



Indian Federation of University Womens Associations

AFFILIATED TO GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL



President's Address

Dear Friends,

IFUWA has successfully completed four and a half years of its functioning since August 2020 and has duly taken responsibility to bring forth to members academic and socially pertinent issues concerning women's sustainable well being through webinars. Much impressed with the associations who have hosted the Central Committee meetings inclusive of meaningful academic programs during the CC meetings. It was my mission to give due appreciation to the women achievers of our associations who are our role models and guiding stars and provides a continued source of encouragement to our members. IFUWA has encouraged members to actively participate in national and international working areas to learn and implement measures of sustainability which will make better the Indian society.

It fills me with pride to learn about the different innovative skill development projects conducted by some of our UWAs. Keeping to GWI's primary vision of empowering girls through education and self-reliant measures, we have attained success in this area. Our national project on adolescent girl child is yet another successful endeavor.

IFUWA retained its scholarship announcement and disbursement to candidates of doctoral and post doctoral studies and are receiving applications through our website information. In our effort to establish new UWAs, we are working towards brining to life UWA of Hyderabad and further to that establishing an association in Jaipur in the coming months.

Over months of dealing with UWAsia matters with meetings and events, we have ceremoniously handed over the mantle of responsibility to the Japanese Federation to carry on with the task of sustaining UWAsia. The last year saw to the completion of the international conference and was happy to have member from regional NFAs and non NFA members. I am happy that the Asian Region has found visibility in the global scenario with its functioning through UWAsia and SAARCGWI.

The striking feature has been the effort and commitment of members joining hands to come together with their local bodies and with IFUWA on various matters. This fraternity cultivation has strengthened the bond amongst the local, national and international bodies and I am certain with the passage of time IFUWA independently and the local UWAs will undertake even more meaningful works for the women and girl child of our society.

IFUWAs work has found a place in the global spectrum as a pathfinder for Women's Empowerment in the most effective and progressive way.

Best Wishes for 2025 to all my IFUWA sisters!

Dr Ranjana Banerjee

President (2020 -2025)

IFUWA/ UWAsia/ SAARCGWI



Editor's Note

Dear friends,

This edition of the Newsletter will be presented by the President in the premises of my parent body, that is the Women Graduates Union (WGU), Bombay. I have been associated with WGU and IFUWA for quite a few years now. There are several members from WGU who have been very closely associated with IFUWA and I hope you will be meeting these people in Bombay this time.

As you are aware, the Newsletter endeavours to bring the overview of activities of each UWA of the latest six months to you. These opens windows of ideas and possibilities for the other UWAs and incoming office bearers.

I would like you to go through the newsletter and spend some time on the Members' Corner. There are members and their families who have lots to say and are also doing a lot of good work. It does make the IFUWA family really proud of them. You will find someone sharing the news of her the awards of her grandchildren, one on her view on women empowerment, someone writes about human rights, whilst one pens a poem. One member gives her experience of Makar Sankranti, one has a flavour for bonsai's. Someone has announced her book, penned by her late husband. Then, the Vadodara women have put forward their plethora of achievements through their accomplishments.

As regards our communication efforts, our Sessions on Zoom have continued steadily. We have held several Sessions through the years, to open ourselves up to different learning possibilities. Some ignite your imagination, some excite you to move and some enrich your capabilities. For me, my next addition to my bucket list is Sunderbans.

IFUWA has been taking baby steps into social media. Of course, there are many exciting possibilities, but it has to be moderated and moderated well. We have recently been coming across several negative fallouts of social media.

Our Sessions on Zoom have helped add volume to the 'IFUWA Events' YouTube channel. Our Website also has been well received. The eyeball nos. must be good, since we get regular emails enquiring about and showing interest in memberships and scholarships.

Communication is futuristic and holds tremendous digital possibilities. The next big thing on the horizon is Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its mega possibilities. Increased AI integration in communication tools, advanced video conferencing with features like 360-degree cameras and a focus on personalized communication experiences all contribute to a more immersive and efficient way to interact across distances. In fact, hyper personalisation is the way forward in 2025 with AI.

So there's lots to learn and grow with. Do read this Newsletter and share your views. And share all the good news, achievements, talent in any creative form, etc., of the UWA members and their families, in the next Newsletter.

Cheers!

Purobi Ghosh Mohan

Editor

Convener - Communication

International News

GWI News

On August 7, 2024, the 2025 GWI Policy Resolution Process was debated upon, which included -

- The importance of policy resolutions to GWI advocacy
- How to write an effective policy resolution
- Common pitfalls to avoid when writing a policy resolution
- NFA partnerships for maximum global impact
- How to identify policy resolutions key issues

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

Since 1982, this International Day is observed on August 9, as a United Nations-designated day to raise awareness of indigenous rights, celebrate cultures and address challenges like discrimination and marginalization.

The theme for 2024 was -

'Protecting Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact'

The theme stressed the need to protect the rights and lands of indigenous groups in voluntary isolation. The statements emphasised recognising and safeguarding the lands of about 200 such groups, promoting understanding, respect and the preservation of cultures and heritage through education.

GWI Supported the International Day of Older Persons

On October 1, GWI celebrated the International Day of Older Persons by co-sponsoring an event 'Geneva Calls: A Pivotal Moment for Older Persons' Rights', organised by the NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva, in collaboration with Member States and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Session was designed to analyse the developments and explore actionable pathways for Member States and all stakeholders to further the human rights of older persons.

International Day of the Girl

On October 11, International Day of the Girl, GWI launched a pragmatic toolkit to demonstrate girls' role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

The toolkit provided GWI members with practical resources and actionable guidelines to raise

awareness and implement initiatives advancing girls' education at the local and national levels. This observance day was a powerful reminder of the unique challenges girls face around the world and the importance of promoting their rights.

GWI Contributed to Widows Rights International Seminar

On October 17 and 18, Widows Rights International (WRI) hosted a two-day seminar titled, 'Widows: Challenges, Gaps, and Best Practices' at the United Nations Office of Geneva. The seminar brought together international experts from civil society and Member States, advocates, and policymakers to explore the critical issues widows of all ages face locally, nationally, and globally.

GWI attended Geneva Peace Talks 2024

On 21st September, to celebrate the International Day of Peace and Interpeace 30th Anniversary, GWI participated at the Geneva PeaceTalks. Under the overarching theme of "The Future of Peace," this year's Geneva PeaceTalks featured personal stories from people on the frontlines of peacebuilding, linking the past, present, and future of peace.

GWI joined UN Women Dialogue on Women's Empowerment

On October 23, GWI attended an event organised by UN Women at the United Nations Office in Geneva. This dynamic dialogue, titled 'Learning, Earning, and Second Chances: Innovative Approaches to Women's Empowerment', brought many stakeholders.

Global Warming is Here Again: How Do We Know?

On February 11, 2025, GWI and CFUW E-Club hosted a webinar in celebration of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. Welcoming distinguished speakers, they showcased and discussed incredible work and achievements that are shaping our futures.

International Day of Education

To mark International Day of Education, celebrated annually on January 24, GWI held an open dialogue on its members' Discussions Network within its global community of graduate women. This initiative encouraged the exchange of ideas and insights among GWI members on AI and education.

International News

The theme for UNESCO's 2025 International Day of Education is, 'AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation'.

GWJ Announced 3 Commission on the Status of Women 69th Session's Parallel Events

From March 10–21, 2025, the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women will convene in New York, uniting thousands virtually and hundreds of GWJ members. GWJ is proud to contribute to this global conversation by hosting 3 parallel events that will highlight key challenges, share insights, and examine this year's theme to review the progress of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

To mark the 'International Day of Women and Girls in Science', GWJ released an exciting video infographic featuring the latest data and insights on women in STEM. This year is the 10th anniversary, focusing on celebrating women's

careers in science and amplifying their voices. The infographic aims to raise awareness, highlight achievements and showcase the contributions of women in STEM fields.

