



WEFA News Letter

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Message from President's Desk

Dear Members,

With the melodious chirping of the Cuckoo, since past few weeks and the flowering of the mango and other plants, the joyous spring season has already set in. Along with it, our most popular festival *Rongali Bihu* is also knocking at the door. So, let us all be prepared to celebrate our traditional festival, with all gaiety and a spirit of goodwill and fellow-feeling, forgetting all petty differences.

In the midst of plenty, with the mighty Brahmaputra flowing through the city, we, in Guwahati, have been suffering a lot due to acute 'water-scarcity', since last two months. Nearly 75% of Guwahatians have been compelled to buy expensive water from private sources. Now, we will have to think about rain water – harvesting, which people have been doing in Mizoram, for a long time, very successfully. WEFA, representing the Engineering & Technology community with certain degree of expertise and experience need to do their bit, in order to alleviate this water problem, by devising cost effective, efficient and healthy 'water harvesting system' and widely publicize it.

The other major concern, which WEFA could take up for educating the public and the youth in particular, relates to growing incidents of sexual exploitation of women & girls, rape cases, abduction & kidnapping for trafficking of young girls & women, dowry deaths and the latest trend of increasing suicide cases. We condemn all such violence against women & girls and demand that quickest justice be given by the State to all such victims.

With these messages, I take this opportunity to wish you all a grand *Rongali Bihu* celebration and Best Wishes for the Assamese New Year.

Long live WEFA!

Mrs. Rita Rajkhowa, President, WEFA.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Women Engineers Forum of Assam has endeavored to encourage meritorious brilliant but economically backward students in different ways from the day the forum was formed. Recently WEFA members of Jorhat initiated a programme at Muloukhat High School on 9.3.2013 where Solar Lamps were distributed to 20 of its boy/girl students who were deprived of electricity supply to carry out their studies at home. We are pleased to mention here that in the

presence of teachers and students of the said school including parents, locals and the village head, distinguished educationist/litterateur. Kutubuddin Ahmed presided over the meeting and highly appreciated wefa's effort towards social welfare service and extended his gratitude to the members of WEFA. Dr. Reeta Sarma, Principal, Jorhat Engineering College, delivered an encouraging lecture to the students and parents present thereto inspire the students to give their best in the field they intend to pursue. The students of the said school added glamour to this programme with presentation of songs and dances. Sri Arun Bora, the head master of the said school and distinguished guest, appreciated WEFA's activities towards social upliftment and development. Ms Eliza Begum explained the best use of the solar lamps presented to the students and described in detail about the maintenance of the solar panel.

Ms.Putuli Saikia Baruah and Ms Meena Bordoloi must be congratulated for initial planning and implementation of this programme. WEFA members of Jorhat, Ms Eliza Begum, Dr ReetaSarma, Ms Arundhati Devi, Ms Neelanjana Baruah, Ms Chandana Chakravorty, Ms Gitanjalee Chetia, Ms Pompe Borah organised the programme at Muloukhat village with full cooperation of the village head. The whole programme was successfully anchored by Ms Arundhati Devi.

The WEFA members in its last meeting decided to distribute twenty solar lamps to deserving students of another interior and socially backward village near Rani where electrification has not reached yet.

Indira Das. Secretary i/c WEFA

WEFA Activity: Distribution of Solar Lamps

9th March, 2013 can be remembered as a memorable day of WEFA. On this day as a part of social activities, WEFA members from Jorhat arranged a meeting in association with teachers and students of Maloukhat High School, Village head, guardians and local people. They distributed 20 number of solar lamps (sponsored by WEFA Head Office) to the students of Maloukhat High School who were deprived of electricity facility at home..



Student recipients of Solar lamps, Maloukhat High School

WEFA Editorial:

Celebration of International Women's Day on March 8th, 2013 by different organizations is over. The celebration focuses on various issues of Women.



WEFA members from Jorhat

The vice-president of 'Breakthrough', a global human rights organization commented that the Indian women today has achieved and advanced a lot professionally and socially owing to their strong will power. There are many intelligent women today in our society and more women are coming out to prove their ability. There has been an improvement in laws, legislations and budget with respect to women. But unfortunately social evils and Taboos still exist in India which hinders their progress.

