



# WEFA News Letter

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President

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Secretary

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Editor

## MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT

At the outset, I would like to break the good news that, now a days in Assam Engineering College, almost in each class; half of the students are girls. This I came to know from Prof. Runjun Das, who is also one of our members, on the foundation day of the college. That is a very encouraging development and clearly indicative of the ways our girls are progressing these days, as compared to the position 50 years ago, when some of us joined the Engineering College, as students.

The theme of the last Republic Day celebration was on 'Women Empowerment'. It was the first time that All-Women's Contingents from the three Services- Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force marched in the parade. The Army contingent was led by Capt. Divya Ajith, the Navy was led by Lt. Commander Sandhy Chauhan and the Air Force Contingent was led by Squadron Leader Sneha Shekhawat. Capt. Ajith has created history, by becoming the first woman in the Army to receive the coveted Sword of Honour, which is awarded to the best cadet. My heartiest Congratulations to each of these illustrious women, who have made every

woman proud! Three cheers for these lady Officers!

Another piece of good news is that, the last issue (Oct.-Dec. 2014) of 'Orani', a renowned Assamese Magazine, was published with the theme- "Women Engineers", where a few lady engineers, also members of WEFA, have written about their work experience etc. It is



really a good exposure for the lady engineers. Thanks to Smt. Eli Ahmed, the noted writer who is the sole proprietor and editor of this magazine, which has been running since 1970. For her kind and laborious work, WEFA offered their gratitude to her, by holding a public meeting in the Guwahati Press Club.

Before closing, I take great pleasure in extending my heartiest felicitations and warm greetings to all the members of WEFA and their families for the Rangali Bihu, 2015 and hope that, the

Assamese New Year and the warmth of Bihu festivities, would usher in a period of peace, prosperity and happiness to one and all.

**Long Live WEFA !**

**Mrs. Rita Rajkhowa,  
President, WEFA.  
Secretary's Report**

In absence of Secretary, WEFA Mrs Indira Das, I am reporting the activities of WEFA during last few months. As appeared by T.V Channel NEWS live, Guwahati, WEFA donated food materials of amounting Rs 5001.00 to carnage victims of Assam on 29.12.2014.



Ms Eli Ahmed 'Luit Kanya' was felicitated by WEFA members at Press Club of India, Guwahati on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2015. WEFA President Er. Rita Rajkhowa presided over the meeting. The meeting began with a Guru Bandana sung by Er. Bijuli Goswami and welcome address was delivered by Er. Indira Das. Srijuta Nirupoma Borguhain and social activist Sri Khanidra Das were invited as chief guest and guest of honour respectively. Er. Rita Rajkhowa felicitated Ms. Eli Ahmed with a Phoolam Gamocha,

a flower bouquet, Kahor Bota, woollen shawl and a book. Er. Labonya Padmapoti Barua read out the citation of felicitation. A group song was presented by few members of WEFA namely, Er. Gitanjali Kakoti, Er. Utpala Rai Choudhury, Er. Archana Choudhury, Er. Sristirupa Das etc. The meeting was anchored by Er. Geetimala Baishya and Er. Krishna Sharma offered vote of thanks.

WEFA is planning to hold new activities in near future. With best wishes for Rongali Bihu and Prosperous Assamese New year.

**Dr. Bibha Das Saikia**

## **Editorial**

On the occasion of World Water day, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2015, Mr. Ben Ki-Moon, Secretary General, United Nations in his message said that with the perils of climate change increasingly threaten the planet earth, the international community must unite in "a spirit of urgent cooperation" to address many water related challenges facing humanity. In his message the U.N. Secretary General warned that access to safe drinking water was among the most urgent issues affecting population across the globe. He also said that to address many challenges related to water, people must work in a spirit of urgent cooperation, open to new ideas and innovation, and prepared to share solutions that necessary for a sustainable future. With this people can

end poverty, promote global prosperity and well being, protect the environment and withstand the threat of climate change.