GWJ Hosts Milestone 35th Triennial General Assembly

GWJ 35th Triennial General Assembly and Conference to be held in Lusaka, Zambia, from September 11-13, 2025. This milestone event marks GWJ's 106 years' commitment to advancing women and girls worldwide through education.



Shyamashree Sen
C.I.R.

Looking back at 2024

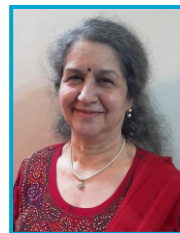
The year 2024 has been quite satisfying and fruitful as far as the GWJ's progress is concerned. As the Vice president Membership I have a couple of noteworthy events to record. For the first time a network of Independent Members (IMN) of GWJ is formed due to my encouragement and efforts. By the end of 2024 we had 53 independent Members and now hope to have altogether 60. These members come from different countries, from different cultures, and with different talents and expertise. Thus it is a very active and powerful group interested in working for fulfilling the vision and mission of GWJ of empowering women and girls through Education. Sahar Gamal from Egypt is the Convener and Ariani Narwastujati from Indonesia is the Co-convenor. Common interest groups among these IMNs are already formed. One in the area of NGOs and Public Services and the second of Therapists and Doctors. The teachers in the group have also offered their services.

Another important work by the Membership Committee (MemCom) has been the creation and distribution of a form which was sent to all the CIRs and the Presidents of the NFAs across

the world. This was to collect information from different NFAs regarding the challenges they face while recruiting new members and retaining the existing ones and to understand the areas where the GWJ Board and the Committees can lend a helping hand. The data has been thoroughly analysed and action points have been identified. The result of the analysis is made available in Spanish and French also.

Yet another MemCom effort is the formation of the Francophone NFA to NFA project where the French speaking countries like Democratic Republic of Congo, France and Canada are involved. This programme is in line with the Spanish Speaking Culture Bridge which is going on since last term with six participating countries.

The landmark event, I would say, has been the revival and consolidation of UWAsia and SAARC GWJ because of the lead taken by our own Association, IFUWA.



Dr Meera Bondre
GWJ Vice President Membership

Happenings

UWA Calcutta

May 17, 2024

Members attended the online webinar organised by IFUWA on cyber security. The resource person Mr Sandeep Sengupta, Director of Indian School of Anti-hacking and a lead auditor for information security and data protection explained how people were getting easily duped. He provided useful information on the precautions to be taken for safety. He also answered the many questions that members asked, thus ensuring that henceforth IFUWA members were well-informed and would not be scammed. The recording has been uploaded on the IFUWA YouTube Channel.

May 25, 2024

Anuradha Sen, a member of UWAC since 1990, passed away in the early hours of May 25. Members sent condolences to the bereaved family.

July 3, 2024

The Annual General Meeting of the University Women's Association was held in Sarat Samity, 24 Aswini Dutta Road, Kolkata 700029, with the required quorum of members present. The Committee that was elected last year continued in office. President Deepanwita Chowdhury gave the Welcome Address. Minutes of the previous AGM were presented by the Hon'y Secretary Uma Majumdar. Then the Secretary's report was placed and the Treasurer Indrani Chatterjee placed the Audited Accounts which were passed. An Auditor was appointed. The Vice President Mrs Sarmila Bose gave the Vote of Thanks.



AGM was held at Sarat Samiti

July 26, 2024

Members attended the online Webinar organised by IFUWA on 'The lives of Women in the Sunderbans' presented by Anu Jalais. It was an interesting Session and members learnt a lot.

September 18, 2024

To commemorate World Literacy Day, a meeting was held at The Commune, 7 Chowringhee Terrace, Kolkata 700020. Shreyashi Ghosh, an internationally published author and journalist spoke on 'Gender, Literacy and Culture in the Global Context'. She also showed her documentary film. The Session was highly interactive.



Documentary by Sreyashi Ghosh



UWAC Executive Committee Member Tilottama Basu with Shreyashi Ghosh before the meeting began

Happenings

November 26, 2024

Dr. Arindam Banerjee, a reputed Orthopedic Surgeon, spoke on the three main risks faced by senior citizens, namely wrist, knee and hip fractures. He explained in detail the surgical processes involved in treating these accidents. This program was held at 5 pm, at 9, Greek Church Row Extension, Kolkata 700026, at the residence of Mrs. Krishna Banerjee. It was an extremely informative Session, beneficial to all.



Dr. Arindam Banerjee



November 30, 2024

Members attended the online Webinar organised by IFUWA on Financial Nuances and Security Measures for Senior Citizens. The resource person was Mrs Chetna Mahajan, Operations Wealth and Personal Banking, (HSBC). It was an interesting Session from which members learnt a lot.

January 28, 2024

A Career Counseling Session is scheduled at the AIWC Buniyadi School where earlier we had assisted in developing the library. It will be conducted by Goutam Mandal of Holistic Rediscovery.

Achievements

Upama Ghosh, granddaughter of Executive Committee Member Sanghamitra Mullick, an Assistant Professor, Inclusive Activist and Author has many achievements to her credit. Her innovative spirit led to the ideation of 'Emote', a sensory Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device designed to facilitate inclusive communication for the speech-impaired. This groundbreaking device earned her a patent and the prestigious International Excellence Award 2024 from the Global Education and Research and Development Council (United Kingdom Global Accreditation) as well as several other awards.



Upama Ghosh receiving the Sabari Samman



Arpita Chatterjee
Association Representative
UWAC

Happenings

UWA Chidambaram

Activities

Children's day competitions and prize distribution function was held on November 18, 2024 at Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Chidambaram.



An invited talk on 'Safety of girl children' was delivered by UWA member Prof. Ezhisai Vallabi on November 18, 2024 at Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Chidambaram.



In view of Human Rights Day on December 10, 2024, an invited talk on 'Violence against women and Rights to educate women' was delivered by UWA Member Dr. Vairamani Shanmugham at Rani Seethai Achi Higher Secondary School, Annamalai Nagar, Chidambaram.



Praveena Krishnamurthy
Association Representative

Happenings

UWA Dehradun

A certificate course in traditional Indian art forms Aipan, Warli, Tie and Dye was sponsored by UWA, Dehradun for the girls of Dayanand Women Training College doing B. Ed (batch 2024-26) at B S Negi Mahila Tekniki Prashikshan Kendra - Vocational Training Centre, ONGC and ended with great success with a exhibition of the crafts learned and items made by the students.



Shevata Rai Talwar
Association Representative

Happenings

UWA Madras

The University Women's Association, Madras is committed to empowering women and promoting a sustainable environment through education, advocacy and community engagement. Through our programs and projects, we aim to create a positive impact on the lives of women and their environment.

Project Manja Pai (cloth bags)

The use of plastic bags in markets and shops has become a ubiquitous practice worldwide. Plastic bags are made from non-renewable resources, such as petroleum, and take hundreds of years to decompose.

In recent years, the issue of plastic bag pollution has gained significant attention. Governments, organizations and individuals have started to take measures to reduce the use of plastic bags. One such initiative is the distribution of cloth bags as an alternative to plastic bags.

Project: 'Manja Pai or Cloth Bags' - is an initiative taken by UWAM in collaboration with Dr. MGR Janaki College for Women, Chennai.

The project aims to reduce the use of plastic bags in local markets and shops by distributing cloth bags.

The students were taught by experts to design and tailor cotton cloth bags of various sizes. These bags were distributed to the shopkeepers and vendors after creating an awareness about the environmental impact of plastic bags.



Stitching cloth bag



Distribution of cloth bags in market

By providing a sustainable alternative to plastic bags and creating awareness about the environmental impact of plastic bags, the project aims to reduce plastic bag usage and promote a cleaner environment.

Webinar on Cyber Security

As the digital world becomes an integral part of our daily lives, the importance of securing personal and institutional data has never been more critical.

