

Reaching out 32

Best Wishes for A Happy New Year

A new year, a new beginning, brings renewed hopes of better times ahead.

The past year or so has been tough for many millions across the world. Global recession has played havoc with the lives of innocent, hard-working people.

The corporate world in India has managed to cope with the crisis quite competently, but the growth rate of the Indian economy has been lowered from a high of 9.5% to about 7%.

The NGO sector has been hit too as fund-raising efforts have been thwarted by lower interest rates and reduced corporate budgets for NGOs.

WIT has had its share of minor setbacks this past year, particularly through declining exports, lower demand and inflationary trends. Consumers have been adversely affected by higher food and provision costs - the inflation rate for foods has scaled to 19% !

As the year comes to a close, at WIT there are positive indications of improvements. It is hoped that 2010 will be a far better year, with booming sales, inclusive growth with more women beneficiaries and bonanzas from up above.

A Joyful 2010 to all our Members & Well-wishers

REPAIRS AND RENOVATION

Started last March, WIT hopes to complete the repairs and renovation to the two buildings at the Kamila Tyabji WIT Centre, Panvel, by early 2010. The final stage of painting the interior and exterior has commenced and hopefully will be finished swiftly and smoothly for a cleaner spic-and-span look.

WIT has overshoot its budget and expended funds collected painstakingly over the 40th Anniversary Celebrations.

Initially WIT had planned to undertake only the very urgent repairs required but it was necessary to extend the work to unforeseen areas as it was strongly felt that, " While we are at it, we might as well get it done." One thing led to another..... new

windows were installed throughout the building, a severely leaking roof made leak-proof and bathrooms and plumbing improved.

NURTURING THE NURSING COURSE



Year after year, WIT is pleased to announce the successes achieved by the Nursing students. The success rate is invariably 100% with at least one or two students obtaining distinctions, thanks to the efforts of Anshu Kaul, Director, Nursing School. Jobs are almost immediately available and starting salaries have kept moving up satisfactorily every year.

Financing this course is one of WIT's main challenges. This year funding was again provided by **Volkart Foundation**. Students are charged nominal fees only for overheads and meals, which are subsidised in any case. Increasing the charges substantially is out of the question as the students simply cannot afford it and would otherwise have to forego the opportunity to acquire a career-enhancing qualification.

The Ladies Wing, IMC, a well-wisher and staunch supporter, offered four bright and needy Nursing students scholarships this year to cover the fees.

The Lions Club of Bombay (Host) also provided a scholarship for one Nursing student.

All this assistance is extremely important and WIT sincerely thanks all the above-mentioned sponsors.

Any takers for 2010 – 2011?

BALWADI AND SNTD TEACHERS TRAINING



WIT has a special place for kids in its heart. The little ones in the Balwadi, dressed in red-checked tops and matching skirts or pants are always smiling, eager to learn and to sing or dance at the drop of a hat. All WIT's celebrations include items performed by them. Fancy-dress competitions are also their forte.

A memorable performance was held on Children's Day and at the Annual Day Programme.

The **SNTD** Balwadi Teachers Training Course, started two years ago, is yet to reach its potential, even though one student scored a distinction last

year and two this year. Enrolment has been slow but hopefully will pick up in a few years. Once again we thank the students' sponsors, **Dhun** and **Bachu Panthaki**, for their continuing contributions to the students to cover their tuition fees.

Thanks also to Mrs. Rao, teachers Mrs. Sandra Padubere, Shahina Sheikh and WIT's Nancy Pradhan for their tireless efforts in running this course.



HOME LINEN, PAPER PRODUCTS AND TOYS

Even though exports were lower this year due to trends abroad, WIT's production of bedspreads, table cloths, bags, cushion covers, runners and toys continued at a steady pace to cope with domestic demand. A selection of toys are still in great demand from the UK.

