA and EAUW NFA-TO-NFA Project on Sexual Harassment at Workplace

As part of the Membership Marketplace NFA-to-NFA program, IFUWA along with EAUW successfully conducted a webinar on 'Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace - Prohibition, Prevention, and Redressal'. The 1st webinar was held on November 21, 2020. Three webinars were created and hosted by IFUWA and EAUW, and the finale was a joint webinar on May 29, 2021. The webinars addressed the common issues concerning professional women facing sexual harassment in the workplace in both the countries. The project highlighted the effective role of the judiciary and the role of women centric, non-governmental organizations along with redressal mechanisms to deal with it as well as the role of the government in forming laws for women's protection.

### 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65)

CSW65 took place from March 15 to 26, 2021 under the priority theme 'Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls'. GWI members in good standing within their respective National Federation and Associations (NFAs) and independent members registered for the same.

### BFGW – IFUWA Solidarity evening

While the COVID 19 pandemic continued to intensify globally, India was hit particularly hard by an unprecedented and worrying surge of cases that had overwhelmed hospitals. To show solidarity with India along with other severely COVID hit countries, British Federation of Graduate Women in collaboration with IFUWA organised a program showcasing personal anecdotes of sickness and recovery and messages from concerned people for the COVID victims. Excellent participation by members from many NFAs.

### North – South Dialogue : UWAsia and PGNET

On August 7, 2021, UWAsia and PGNET organized an event titled 'Women, Peace and Conflict Resolution – A dialogue'. Resource people were Nimalka Fernando of Sri Lanka, Meghna Guhathakurta of Bangladesh and Swarna Rajagopalan from India. This was followed by a program of the Pacific Region on Women, 'Leadership and Peace', where the speakers were Shirley Gillett, Elizabeth Fog and Shirley Randell. The program was absorbing and interesting and highlighted the role of women of yester years and contemporary period as effective peace makers.

### International Networking and Collaboration: A Way Forward

On August 13, 2021, GWI held a new webinar on 'International Networking and Collaboration: A way forward', organised by the Young Member Network, as part of the 'Connecting across Generations' webinar series. Shruti Sonthalia, a young member from IFUWA, who is a member of the GWI – Educom, was a participant.

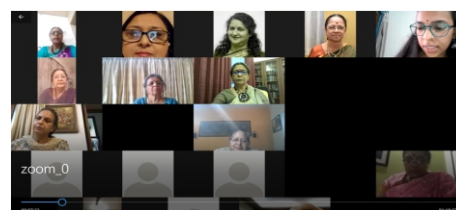
**Shyamashree Sen**

**CIR**

## EVENTS

### Understanding Feminism in Varying shades: Impact on Women's lives

On June 26, 2021, Session on 'Understanding Feminism in Varying shades: Impact on Women's lives' was taken by Dr Subhadra Channa, retired Professor of Anthropology from University of Delhi. She spoke at length about the perception men have of women that have come down the ages and the way in which society has nurtured them under different circumstances. She explained that feminism is a perspective of life and not to be considered as a stereotype. The root of feminism lies in the structural inequality that has been perpetuated in society over centuries. To her feminism is not merely talking of women's rights but understanding the masculine values that have existed for long to which women have been subjected in their daily lives.



The Session is uploaded on the IFUWA You Tube channel for complete viewing of Session.

**Varsha Aithila**

**UWA, Bangalore**

## EVENTS

### National Project on Coping Strategies during the Covid 19 pandemic

The members of Project committee had conducted a study in 2020 on the coping strategies adopted by graduate working women during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Through this small action research, the team collected evidence from 841 respondents about the coping strategies adopted by graduate working women. As an extension to the findings that indicated approaches to coping being more avoidance coping that is harmful to one's mental health in the long run, IFUWA President, Advisory Board Members and Project Committee Members discussed with experts the pro and cons and have together designed a year long program to cater to the physical, social, emotional and psychological well-being of graduate working women titled 'Swayamsiddha', empowering women to be self-sufficient.

Under this initiative there will be series of lectures consisting of 11-12 sessions by illustrious facilitators. The sessions will cover vital aspects of self care, self-development and awareness on critical issues related to women, namely Food & Nutrition, Relaxation & Yoga, Mental Well being, Legal Awareness and Money Matters.

The sessions will begin on September 3, 2021 and will end in July or August, 2022. The dates for the online sessions are as follows :

Flyers with registration forms will be sent to all the affiliates two weeks prior to the session. The Zoom link will be sent to the registered participants.