A webinar on 'Ensuring Cybersecurity' was organised by UWAM on 11 December 2024 to highlight the growing risks and challenges in the realm of cybersecurity, focusing on how women can proactively safeguard their online presence.

Cybersecurity professionals and eminent speakers: Mr. A. Alexander Mohan, Superintendent of Police

Happenings

in Vigilance and Railway and Mr. R. N. Srinath Cyber Security, Engineer, shared their insights and provided actionable advice to help build a safer digital environment for everyone.

Awareness on Organ donation

Organ donation is a selfless act that can save lives and improve the quality of life for recipients. Despite its importance, organ donation remains a relatively low priority and there is a significant shortage of organs available for transplantation. Raising awareness about the importance of organ donation and the process involved in becoming an organ donor is critical to increasing the number of organs available for transplantation and saving lives.

UWAM in collaboration with Mohan Foundation organised a talk on the importance of organ donation by Mrs. Hemal Kanvinde, who is also a member of UWAM.



Talk on Organ Donation

Other on-going projects include scholarship distribution to undergraduate students and research scholars and awareness talks on areas pertaining to women's empowerment.



M C Santhi Lakshmi
Association Representative
UWA Madras

Happenings

UWA Nagpur

Bakery Workshop for specially-abled students

Department of Hotel Management and Catering Technology of L.A.D & Smt. R.P. College for Women, Nagpur, in association with UWAN, organized a Pizza Making Workshop under the guidance of Dr. Nandita Sapra – Association Representative (AR) UWAN, Dr. Pallavi Komawar and team in the Bakery Lab on July 30, 2024. Dr. Harsha Jharia - Past Association Representative (AR) UWAN, taught the participants to prepare Tawa Pizza.

The Workshop was intended to empower fifteen specially-abled students of SVK Shikshan Sanstha by providing them with hands on training in baking and preparing Burgers, Sandwiches, Hotdogs and Pizza. It was designed to make the participants to be inclusive and supportive, fostering a sense of accomplishment and independence.

The main goal was to create a space where specially-abled individuals can explore their creativity, build confidence and develop skills that enhance their independence and quality of life and provide employment opportunities.



Bakery Workshop 1



Bakery Workshop 2

Cake Making Workshop

Department of Hotel Management and Catering Technology of L.A.D and Smt. R.P. College for Women, Nagpur, in association with UWAN, had organized a Cake Making Workshop on 7 August 2024. The students of Department of



Cake Making Workshop 2

Applied Electronics & Software Technology, L.A.D & Smt. R.P. College for Women, Nagpur and students of B.Sc. in Hospitality Management, Raisoni College, Nagpur, participated in the workshop. Dr. Nandita

Sapra – Association Representative (AR) UWAN, coordinated the Workshop. Dr. Pallavi Komawar was the Resource Person. A hands-on cake experience was given to all the participants. In



Cake Making Workshop 1

Happenings

the workshop, three main types of sponges were taught namely- flavored cake, black forest cake and chocolate cake. In this, both fatless sponge and eggless sponge cakes were taught. Basic knowledge and tricks about cake making were given to the fifteen participants.

Manobal – a unique talent show of specially abled and underprivileged students

Ashrita Mahila Mandal (Nagpur Mahila Club) and UWAN (University Women's Association Nagpur) jointly organized 'Manobal' - a unique talent show of specially abled and underprivileged students of Nagpur and adjoining districts at Justice Bhawani Shankar Niyogi Hall, L.A.D & Smt. R.P. College for Women, Shankar Nagar, Nagpur; on December 8, 2024. The aim of the show was to provide a platform to the special children to showcase their talents and thereby bringing them into the mainstream.

Mrs. Varsha Manohar, Director of Shrinivas Public School was the Chief Guest of the event while UWAN Association Representative (AR) – Dr. Nandita Sapra presided over the function. Dr. Meenakshi Kulkarni – UWAN President, delivered the Welcome address. President of Nagpur Mahila Club – Vilasini Nair delivered the Presidential address. Vice – President of Nagpur Mahila Club – Anita Bose proposed the formal vote of thanks. Dr. Dini Menon, General Secretary and Coordinator of the event – Latha Raman were also seated on the dais.

Dr Harsha Jharia – Past Association Representative (AR) UWAN & Dr Sheela Kulkarni – Convenor, IFUWA Scholarship Committee & UWAN Member, Ms. Kanchan Bade –, UWAN Secretary and Dr. Archana Masram – UWAN Executive Committee Member, were prominently present.

Executive Committee Members, Nagpur Mahila Club – Neelam Shukla and Shraddha Purohit anchored the programme. Technical support and sound system were handled by Dr. Shanti Nair & Dr. Shreeja Kurup, Dr. Payal Hiranwar of UWAN. Hall arrangements were efficiently executed by Dr.



Manobal 1

Happenings



Manobal 2

Varsha Bhujbal – UWAN Vice President, Dr. Aboli Vyas and Dr. Ashwini Balki, Dr. Vandana Menon & Dr. Sonal Dhabekar – Members of UWAN.

In all, 15 institutes participated with 136 participants performing 26 items. Best performance trophies were awarded to four top performers. Participation trophies were given to all the performing groups. All the members of Nagpur Mahila Club and UWAN worked hard for the success of the event.

Gayathri Vathsalya authors a book

Beyond Barriers - Understanding Disability Etiquette

The book is dedicated to fostering understanding, respect, and inclusion in our interactions with individuals of diverse abilities. It was released on December 24, 2024, by the Chief Guest, Smt. Abha Dwivedi, President - Jhankar Mahila Mandal, WCL, Nagpur; Guests of Honour - Shri. Jay Singh Chouhan - Managing Director, Ranjana Industries; Dr Harsha Jharia, CAO, Women's Education Society's L.A.D and Smt. R.P. College for Women and Past Association Representative (AR) UWAN, Smt. Manisha Manghani - President, Rotary Club of Nagpur North.



Manobal 3



Manobal 4

The book is a comprehensive guide designed to create awareness and empower individuals to build a more inclusive society. The book provides practical insights and thoughtful perspectives, making it an essential resource for everyone.

She will be donating this book to the libraries of various Schools & Colleges so that we can prepare the future generations for an Inclusive Society.



Meenakshi Kulkarni
President
UWA Nagpur



Gayathri Vatsalya - Book Release

Happenings

UWA Thiruvanthapuram

Second CC Meeting of IFUWA

UWAT hosted the CC Meeting of IFUWA on August 31 and September 1, 2024 at Hotel Sopanam. On August 31, with the prayer song of Kum. S Kanmony, under the Chairmanship of Dr Ranjana Banerjee, the President of IFUWA, Dr Sunanda Kumari, President of UWAT delivered the Welcome Address. HH Pooyam Thirunal Gowri Parvathi Bayi inaugurated the function. On that occasion, as part of the 60th annual celebration of UWAT, a Souvenir was released by Dr Ranjana Banerjee and received by HH Pooyam Thirunal Gowri Parvathi Bayi. She honored Cheveliar Awardee HH Pooyam Thirunal Gowri Parvathi Bayi and Padma Awardee HH Aswathi Thirunal Gowri Lekshmi Bayi and senior Members Kum. R Padmini, Mrs. Sreedeviamma and Mrs. Padma Surendran. HH Aswathi Thirunal Gowri



IFUWA President Dr Ranjana Banerjee honoring
HH Pooyam Thirunal Gowri Parvathi Bayi



IFUWA President honoring
HH Aswathi Thirunal Gowri Lekshmi Bayi



IFUWA Secretary Sakunthala Ghosh Hazra
presenting Report



Dr Usha VT presenting a talk on Standing up
for Women and Standing up for Nature



HH Pooyam Thirunal Gowri Parvathi Bayi
inaugurating the Meeting



HH Aswathi Thirunal Gowri Lekshmi Bayi delivering
the lecture on Women's Social Security Issues

Happenings

Lakshmi Bayi honored Kum. Kanmanoy. The inaugural session concluded with a Vote of Thanks by the R Mrs. Jaya Chandrasan.