WIT faces some constraints in production as the traditional Indian skills in block-printing are no longer around or easy to come by. The in-house block-printing department at the WIT Centre, Panvel, produces quality items but attrition rates are high. WIT now also screen-prints on fabric in-house in addition to screen-printing on paper for gift wraps, gift bags, gift envelopes, cards, etc., which is proving to be promising and productive. Introducing new designs is also a continuing challenge, but WIT has a few young, budding designers with great potential, such as **Romana Sheikh**, ably supervised by CEO **Shyamla Nath**.

New Summer and Diwali Collections, were introduced again during the year alongwith a special **Baby collection**, which included Baby Quilts, Baby Blankets, Napkins, etc., most of these imaginatively appliquéd with baby themes in pretty pastel shades.

The **Taj Group of Hotels** continues to support WIT through their regular orders for cloth bags for newspapers, slipper bags, toilet cases, etc., as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility initiative. WIT products have been ordered by Taj Hotels at Chennai, Bangalore, Bhutan, Goa and Maldives.

EXCITING EVENTS

- WIT was privileged, once again, to arrange another Workshop on Entrepreneurship, conducted by the **Salt Lake Community College (SLCC)** of Utah, USA, represented by **Danielle Lower and Randy Schouten**, between September 14 and 24. About 30 women attended the 10-day Workshop.

Encouragingly three of these women are being mentored to set up their own micro-businesses.

Once again, samples of WIT products were selected by the SLCC team for future bulk orders.

WIT extends a sincere "Thank you" to the two Trainers as well as the Dean of the SLCC for their valuable inputs and continued encouragement.



- **A Child Abuse Awareness Programme** was held in association with **SAATHI**, the organisation that promotes the girl child, both at Panvel and Mahim, to bring home the importance of this important social issue. An interesting skit was also performed to highlight this problem.
- WIT recently received **Membership** of the **Fair Trade Forum** after strict verification of standards achieved by WIT. It is hoped that WIT's association with this organisation will prove productive.
- **CNBC** aired an interesting feature in May on WIT's activities which was well received, with a positive response.
- At the St. Xavier's College an interesting short film on WIT was specially screened for a class project.
- In October the **Hon'ble Mayoress, Lady Lin Lauder**, wife of the Mayor of London City, the financial hub of London, was invited to WIT to familiarise herself with WIT's educational and vocational activities and to showcase the products produced by WIT women. Encouragingly she was an enthusiastic

shopper and promised to work out a partnership with a London organisation which could promote WIT's products.



- **A Cooking demonstration** was conducted by two chefs from **Taj Lands End, Bandra**, at the WIT Centre, Panvel in November. Several dishes were presented and the response from the women for learning Chinese and Italian dishes was quite amazing. Another session on "**Hygiene and Grooming**" was held on December 11th.

WIT thanks **Ms Debasmita Pani** of the Taj Lands End for all her efforts in organizing these two events.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The penetration of the market by WIT Foods has certainly increased. Sales of Marmalade, Jams, Jellies, Pickles, Chutneys and Squashes have moved favorably upwards and new areas have been explored, even though competition from abroad and even locally is intense. New foreign brands are continually crowding limited shelf space, nudging WIT into smaller areas.

An impressive list of new outlets, both in Mumbai and upcountry like Nature's Basket, Food Bazaar, Sahkari Bhandar, Star Bazaar, Haiko, etc., has been added.

WIT Foods have a proven shelf-life of 18 months, and are prepared from actual fruit during the season with minimal food preservatives. Dealers today refuse to stock products which have a manufacturing date from the previous year, posing a real problem – this is an example of consumer awareness carried to extremes!

To stimulate demand in new areas, two young women have been appointed to promote WIT brand awareness on the spot at different outlets, resulting in instant sales.

Promotional material has also helped, such as, little recipe booklets tied around the necks of jam bottles, flyers distributed before Diwali, colourful kiosks, danglers and branding strips for dealers and the creative painting of the WIT van with

luscious fruit to tempt commuters.

Neville Gomes and his team at **Multi-media Aquarius** have very graciously provided all the distinctive designing for the above mentioned promotional material without any charge, for which we are beholden to them.