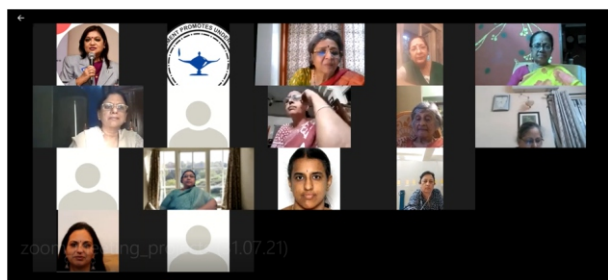
These sessions are open to IFUWA members as well as non-members.

|           |            |          |            |
|-----------|------------|----------|------------|
| September | 03/09/2021 | October  | 22/10/2021 |
| November  | 20/11/2021 | December | 17/12/2021 |
| January   | 21/01/2022 | February | 18/02/2022 |
| March     | 25/03/2022 | April    | 22/04/2022 |
| May       | 20/05/2022 | June     | 17/06/2022 |
| July      | 15/7/2022  |          |            |

(Time : 5.30 pm -7 pm)

**Malati Kalmadi**

**Convener – Projects**



### BFWG hosts emotional COVID-19 Meet & Greet



Standing in solidarity with India and other countries going through a humanitarian crisis due to COVID-19, British Federation of Women Graduates (BFWG) hosted, on June 19, 2021, a Session on 'Meet & Greet' with IFUWA. The event began with a candle lighting ceremony and sitar recording of Maestro Ravi Shankar playing in the background. The members paid tribute to all lives lost due to Covid. The Speaker, Dr Deepa Agarwal, spoke of her true moving story, how she flew from the UK to look after her mother in India, who was in the hospital suffering from COVID-19. All members who attended the event had an opportunity to share their experiences and comment on the issue.

As news was received of the sad loss of Dr Aquila Islam, CIR of Pakistan Federation of University Women (PFUW) during the event, attendees observed a minute of silence for her.

The concluding music included an Indian song filmed in London and Imagine, played by the Beatles. A truly moving and an interesting experience enjoyed by all, through friendship and unity.

'This event has certainly strengthened the bond and made us so proud to belong to this amazing organisation', writes Phull. 'We received excellent feedback from our own members and members from abroad. Truly, a very successful solidarity event that brought us closer to the distant members', she adds.

GWJ applauds BFWG and IFUWA for hosting this special 'Meet & Greet'. The stories shared were touching and meaningful during these COVID-19 times.

**Jasmit Phull**

**President**

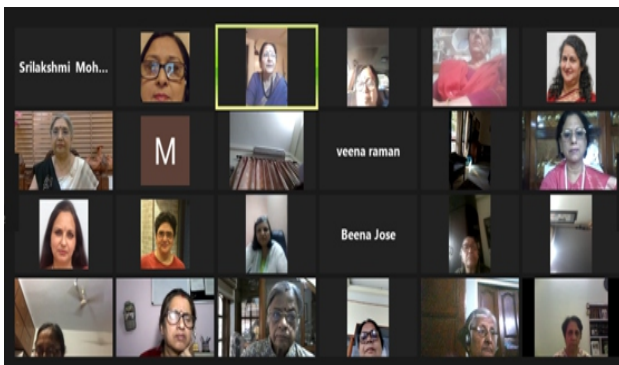
**BFWG**

## EVENTS

### How practising Yoga helps holistic rejuvenation

IFUWA held a program on 'How practising Yoga helps holistic rejuvenation' on March 06, 2021. Mrs. Sarah Pamela John, President, UWA, Cochin and member of IFUWA Membership Sub-Committee commenced the program with a welcome and a prayer to invoke the Lord's blessings with the sloka Asato Ma Sadgamaya.

President of IFUWA, Dr. Ranjana Banerjee in her address spoke about the significance of Yoga in our lives and the role it plays to promote physical and mental balance. She reiterated that yoga is a way of living practised from 2700 BC.



The Director of the 103-year-old Yoga Institute of Mumbai, Dr Hansaji Jayadeva Yogendra spoke of mental health and self-control, giving practical suggestions on relationships within the family, dealing with anger and frustration especially during the lockdown. She recommended Pranayama for inducing sleep, dealing with thyroid, managing stress and losing excess weight. The Session was made lively and interesting with her sharing real life stories and incidents that had taken place at her Institute. Members participated with a plethora of questions like how to take care of one's mental and physical health and simultaneously be able to deal with emotional state of mind as well. Hansaji proposed yogic techniques by which women could manage various issues related to their day-to-day life.

It was an informative and inspiring session for all the participants. Most members were curious to know more about the 103-year-old Yoga Institute in Mumbai, the oldest centre of yoga in the world, run by Dr Hansaji and her husband, the well-known Yoga exponent Shri Yogendraji. Members were invited to a 7-day Camp at the Institute to learn more about Yoga and its benefits. The Vote of Thanks was delivered by Ms. Gomathy Venkateshwar, Vice President, IFUWA.

**Sarah Pamela John**  
UWA, Cochin

### Women in Police Leadership:

#### Their Role in Protecting Women's Rights

IFUWA organised a Session on 'The Women in Police Leadership: their role in protecting Women's Rights', on April 17, 2021. IFUWA President, Dr. Ranjana Banerjee, in her welcome address, mentioned that IFUWA aims to bring forth informative and significant programs that would help increase the knowledge base of members.