Following the Inaugural Session HH Aswathi Thirunal Gowri Lekshmi Bayi delivered a lecture on the 'Women's Social Security Issues'. This delightful lecture captivated everyone's attention. Thereafter, former Professor of Pondicherry Central University Dr Usha VT presented timely and pertinent issues on the topic 'Standing up for Women and Standing up for Nature', captivating the audience's attention.

After enjoying the sumptuous Onasadya, delegates visited the Palace Museum, Wax Museum, Kuthira Malika, Sree Padmanabha Temple and arrived at the Levy Hall by 6.30 pm. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the one hour dance programme presented by UWA members, who showcased their talents. All returned after dinner with joy and delight.

The second Central Committee meeting of the First Year of the 10th Triennium of Indian Federation of University Women's Associations held on Sunday September 1, 2024. UWAT President Dr V M Sunanda Kumari delivered Welcome Speech at the meeting, presided over by the IFUWA President Dr Ranjana Banerjee. Discussions took place as per the agenda and IFUWA Vice President Mrs. Gomathy Venkateswar delivered the Vote of Thanks.



IFUWA President releasing Newsletter



IFUWA President Dr Ranjana Banerjee releasing the Souvenir and handing over to HH Pooyam Thirunal Gowri Parvathi Bayi



Thiruvathira team



Dance team



Sunanda Kumari
President

Happenings

UWA Vadodara

Valedictory function of UWA Anandam

A two-credit online Certificate Course on 'Research Methodology' for Masters and Doctoral students was successfully completed by UWA V. It was held between July 11 to August 2, 2024 with 27 participants. IFUWA President Dr. Ranjana Banerjee graced the Inaugural Function being the keynote Speaker. Valedictory function was held in Hotel Rangoli, Fatehgunj where the Chief Guest was Prof. R G Kothari - former Vice Chancellor, Veer Narmad South Gujarat University. This event was attended by 50 people, including UWA V members, resource persons, guests and course participants. Certificates were distributed to the participants, to the resource persons and to the organising teams. Saplings, course related books, diaries, posters and chocolates were given as gifts. Interactions during the delicious dinner amongst resource persons, participants, UWA members were very fruitful. They led to getting new members for UWA and conducting other programs.



UWA members, resource persons and few of the participants of Research Methodology course

Slogan writing competition amongst members

An online competition was held, where members had to write a slogan on 'women education and women empowerment'. 18 members participated and some members submitted more than one slogan. Senior members of UWA V like Prof Parul Dave, Ms. Neelam Patel and Prof Arti Nanavati were humble enough to judge the competition. Winners will be felicitated at the Women's Day celebration in March 2025.

Rangoli making Workshop (UWA Kaushayla - 2)

A Rangoli making Workshop was held on October 19, 2024 at the ITI Girls college, Gorwa, Vadodara.

Happenings



UWAV president Dr Arti looks up for a click
are busy in Rangoli making



Some of the finished designs after the
Rangoli Workshop

All necessary materials, various rangoli colours, tools and colour print of Rangoli designs were given to participants. Art teacher Shri Nikunj Gandhi - a fine arts graduate and Mrs Anjali Chemburkar were the resource persons. Chief guest Shri G N Rathwa (Principal, ITI Gorwa) encouraged the girls for the fineness of their skill and adding to their pool of skill sets. Beneficiaries were 30 young girls and 10 UWA members. The event was well covered by local news channel - Vadnagri Samachar.

Warli Art Workshop (UWA Kaushalya - 3)

Warli Art Workshop was organised on December 11 2024, under the skill development series UWA Kaushalya for young girls. Its a traditional art form of Gujarat and Maharashtra, gaining popularity across India. It can be observed not only on wall paintings but also on dress materials, saree, curtains, bags and similar items. 35 young girls from ITI and 12 members of UWA V learnt the art under the able guidance of expert resource person Ms. Kalpana Shah senior UWA member. She sponsored the workshop, distributed necessary material along with zerox of basic Warli art designs to each participant.



Warli art Class in action, alongwith UWA V President,
Vice President, Former AR and Resource person



Showcasing the finished product of
Warli art

Happenings

UWA Samvaad

Believing in knowledge as a tool for change, UWA V organised two awareness sessions for girls of PTC college and ITI Skill development institute during July to December 2024:

Awareness Session on Menstrual hygiene

UWA arranged an awareness session on menstrual hygiene for 200 girls (from tribal areas of Panchmahal and ChottaUdaipur), was conducted at Govt. PTC college, Sursagar, Vadodara, on October 4, 2024. Ms. Swati Bedekar, (UWA member - the Pad Woman of India) conducted the Session in a lucid and comprehensible manner. As the session was conducted during Navratri festival, each participant was gifted with beautiful handmade colourful earrings and Sakhi Sanitary pads. Ms Vasanti Amin, Principal, PTC College, was the Chief guest.



Swati Bedekar giving talk on Menstrual Hygiene

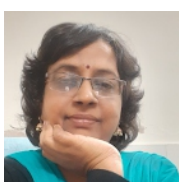


Girls listening carefully at cyber security session

Talk on Cyber Security

Keeping in view the dangers of social media in general and particularly for women, UWA organised a talk on 'Cyber security for young girls' on December 3, 2024 at ITI Gorwa (Mahila), Vadodara. 50 girls and 5 UWA members were present. Resource persons Dr. Surakshsha Narang (Asst. Professor, MS University of Baroda) and Ms. Astha Garg (Research Scholar, MS University) explained to the young girls the importance of being aware of cyber frauds, ways to be cyber safe and shared contact details, in case of cyber emergencies. The girls shared their concerns and queries, which were clarified by RPs. Vice President Prof.

Maneesha Shukul (UWA V Vice President) coordinated the Program and Ms. Kalpana Shah (Member, UWA V) gave away Appreciation Certificates to RPs. Ms Jyoti Lalpurwala was a warm and cooperative host from ITI Gorwa.



Arti Bhatti
President

Happenings

WGU Bombay

Monsoon Magic

'Monsoon Magic' was held on July 25, 2024, in the Amy Rustomjee Hall of Women Graduates Union (WGU). It was a delightful morning filled with entertainment and camaraderie among members.

The event included a mix of games, quizzes and housie, challenging both the physical and mental prowess of participants. Members and guests participated in housie games and winners happily received cash prizes. To top that they enjoyed music, songs and dance. The festivities concluded with a delicious lunch that was well appreciated.



Monsoon Magic

Celebration of Independence Day

The Independence Day celebrations on August 15, 2025, included a flag-hoisting ceremony attended by the President, Vice President, Managing Committee members, Study Centre students, their parents, hostelites and staff. The children, dressed in tricolor outfits and waving flags, with bright smiles that lit up the entire place .in WGU

The event featured dance performances by the Balwadi children and Study Centre students from the morning and afternoon batches. These performances were guided by Mrs. Ila Dalal, Honorary Secretary and her student Janvi. Mrs. Dalal also performed. Patriotic songs were sung with patriotic valour.

Snacks and sweets were distributed to all attendees.



Independence Day

Happenings

Do You Know

On August 6, 2024, a talk titled 'Do You Know' was delivered by keynote speaker Mrs. Renu Kapoor, a Chartered Accountant by profession, at the Amy Rustomjee Hall. The Chairperson of the Counseling and Guidance Committee, Adv. Gauri Chhabria, had organised the program. Adv. Ravi Jadhav attended as a special guest.

Mrs. Kapoor provided an insightful presentation on 'Banking, Accounting, and Finance' that was well-received by the audience.