No matter what the measures may be, the basic need of valued system is to be realized by every human being. But the valued system of present Indian society is in the stage of degradation. As a result of it the weaker section in the society including women are suffered badly. To combat violence against women along with implementation of laws and legislatures, old values of our society like love, co-operation, dedication, respect, discipline, forgiveness, brotherhood etc are to be revived and inculcated among the young generation.

Hope the coming Assamese New Year will bring safety and security to the all women of our society.

Bibha Das Saikia, Editor

A Visually Challenged Lady

Bertha G Dkhar who went to Bengaluru to do MSW from Bangalore University in 1982 suffered from an eye disease. It lead to gradual deterioration of eyesight and finally lost her eyesight completely and had to come back to her home. After about 3 years she joined in a newly established secondary school for Blind in Garo hills, Meghalaya. The headmistress of the school (a Garo lady) made her to realize the fact that it is her duty to come up with the Braille code in Khasi language since Bertha knew English. Taking it as challenge, Bertha took the challenge though the task was confusing and difficult.

With great effort she prepared Braille code with Roman script in Khasi language for Grade I. After it was accepted she developed Braille code for Khasi language in English for grade II. It was approved in 1995 and children started using it. In the school the monthly salary of rupees two thousand (Rs. 2000.00) only that Bertha received was great to her after staying at home for three years without any income. Her growing concern for children with special needs and disabilities, Bertha tended to forget herself. It was the work & faith in Jesus that kept her going forward. There were others who inspired her. Javed Abidi (NCPDP) made her out of Meghalaya to join in the disabled rights group of Delhi. She joined as a teacher of Bethany Society and became Head Mistress in charge within a short period. The school grew from 50 children to 180 at present. This school is open to children with all types of disabilities and for the underprivileged children. The children who have passed out of the school are doing

really well. The disabled rights group takes care of protecting children against abuse in school and other institutions. Similar type of school is going to start in Meghalaya.

Bertha G Dkhar received the best teacher award for the district & state level as well as National award for child welfare from Ministry of Women and Child Development and Padmashree award.

Recently she is nominated and appointed as a member of the National Monitoring committee on Education, SCs and persons with disabilities under HRD ministry. She has received an approval for developing Braille for four states in North eastern region. According to Bertha – “The people with disability need hand holding & guidance, and that’s how I accepted the offer”

Three female engineers build toys to inspire young girls to love science

Alice Brooks was a little girl, when she asked her father for a Barbie doll he gave her a saw, which she used to hack a dollhouse.

Alice, now 24 year old, excelled at school and went on to study mechanical engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She, while enrolled in graduate school at Stanford University, a project has been brewing in her mind: Can a toy inspire the next generation of young girls to love science, technology, engineering and math? Convinced of the merits of the idea, Alice teamed a group with two fellow graduate students, Bettina Chen and Jennifer Kessler, to form a ‘toys for girls’ company known as “Maykah”.

As graduate students at Stanford, and throughout their academic careers, Alice noticed that in all their courses (advanced linear algebra, electromagnetic engineering, and so on) very few of their classmates were female. As she went further into their education and careers, saw the number of women around us decreasing.

They believed that this problem is rooted in childhood. Their feeling was “When we looked around at girls’ toys today, we did not see the kinds of toys that inspired us when we were young,” They formed an organization dedicated to increasing the number of female entrepreneurs who build toys to inspire the next generation of female technology innovators.

They are designing prototypes for the toys at StartX, a highly competitive accelerator for Stanford students. Roominate, their first toy, was inspired by that early dollhouse memory as an alternative to playing with dolls, Roominate lets young girls attach and custom-build a miniature room with working circuits.

When Alice Brooks her two associate founders launched the idea for Roominate on Kickstarter, a website to crowd source funding for projects, and proclaimed that every girl should grow up with a love of all subjects and the skills to become “an engineer, architect, and a visionary,

Quotes:

1. Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving – Elbert Einstein
2. Worry often turns out to be interest you pay on a loan you haven’t taken - Arvind Kala