The knowledge about Police in Administration and Leadership is of vital importance in order to be aware of what women in distress can seek for, from the police force. The well known fire brand IPS Officer Mrs. Meeran Chadha Borwankar (Retd), gave an informative and interesting talk on the challenges and discrimination faced by women and the measures they can adopt legally for their physical and mental security. She cited cases from her immense experience in the Police Force in the top notch leadership position and urged members to write in newspapers / journals about the state of women citing actual incidences to raise the level of awareness of the people and the government. She also stressed on the need to orient girls and women to opt for working in the Police Force, as women are fewer in numbers and less visible in the profession.

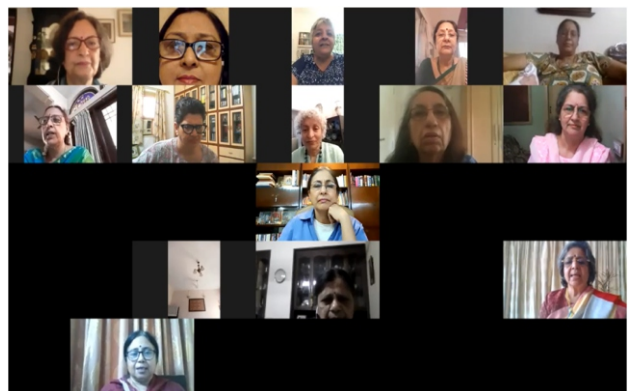
MC Mrs. Vineeta Hoon put some of the questions of members to the Speaker, who were especially concerned to know more of what the Courts and the police can do to give protection and restore dignity of a woman in need.

The Event came to a close with a Vote of Thanks by IFUWA Vice President Mrs. Gomathy Venkateshwar who thanked Mrs. Meeran Borwankar for her deliberations, the IFUWA President and her team for having organised the program.

The IFUWA You Tube channel for complete viewing of Session.

The Session is uploaded on.

**Vineeta Hoon**  
UWA, Madras



## Down The Memory Lane

I am happy to pen down a few lines on my involvement with the Indian Federation of University Women's Association which has completed more than hundred years of existence.

It was during the tenure of IFUWA President Panna Akhani (2002 – 2005) that I was inducted by the then IFUWA Secretary Shyamala Nair to be her Minuting Secretary at the Central Committee meetings. I began this minimal administrative work with shaky hands but with a will to do my best and with seniors as my guiding stars I learnt and enjoyed my work. I believe till date that writing those minutes gave me a complete insight, knowledge and learning into the nuances of IFUWA functioning and then there was no looking back. I joined the IFUWA Committee for the first time under the leadership of Dr Sudha Padhye in 2005 and since then have had the privilege of working with different IFUWA Presidents each of who have been stalwarts in their own way and have left footprints on the sands of time for building IFUWA to what it is today. With every convenorship that came to me, my knowledge of the association became more extensive and confirmed.

We shared ideas, confronted one another, made innovations in policy and administrative matters, and participated in academic and cultural pursuits at every meeting. We visited the different UWAs not just to attend but to know more about the place and the people of that local chapter and established unique fraternity across states.

But of all the memories that I have with my IFUWA Association, none more vivid than the Virginia Guildersleeve 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Friendship Visit in Calcutta in November 2009 in conjunction with the then IFUW. A 20 member delegation led by Eileen Menton, President of VGIF, and IFUW represented by President Louise Croot, Vice Presidents Sushil Bharadwaj from Delhi and Shirley Randall from South Africa, shared the same platform. Excellent presentations by research persons on the seminar 'Women, Water and Food Security' enthralled the

audience. Wonderful fellowship and togetherness was established when members from the other UWAs participated in large numbers in the Topaz Hall of Hotel Hindustan International. The evening's cultural program showcased Indian classical dance and music much appreciated by the visiting team. It was a moment of appreciation and of positive emotion when the grantees coming from the remote villages of South India came forward to receive their VGIF grant for the excellent projects that they had completed towards women's empowerment amidst the huge challenges that they had faced. My IFUWA Association has also introduced me to Project 5 'O' led by past IFUW / IFUWA and UWAC President Chitra Ghosh where children at the Balwadi Center and at the Vocational Training Centers are nurtured to become educated empowered women of the future.

As IFUWA member, I was happy to be present at the Centenary celebrations of GWI at Geneva and more so to giveaway the Chitra Ghosh Best Project Award to IFUWA President Swati Bedekar.

I have made many friends and have achieved tremendous satisfaction in all the assignments undertaken and feel proud to be a part of this esteemed association. Lessons on cooperative democratic functioning, leadership qualities and waking up to the needs of present social conditions are some of the areas that have been received being a part of this association. My participation in a number of IFUWA matters and capacities has empowered me to think independently and strive to achieve the best for those who are yet to taste the spirit of freedom and self reliance. I am thankful to IFUWA for supporting my candidature for GWI posts. For our hundred years of achievement laden association, I pray that the Good Lord bless our association and help us to put in our best effort for the women and children of our society. Let our mission be to empower others to help themselves.

**Ranjana Banerjee**

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