Do You Know

Medical Health Check-up Camp

A complimentary medical check-up camp was organised in the Amy Rustomjee Hall in collaboration with Wockhardt Hospitals on November 29, 2025. This initiative served Balwadi and Study Centre children, their families, hostel staff, security personnel and senior citizens. Over 100 underprivileged individuals benefited from this event.

Dental and hygiene kits were distributed and vision problems were identified in 12 children, who received spectacles donated by WGU. The camp's success was made possible through generous contributions from donors.



At the Medical Camp

Study Centre Poster Competition

The Lions Club of Bombay Cuffe Parade sponsored a Peace Poster contest at WGU on September 26, 2024. Five outstanding posters created by Study Centre students were selected and awarded prizes.



Poster Competition

Happenings

Teacher's Day Celebration

Teacher's Day was celebrated by the Balwadi Children on September 13, 2024. The Chairperson of the Balwadi Committee, Mrs. Usha Bhandarkar and Chairperson of the Study Centre Committee, Mrs. Manjula Patel, felicitated the teachers, Divya Rane and Ranjana Chandolkar, for their decades of dedicated service.

Honorary teachers, Zarine Commissariat, Kashmera Gamadia and Aban Mukherjee, who teach conversational English, were also thanked.



Teachers' Day



Balwadi Dahi Handi

Balwadi – Dahi Handi

Held on August 26, 2025, the children of Balwadi, dressed in traditional attire, enthusiastically participated in this joyful event of Dahi handi. The Study Centre teacher Mrs Divya Rane assisted by Smita decorated the school room in joyful colours and streamers.

Balwadi Ganpati Festival

The Ganpati event was held on September 4, where each child created a colorful Ganpati idol and celebrated with dhol and brass bells. They sang out Ganpati Bappa Morya with gusto.

Balwadi Diwali Celebration

Stories, games, and sparklers delighted the Balwadi children. Goodie bags donated by the Lalkaka family and Mrs. Sangita Vaswani added to the festive spirit. Special thanks to Zarine Commissariat who added extra sparkle to this double Diwali Dhamaka and Mrs Divya Rane who decorated the stage with diyas and flowers.



Diwali Celebration

Happenings



Dandiya Raas

Dandiya Raas

A Dandiya Raas program was organized on October 16, 2024, to celebrate Navratri. Members and guests enjoyed a Garba performance by Mrs. Ila Dalal and her group, followed by audience participation. The evening concluded with a delicious dinner enjoyed by all.

Christmas Celebrations

A rollicking Christmas party was held on December 24, 2024 for Balwadi and Study Centre Children. Santa's goodie bags, games, dancing and treats brought joy to the children. The event was hosted by Mrs. Sangita Vaswani and compered by Zarine Commissariat.



Christmas Celebrations

Interfaith Christmas Celebration

On December 19, 2024, the Interfaith Colaba Carolers performed carols, music and dance at the Amy Rustomjee Hall in WGU. Audience participation and house games added to the festive spirit, followed by a special Christmas lunch.



Christmas Celebrations

Happenings

Tree Plantation Drive

The Lions Club of Queensway donated medicinal and flowering plants to WGU as part of an environmental project. Chief Guest, District Governor Lion Viraf Mistry, along with other dignitaries, praised WGU for its hospitality and commitment to environmental causes. This project was successful.



Plantation Activity

Scholarship Award Function

Annual Scholarship Function of Women Graduates Union held on January 9, 2025, at Amy Rustomjee Hall, WGU disbursing scholarships on need-cum-merit basis to young women students pursuing higher studies in their chosen fields.

Scholarships amounting to Rs. 18 Lacs were given to 84 students during this academic year. We have helped many deserving and needy students in their journey towards literacy.



With Awardees



Sabita Chuganee
Association Representative

Happenings

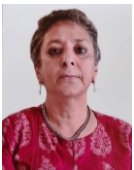
UWA Delhi

The meeting of the Managing Committee of UWA Delhi took place on December 14, 2024. Dr Shashi Khurana was continued as the President and the Association Representative is Dr Purnima Kashyap for the period 2024-2027.

2025 has been identified as the year of 'Women and Peace' and relevant activities will be held around the theme.

Major actions are being taken for offering scholarships for the ongoing academic year to students. The scholarships would include two fresh undergraduate scholarships and two continuing undergraduate scholarships.

Meanwhile, the International Women's Day event is being planned in coordination with WDC Gargi College.

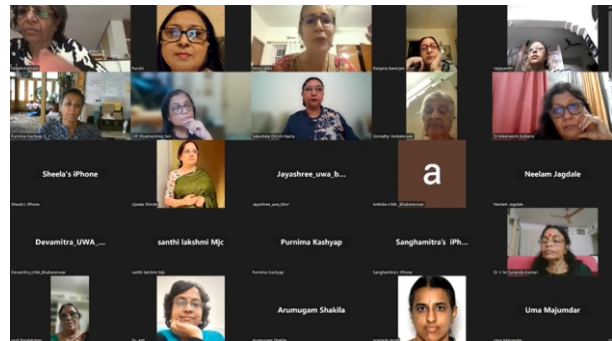


Purnima Kashyap
AR, UWAD

Events

Lives of women in the Sunderbans

On July 26, 2024, Dr Anu Jalais, an Environmental Anthropologist, shared her interesting experiences about the lives of women in the Sunderbans and their connect with the Sundarban tigers. At the outset, she stated that her research and publications were interdisciplinary. She felt that the survival strategies in Sunderbans involved people of different communities which even extended to tigers. The islanders, she said, venerated Ma Bonbibi who they believe guards Sunderbans in its entirety. She said that at the outset she learnt to 'unlearn' what she thought an 'animal' was and understood from Sunderbans islanders' points of view. For instance, a 'non-human' also being adopted by Ma Bonbibi as her son, so that they were like brothers. And non-



Courtesy : YouTube Channel 'IFUWA Events'

Events

human referred to were tigers. Interestingly, there are also stories about Sufi pirs controlling tigers as well! She talked at length about how difficult the lives of women in Sundarbans are and how they cope to coexist with the animals. Sundarbans is not a very well-developed region and the islanders believe that one need not go to the jungle if there is no need.

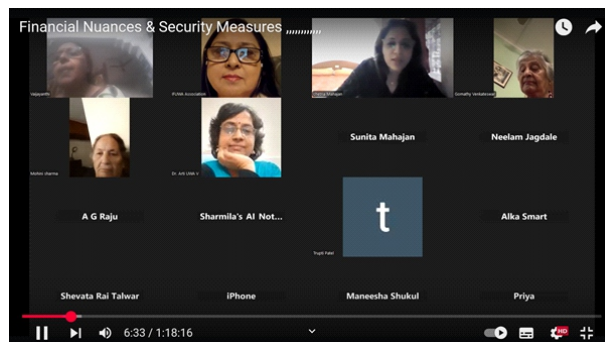
The insight into Sundarbans women and their lives was surreal. It was an evening well spent indeed.

Financial Markets and Security Risks

On November 30, 2024, Ms Chetna Mahajan, an Operations, Wealth and Personal Banking professional, in a Session with the IFUWA members, shared her knowledge of financial risks and their awareness. She started with some terminologies which are oft used in the financial market and then about the awareness which a senior citizen should have while handling his or her finances.

She went on to speak about certain non-banking Financial Corporation fixed deposits that fetched around 8.85 and 9.40% interests. But the main business of these non-banking financial RBI regulated companies is lending, she pointed out. They don't really have access like Banks have to the customers. So she opined that it was better to invest with more financially solid companies.

She also touched upon mutual fund investments. She explained about different types of investments. The do's and don'ts in the financial investment choices. And how to select the right portfolio keeping in mind the market risks.