In the past, water was considered as an unlimited resource- a gift of God that last forever. According to estimates of world water resources, 97.2% of the total water is salt water available in the Ocean and only 2.80% is available as fresh water in the form of surface water (2.2%) and ground water (0.6%).

Water is a prime need for the survival of human and all other living system. Further, water is essential for agricultural activities, industrial development, power generation, navigation, recreational activities etc. Therefore, sustainable use of water and its management are urgently necessary.

Recently, a new concept namely 'Water footprint' has been developed for the purpose of water management. It expresses consumption based assessment of water utilised by an individual, community, industry etc. The new concept has termed 'blue water', 'green water', and 'grey water'. Blue water is available in all visible sources; green water resides in pore spaces of the soil whereas grey water falls under contaminated water.

With the celebration of World water day let us spread the message – judicious use of clean blue water, conserves green water and reduces grey water.

With best wishes for Rongali Bihu and Prosperous Assamese New year.

**Dr. Bibha Das Saikia**  
**Editor**

### **Women of the year 2014**

The Week magazine selected Dr. V Rukmini Rao as Woman of the Year 2014. She is a social and rural development activist working with women at many levels of Indian Society but particularly with the poor, underprivileged and vulnerable. She has a high media profile and credibility in Andhra Pradesh and in India in general on these issues. She is currently Executive Director of the Centre for World Solidarity (CWS) and on the Boards of the Deccan Development Society (DDS) and Gramya (Gramya Resource Centre for Women, which she founded). She also was a founding member and worked for many years with Saheli (Saheli Women's resource Centre) in Delhi.

Rukmini Rao has a PhD, Masters and BA majoring in psychology. She began her career at the NLI (National Labour Institute) and PECCE (Public Enterprise Centre for Continuing Education) in Delhi working on organisational change in Public Enterprises from the mid-1970s to early 1980s. She worked as project Director for and Indo-Dutch program on women workers in the garment industry, in Saheli and was a program officer and consultant to NORAD (Norwegian Aid) from the early 1980s to the early 1990s,

when she moved back to Hyderabad. In Hyderabad she began work with DDS and Gramya.

Rukmini Rao has had prestigious fellowships in India, Australia, Europe and China. She has participated in many International Conferences, Seminars and Workshops on women's issues and development education all over the world, with organisations such as the ILO, the UN, NGO and World Women's Forums, Christian Aid and other International Aid organisations. She has lectured on development education in many countries including Europe, Australia and India. She has also worked with several European aid organisations in India to promote women's development.

In recent years she has also been involved with Watershed Development Programs to ensure women have access and control to common property resources such as land and water. She was a member of the research steering committee for The Agha Khan Foundation for the Management of Environmental Resources by Communities. She was a founding Member of Asmita Centre for Women. She was also a member of the Governing Body of LEPRO India (leprosy eradication) and has served on and advised many government standing committees in Andhra Pradesh and for the National Government of India.

Highlights of her recent work with DDS involved organising rural women towards self-reliance. DDS currently works with self-sustaining women's sangams in 70 villages and the model is being fostered into and copied by NGOs in other

areas. Gramya has exposed the sale of girl babies and trafficking for adoption in Andhra Pradesh.

Her work with the Centre for World Solidarity (CWS) involves collaboration and support for more than 300 NGO voluntary organisations with a focus on dalit, minority and gender rights.

CWS has a focus on human rights, sustainable agricultural development and gender justice. From the big cities of Hyderabad and Delhi to the remote villages of Nalgonda, Rukmini's stamp is visible on a range of issues, organisations and support systems. It has not been easy and has required enormous personal sacrifice. She says- "Many women suffer in silence. I suggest that we break our silence and help others in breaking theirs. This helps because many men have come forward to support the right cause,"

### **Quotes:**

"There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers". (Susan B. Anthony, women's activist)

### **Health tip:** Go for Garlic

Adding raw or lightly cooked garlic and onions to your meals may help keep you healthy this winter. Both foods appear to possess antiviral and antibacterial properties and are believed to boost immunity.