An important labelling requirement was met this year with the inclusion of nutritional values and barcodes for every WIT product, with the assistance of expert **Dr. Rodrigues**.

New varieties were also introduced, including Apricot Chutney, Karela Pickle and Tendli Tasty Bites (similar to olives served with drinks and cocktails).

Once again WIT places on record its sincere thanks to marketing professionals **Astad Parakh** and **Uday Mallick**, who have worked with enthusiasm and diligence for more than two years. Their contribution on a regular and purely voluntary basis has been enormous.

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

Vicky Treadell, British Dy. High Commissioner, loves WIT Mango Chutney.

Simone Tata relishes Tomato & Raisin Chutney.

Armaity Desai can't get enough of Orange Marmalade.

Jinx Akerkar stocks up on Mango Panna.

Philippa Waterfield writes, "I have recently had the opportunity of tasting possibly the most delicious Marmalade I have ever eaten (and I come from the UK where wonderful home made marmalades are famous!). It is your 3 Fruit Marmalade."

Scores of other discerning friends tell us from time to time how much they enjoy WIT Foods. Do spread the word to all your friends and acquaintances. Sample WIT products and get hooked.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A heartening and happening place at the WIT Mahim office is the continuing **Community Development Project**, sponsored by Tata Communications. Most mornings a group of women are industriously working away at their sewing machines, perfecting their tailoring skills as part of the on-going Tailoring Training and Income- Generation Programme.

At MESCO, Dharavi, WIT is providing teaching expertise in tailoring and embroidery.

VISIT OF BRITISH BUSINESSWOMEN

The year closed with an interesting visit to WIT on the morning of December 10, by a delegation of twenty high-powered businesswomen from the UK, here in India on a whirlwind familiarization and business trip.

Their own achievements were awesome, with most of them at the top of their chosen professions, many of them venturing out on their own to create highly lucrative and successful businesses.

The WIT team presented a review of WIT's activities, followed by an interesting interactive session with a lively exchange of ideas and promises to help WIT. They immediately decided on a project to upgrade the WIT website and to help start a Payments Gateway. A graphic designer agreed to help with designing, while many wanted to order products and recommend them to buyers in the UK. The VIP guests also managed to buy up the shop for they loved the WIT array of handmade products.



Much excitement, much enthusiasm and a great time was had by all.

TRUSTED DONORS

WIT depends on regular Trusts, organisations and individuals, to carry forward its work every year.

Hearty thanks to all the following:

- Volkart Foundation
- Mahalaxmi Temple
- Bai Alamai & Seth Ardeshir Talati & Seth Sarosh B. Mody Charity Trust
- M.K. Tata Trust
- Sir Dorabji Tata Trust
- Murad Futehally
- KPMG

- Gandhi Group
- Ladies' Wing of Indian Merchants' Chambers
- Hari Mundra
- Aroti Hosali
- Nalini Murthy
- Universal Medicare
- Margaret Mehta
- Femke Rensen
- Lions Club of Bombay Charity Fund
- Seth Purshotamdas Thakurdas & Divaliba Charity Trust
- Lotus Trust
- Ratanbai & H.K.Bhabha Charity Tust Fund
- Radha Iyer
- Keki Golvala
- Jaya Kilachand
- Dhanoo Khusrokhani
- Dr. Sudha Padhye
- Taj Lands End
- Pestonji F. Daver Charitable Trust
- Sorab & Coomi Mistry Foundation
- Ann Mueller
- Vanita Bhandari
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- Cooma Mehta
- Tehmi Mehta
- Rutty Wadia
- Shaila Welfare Trust

MARATHON DONORS

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SUCCESSION OF SALES

With three regular WIT Shops at Tardeo, Mahim and Panvel, it is still imperative to participate in NGO, Home, Institutional, Club and Corporate Sales to market the range of products made by WIT women.

WIT avails of every opportunity and extends its grateful thanks to all those who invited WIT to participate.