Courtesy : YouTube Channel 'IFUWA Events'

Member's Corner

Beating Competition in Ashtalakshmi Stotram

Tamil Nadu Arya Vysya Mahila Sabha organized one Bhajan competition on January 4, 2025, at Kuchalambal Kalyana Mahal on 'Ashtalakshmi Stotram'. It was for Juniors (5 years to 8 years) and Seniors (8 years to 12 years). Mrs Vijayanthi Mukkala's granddaughters, Aashritaa Mukkala and Shrinika Mukkala, each, won the first prize in Junior and Senior category respectively.



Aashritaa with her prize

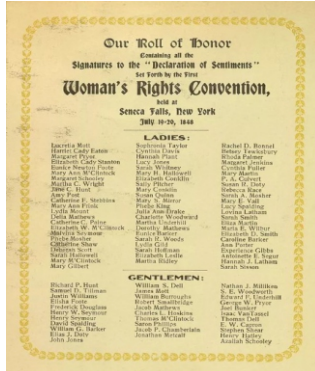


Shrinika with her prize

Member's Corner

Evolution of Human Rights and Women's Empowerment

Though Human Rights and Women's Empowerment are intrinsically connected, Women still struggle for their rights globally.



Seneca Falls 1848

Women have raised concerns for equality for many centuries now, but the progress has been slow. The voices are now getting stronger and there have been numerous milestones that continue to change the tide.

It was in 1848 that in United States Women stood up for the Social, Political, Civil and Political Rights at the well-famed "Seneca Falls Convention".

It took another Fifty years (in 1893) when in New Zealand for the first time women got together to stand up for Global Women's right to Vote.

Europe took the lead in 1911 to organize the very first International Women's Day.

India was not far off! It was in 1927, the All India Women's Conference (now based in Delhi) was started in the city of Pune, with priority focus to promote women's education. Maharani Chimnabai of Baroda was first President.

With the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, there was a call for a Declaration on Human Rights. It took 3 years before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was presented in 1948; interestingly this role was given to Eleanor Roosevelt for leading the drafting of the declaration. The declaration recognized the importance of equal rights for women in all fields.

Asia set an example by electing the first Woman Prime Minister, Smt Sirimavo Bandaranaike from Sri Lanka in 1960.

In 1975 the first World Conference on Women was organized by the United Nations and the decade 1975-1985 was declared as the United Nations Decade for Women. In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of



Maharani Chimnabai of Baroda



Sirimavo Bandaranaike:
The world's first woman
prime minister - BBC World
Service, Witness History

Sirimavo Bandaranaike was elected the modern world's first female head of government in 1960, when she became the prime minister of Sri Lanka, or Ceylon as it was known then. Click here to subscribe to our channel <https://bbc.in/3VyyriM> She entered politics after the assassination of her husband just a year earlier. Her daughter ...

youtube.com 1 year ago

Srimavo Bandaranaike

Member's Corner

all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an International Treaty was adopted by the General assembly of the United Nations and eventually ratified by 189 countries in September 1981. Unfortunately, several countries objected to it and are not signatories to the Treaty and some did not even ratify the same.



United Nations established UN Women in 2010 – one only wonders why it took the United Nations over six decades to do so!!!



Rigoberta Menchu

Globally, there have been many women who have influenced the World with their role in mobilization of women towards empowerment. Many have received Global recognition including Rigoberta Menchu, who was the first Indigenous Nobel Peace prize laureate in 1992;

Dr Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first elected Woman Head of State in Africa, leading Liberia in 2006 and led the nation out of many crisis. The 2011 Nobel Peace

prize was awarded jointly to three women political activists for their persistence in obtaining equal rights for women. The laureates were Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberian activist Leymah Gbowee and Yemeni Politician Tawakkul Karman for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work.



2011 Nobel peace prize Laureates

2014 saw another recognition through the Nobel Peace Prize, which was shared between Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai for the struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education. Malala is also the youngest to ever receive the Peace Prize.

In the recent years, social media has been playing a crucial role in bringing to light sexual harassment, gender discrimination at work and the important role of equal pay for equal work. Marked changes have been seen in the area of sports where the prize winnings are the same for Men as for Women for major Tournaments.

It is impossible to document the entire progress to-date on this issue. Needless to say there has been progress and lot more needs to be done in various areas, which include End to Gender based Violence; access to Health Care; access to Quality Education and training; Equal pay; Economic inclusiveness; Equal Participation in Political Life; access to safe and sufficient drinking water; basic sanitation and so much more.

In 2015, when the World Leaders adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, it was evident that there is a new sense of urgency to leave no one behind. In that context, it is clear that



The 2014 Nobel Peace Prize
Kailash Satyarthi and
Malala Yousafzai



Satyarthi (left) and Yousafzai (right)
“for their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education.”

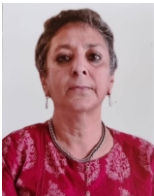
Member's Corner

women can make a difference, women will lead and influence decision making because they have greater ability through their ideas to change their own situation.



SDGs

We all, through our respective UWAs, IFUWA and GWI have the privilege to be in a position to engage with young girls and women and with the community as a whole, to help make women become equal partners in their development story. Currently, social media and increased digital connectivity is helping make rapid changes. We must work together to change our world and make it a better place for our Gen-X.



Purnima Kashyap
Association Representative
UWAD

Member's Corner

Kids and Gen Alpha Marathon

On January 12, 2025, the Pune International Marathon Trust, in partnership with Kaveri College of Arts, Science and Commerce, hosted the Kids and Gen Alpha Marathon. The event showcased four age categories: Under 20, Under 17, Under 14, and Under 12. A heartwarming highlight was the Under 12 category, where many parents ran alongside their young children, creating unforgettable moments.

I had the honor of flagging off the Marathon and distributing prizes to the winners.

With over 2,000 children participating, the event was a remarkable celebration of fitness. In fact, it reflected the growing interest and enthusiasm of young children and their parents in fitness.



Malati S Kalmadi
Project Convenor
UWAPune Past Trustee & Past President

Member's Corner

Makar Sankranti

Makar Sankranti is dedicated to the Sun God, marking its journey into the northern Hemisphere or Uttarayan and the beginning of the zodiac month of Capricorn also known as 'Makar'. For Hindus it is an important festival heralding an auspicious period for marriages. People give till-gul to each other and take blessings from the elders. Married women also exchange haldi-kumkum as a good will gesture. These customs have various social and cultural significance.

Kite Festival is organised at Ahmedabad's Sabarmati riverfront every year. Professional kite fliers and enthusiasts converge to whet their appetite. Creatively made kites, with popular characters from children's games or Bollywood themes, in all shapes and sizes, can be seen.

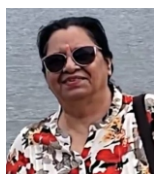
From early morning people gather on their terraces with colourful clothes, hats, glares, binoculars, sound systems and an unending supply of kites. Loud music blares from everywhere with songs like 'Dheal De De Re' and 'Udi Udi Re Patang Meri' and an occasional 'Kai Po Che' followed by lappet. This goes on till it gets dark. At night the sky is full of countless lanterns trailing each other behind the kites.

The must have food during this time is 'Undhiyu'. A dish made from seasonal vegetables, green garlic and methi leaves. Bhajiyas or pakodas are also hot favourites. Another popular snack during this period is fresh green kernel of jowar called 'poonk'...eaten with green chutney and garlic flavoured sev.

The art of kite making has been passed on from father to son since generations. It is believed that this profession came to India from Sialkot, Pakistan with the people who migrated at the time of partition. Unfortunately, this art is fading away, with experiments with newer materials and reusable kites!



Flying kites



Malti Gaekwad
UWA Vadodara

The women achievers of UWA Vadodara

Dr Sarjoo Patel

Skill Enhancement workshop on Hospitality and gardening skills for especially abled children was organised by the UWA Vadodara Member Dr. Sarjoo Patel (Head, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, The MS University) along with other faculty members of Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in collaboration with Disha Special School and Autism Centre. 4 days' Workshop was conducted between August 20 -24, 2024 at the Vocational Training Centre of the University.

Beneficiaries were 20 children from Disha Centre.



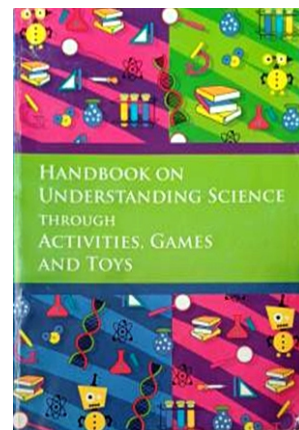
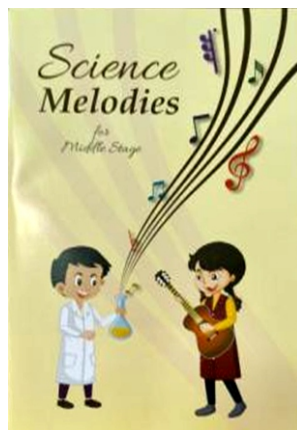
Dr Sarjoo Patel

Swati Bedekar

Times of India along with University of East London, honoured winners at the 'Women in Leadership' awards at Lakshmi Vilas Palace, Vadodara. Event was co-hosted with Her Highness, Smt. Radhika Raje Gaekwad. Nine women from diverse fields in Vadodara - business, arts, governance,

Member's Corner

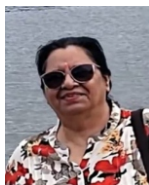
science, and community welfare were felicitated under the campaign 'She Leads'. Swati Bedekar from UWA (UWA V-member, Pad Women of India and founder of Sakhi Project) was awarded for her contribution to women's health and hygiene, on November 22, 2024. She has also been part of the Author's team (as Director, Discovery Science Resource, Vadodara, Gujarat) in the NCERT publications for Science stream for middle schools.



Science NCERT books
coauthored by Swati Bedekar

Malti Gaekwad

Senior UWA committee member, Retired professor from Faculty of Fine Arts, The MS University, Ms. Malti Gaekwad was invited to the National Institute of Design (NID) Kurukshetra, Haryana as Senior Faculty to teach a 3-week module on 'Elements of Composition' between October 7 and 25, 2024.



Ms. Malti Gaekwad taking a
session at NID Kurukshetra

Dr Urvashi Mishra

Dr Urvashi Mishra, Asst. Professor at The M S University of Baroda bagged the best paper award for her paper titled 'Assessment of Furniture waste disposal practices in selected higher educational institutions of Vadodara City' at the IIHSG International Conference 2024, held at YMCA Delhi held between September 30 and October 1, 2024.

Yet another best paper award was conferred on Dr. Urvashi, for her paper titled 'Transforming Furniture Waste into Sustainable Campus' at the National Conference 2024 - Sustainability for Viksit Bharat organised by Department of Resource Management and Design Application, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi held between October 16 and 18, 2024.



Dr Urvashi Mishra receiving
the best paper award

Member's Corner



Dr Uma Nayak receiving the award

Dr Uma Nayak

Dr Uma Nayak, a senior UWA member and Head of the Paediatrics Department at Parul University, was honoured with the 'Presidential Award of Appreciation Certificate for Specially Distinguished Service to Newborns 2024'. The Award was presented on December 6, 2024, during the inaugural session of NEOCON held in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu. Only two doctors from each zone of the country were nominated for this prestigious recognition, with Dr Nayak representing the West Zone.

Ms. Kalpana Shah

Senior UWA Member, Artist, Engineer, Educationist and a social worker Ms. Kalpana Shah was awarded Sakhi Sheero Award, on December 21, 2024, at Vadodara, for her lifetime contribution to Vatsalya Foundation. Her creative compositions in form of skits and songs are well received and appreciated.



Ms. Kalpana Shah



Ms. Sharmila Divatia

Ms. Sharmila Divatia

Undeterred by her spastic left hand and speech impairment due to cerebral palsy, Sharmila Divatia is a force to reckon with due to her steely grit and determination. She has been working for the rights of disabled persons since the past two and half decades.

Her recommendations for improvements in facilities and services in educational institutes, housing, banking, health sectors, judicial system and information ICT sector for PwDs (persons with disabilities) were accepted by National Education Policy 2020, by Maharashtra State government, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), University Grants

Commission (UGC) and Information & Broadcasting ministry.

Ms. Alka Smart

At one of the biggest conventions of the year, Disha Charitable Trust was selected for the title of 'Top ten NGOs of the year 2024'. MS. Alka Smart, Vice President of the Trust and senior UWA member, Retd Principal, former secretary, IFUWA, was felicitated at Indian CSR Awards, supported by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Disha is the first Autism Centre in Gujarat providing all the requisite therapies and services to the children with Autism and other Developmental Disabilities under one roof. More than 80 percent of Disha's beneficiaries belong to low-income group and receive all the services free of charge.



Ms. Alka Smart with the award

Member's Corner

The Book of Gallantry

Mr. Vijay Raman IPS, M.P. Cadre, my late husband, had penned his experiences in policing as an IPS officer in his book 'Did I really do all this?' His experiences and achievements were varied and inspiring. Be it winning gold medals in law or President's Police Medal for Gallantry for liquidating Dacoit Pan Singh Tomar in Chambal or protecting four Prime Ministers of India or annihilation of the mastermind behind the Parliament attack or breaking The Guinness World Records, amongst others.



Veena Raman
UWA Pune



The book has been published and launched on September 20, 2024, by Rupa Publication and has received good reviews so far, from the media including few renowned newspapers.



The proud owner of Casurina
Mrs Pabitra Dasgupta

The Winning Bonsai

Casurina, 13 years old, style 'Informal Upright', my Bonsai, won the third prize in Seniors' Group at the 18th Annual Bonsai Exhibition, Banyan Bonsai Club, Vadodara, Gujarat.

The exhibition was organised on January 10, 11 and 12, 2025 at Parsi Agyari Ground, Sayajigunj, Vadodara. More than 50 club members had exhibited their Bonsais. News so far, from the media including few renowned newspapers.

Small Steps towards Women's Empowerment

We all are a part of this great network of educated women, working for women's empowerment. Everyone may have their own way of doing their bit. I do this, in my own small and humble way, by disseminating the knowledge that I was fortunate enough to receive, both in my academic discipline, Economics, as well as my music. One of the greatest ways to achieve women's empowerment is through the wealth of knowledge and education. Sharing some very satisfying moments of my life, trying to contribute in my own little way to this process.

All women, whether educated or not, have some talent, which can be converted into a profession. However, very often, they are clueless as to the costing and pricing of it and in general, the financial literacy. This lack of knowledge often comes in the way of it becoming their profession. So whenever possible, I conduct these sessions, (very often free of cost if the participants come from modest backgrounds) for women, who would like to convert their hobby into a profession, thereby becoming somewhat independent and also contributing to the family income.



Kalyani Bondre
UWA (Pune)

Music, my greatest passion and profession, is also a way for me to reach out to maximum wonderful women and girls, who would like to nurture their talents. Very often I'm asked by ladies interested in music, whether I teach only the serious students, who might want to pursue music as a career. I feel doing that would be rather unfair to women who had to give up their passion in music, due to family, work or other responsibilities. It's really satisfying to see such ladies get back to their passion later in

Member's Corner

life, through the classes I conduct in classical and light music. Similarly, conducting sessions for little school girls through our NGO Arbutus also gives me great happiness.

The greatest joy comes from sharing the knowledge that one has been blessed enough to receive!

Vita est Proelium! Fortis est Veritas! Life is a battle but the truth always prevails!

India woke up once again, to a uproar and the burning issue of "The Safety of Women" may it be in public, the work place or her 'Haven' her home. The rage, the on-cry after Nirbhaya had barely subsided with the government offering special funds to be used for the said matter and a change in law for serious offenders who were minors.

The outrage knew no bound as people, doctors, women, NGOs took to the roads in protest as the Kolkata Rape and Murder case unfurled its gory details on social media. Was it 'one' person or were there more - did this in any way change her suffering while undergoing such brutality? My hackles rose to her pain and helplessness. Parents of girls were dismayed and shuddered at the thought of minuscule protection to their young daughters, even in their own familiar work environment.

Fear set in, fear as a woman, fear for the unknown, hapless at the mercy of the perpetrators. The new Anti Rape bill introduced by the West Bengal Government asks for capital punishment for rape, if the victim dies or is left in a vegetative state. Does this really acts as a deterrent? Does this address the power balance of Patriarchy? Does this provide adequate safety and respect to Women who are biologically at a disadvantage! Mother hood weeps and demands equality from her sons. From conception, adolescent, to womanhood, the girl child struggles for her Human rights.



Shevata Rai Talwar
Association Representative
UWA Dehradun

Her basic right to life is questioned even before she is born. Rape, forced prostitution, demeaning pornography, dowry deaths, honour killings and glass ceilings follow.

At all levels of governance, organisations and institutes a special need and focus on Women's safety has to be developed. Sensitising boys and males towards the dignity of women should be the priority. Young boys and youth of today are to cherish and value girls as individuals and equal partners in all walks of life from family to work force.

The VGIF

The Indian Federation of University Women's Associations which turned a 100 years in 2021, is one of the earliest affiliates to the Geneva based International Federation of University Women (now called Graduate Women International since 2016), whose founders Virginia Gildersleeve, Caroline Spurgeon and Winifrid Cullis from Canada, were signatories to the Iconic Human Rights Charter in 1919 in San Francisco, that followed the Great Armistice Treaty that was signed in 1918 that ended World War I.

These pioneering women got together several women in academic fields at Universities in the US, the UK and Europe, to establish an organisation towards a new path breaking trail for women to gain their own rights by reaching higher scopes in academics through Fellowships, the corpus for which had been set up with a million-dollar grant from philanthropists.

Born in 1921, The International Federation of University Women and as India was still a British colony, its first President was the then Viceroy's wife as First Lady. But the first representative from India who attended the first Conference of IFUW with all the new member countries' delegates in London in 1922 was a young Parsi lady who was already in London studying Law. Her name was Mithu Tata. She was

Member's Corner

asked by the British President to represent the University Women's Association at this Conference. She was a graduate of Bombay University.

Meanwhile, Ms. Virginia Gildersleeve, the Dean of Columbia University's Barnard College, a Women's Undergrad college in Manhattan already set about a new organisation as a sister to IFUW in Geneva. It was a part of IFUW, but with a different mission. It was established as a Funding organisation that would help women in small countries across the world to set up grass root projects that would educate women in rural areas to become literate and learn income generating skills. It was project based, but ultimately had the goal as the IFUW: Women's Empowerment.

The original name of VGIF, as we know it today, was VGIFUW. In the mid-1980s it separated itself from the Geneva based IFUW and created its own office in New York with its own Executive Secretary and Board of Directors. It had its one set purpose : to reach out to women across the world who were working within their communities to improve the lives of women and young girls through the constraints of male patriarchy and their centuries of traditions and customs, that left women most vulnerable to violence and conflicts.

In 1981, Elizabeth May was the President of VGIFUW and had been the previous President of IFUW from the USA. At that Conference she requested the Indian delegates to become members of VGIFUW, with a mere \$25 as the Annual Subscription. She announced that subscribing members could apply to be on the Projects Committee, the main arm of VGIFUW, that received hundreds of application for Funds to start and work on Projects in rural regions of their countries where lives of women and children was precarious with poverty, illiteracy and diseases.

The news that such a Grant was available made several NGOS in India apply for grants and these came to New York to be read by the Projects Committee of 10 members from across the world and assessed for their authenticity by due process and finally approved by the VGIFUW Board at the AGM in April every year. A substantial amount of 1 million dollars as Gift through the Will of Virginia Gildersleeve set the base for the Project Grants. Much later a similar gift of 1 million dollars was left for VGIF by Virginia Maynard. (VGIFUW had cut short its name by the early 1990s to just VGIF).

India (in the Tamil Nadu region) and African countries Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda received most of the Project Funds.



Gomathy Venkateswar
Vice President, IFUWA

Obituaries



Dr. Vinaybala Mehta, passed away on January 08, 2024. The former President of the Indian Federation of University Women's Associations (IFUWA), Vice-President and Managing Trustee of the UWA, Pune, she had actively participated in several GWI Triennial and Regional Conferences during her journey with UWA, IFUWA and GWI.

Dr. Mehta had an illustrious career in education and educational institutions. A 3-time Fulbright Scholar, she retired as the Principal of the SNTD College, Pune. She was also the Teacher Educator of University College of Education, Nagpur.

Having been actively associated with University Grants Commission (UGC), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), she pioneered in development of Research Aptitude Inventory. She guided students and her many doctoral students have excelled in their fields and done her proud. She has also done a lot of work in Training the Trainers, in the education field.

Obituaries

Always the leader by example, she kickstarted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fund of the Graduate Women International (GWI) by donating 'seed money' towards this Fund, with the hope that the fund will be used for pursuing of projects and education of trainers. She hoped that this fund and its activities would grow multifold in the coming years and enable GWI to make a meaningful impact with well-chosen and executed SDG projects and training of women for such projects.

Dr. Vinaybala Mehta who had many admirers, was full of positive energy and led an active life till the age of 91 years.



Veena Bathe
UWA Pune



Mrs Sheela Rao of UWA Pune, passed away on October 3, 2024, at the age of 84.

Mrs Rao moved from Mumbai to Pune in 1989. She joined the UWA and served as its President for 4 years and continued as a member of the Managing Committee for over 20 years, holding a range of positions. In this capacity, she attended the IFUW conference in Ottawa, Canada in 2001. She also attended conferences all over India. She served as News Convener for the IFUWA for three years and was invited to edit and publish the Platinum Jubilee Souvenir for the All India Women's Conference in

2006, which was released by then Vice President of India, Dr. Najma Heptullah at Fergusson College, Pune.

A post graduate in Statistics, she lived outside of India for a few years after marriage. After her return to India, her love for voluntary work in the field of empowering women drew her to join several women's organisations where she actively participated for many years before her health started faltering.

She will always be remembered as a strong, capable and inspiring lady who touched many lives in many ways. Her dedication and passion towards all the causes that she supported was truly valued and appreciated.

Radhika More

Daughter



Dr Prabha Deodhar was the President of UWA Pune and also of the Ad hoc Committee formed for the Working Women's Hostel Project. In this project she involved some influential personalities like, the then Mayor of Pune, Industrialists, Chairman of the Bank of Maharashtra and some Rotarians, etc. The lady Chairperson of the Social Welfare Department of Maharashtra was also involved and was a part of the team hence made it happen. was the first practising lady Dentist in the city of Pune.

In 1996, Prabhatai was instrumental in kicking off the Educational & Vocational Training Centre for Spastics called Musiquet was started along with Himmat Centre and Sucharita activities in UWA Pune. Activities like Batik, Tie n Dye, Block-Printing, Photocopying and Paper-Shredding were some of the Vocational Training programs developed.

Dr Deodhar believed that 'the aim was to help young handicapped adults to become self-reliant and independent, live a life of self-esteem and to assimilate them in the normal mainstream of society.

Dr. Deodhar, a dentist by profession, was an amicable and enthusiastic person, had a great following and resourceful contacts which helped her in organising programs on Education, Art and Culture, Awareness, etc., in UWA Pune.

She left us on January 25, 2025 at the age of 92 years. Upright, mentally agile, prim and proper, Dr Deodhar was a great loss to all who knew her well.

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