NGO Sales

- INDUS • Concern India • Shilpi Kendra • PVM Gymkhana • Shaila Bazar • South Mumbai Mahila Samiti • BARC • Archana Trust • Rising Sun • Orchit Empowered Dist • Women's Graduate Union • Indian Cancer Society • Maharashtra State Women's Council • IMC Ladies Wing

Home Sales

- Dina Daver • Neena Patel • Dhanoo Khusrokhani • Abha Mundra • Dolly Nanavati • Nasreen Khorakiwalla • Bindu Dutta

Institutional Sales

- American School • SIES College • Father Agnel School • CKT College • TISS • Kalina University • Ruia College • S.P.Jain College • Bazm-e-Niswan • Saisa Club • Radio Club • NSCI • American Women's Club • SCPF

Corporate Sales:

- Novartis • Johnson & Johnson • RPG • UTV R-City Mall • HUL • Wokhardt • HDFC • HSBC • Taj President Hotel • Mizuho Corporate Bank Ltd • Loop Mobile • Bharati Airtel Ltd • Bank of Baroda • Taj Lands End • Glaxo • J.P. Morgan • Tata Teleservices • Mahindra Finance • Palm Beach Galleria

NEW LIFE MEMBERS - FRIENDS OF WIT

The drive to enrol new members this year was eminently successful. A warm welcome to all !!

- Fatima Jasdhanwalla • Rafia Abdulali • Gool Mistri
- Razishta Malegam • Meher Kharas • Dhun Panthaki • Meera Sanyal • Saker Mistri • Jaya Khilachand • Dr. Arun Kurkure • Phiroza Muncherjee • Abha Mundra • Siddharth Mundra
- Kunal Mundra • Veera Udwadia • Lyla Mehta
- Kulsum Dubash • Kusum Lodha • Nalini Murthy
- Tannaz Commissariat • Dilnavaz Variava
- Methoo Hajeebhoy • Simone Assomull
- Meenaz Molloobhoy • Ayesha Soonawalla
- Farah Parakh • Anahita Havaladar • Anahita Adajania • Minnie Dastur • Jiloo Bilimoria
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- Sunita Khandelwal • Suvarna Sathe • Bachoo Rao • Dilnaar Ahmedulla • Rosina Mehra
- Nandita Singh • Devbale Sharma • Jenai Banaji
- Yazdi Tantra • Faryal Katgara • Tina Mehta • Vera Choksey • Mahakurshid Byramjee • Padma Vazirani • Minal Thakore • Firoza Patel • Viloo N. Cama • Bakhtawar Karkaria • Shernaz Mehta
- Dhun Palia • Jerry Kumana

WIT's long-time and loyal Friends of WIT, Scylla Vatcha, Perveez Agarwal, Pилоo Tata,

Mehroo Kotval and Dina Davar continue to provide us with their full support.

Thank You !

GOVERNING BODY NEWS

WIT is fortunate to have a competent and proactive Governing Body.

President **Anu Aga** has continued to contribute her expertise despite her constraints and multiple commitments.

Vice-Chairman **Vidya Ranadive** has helped for years, bringing in funds and providing practical points of view.

Vice-Chairman **Dhanoo Khushrokan** is literally a livewire and shoulders many responsibilities including Finances and the Foods Division.

Hon. Treasurer **Abha Mundra's** invaluable help with HR and Repairs is laudable, while Hon. Secretary **Dinoo Parakh's** persuasive powers have brought in many new Life Members, a most vital resource.

Shama Phadke has been facilitating the WIT Medical Programme for the staff and she and **Irmela Futehally** make a good duo for designing ideas. **Aroti Hosali**, the veteran globe-trotter, and **Zakia Khatib**, despite health problems, have been there for WIT for many years.

Chairman **Dolat Kotwal** continues to steer the multifaceted organisation, only because of the able support of the GB team.

Kudos to **Shyamla Nath**, CEO, who works exceedingly hard and efficiently while managing a fine balancing act to cope with diverse demands.

Finally, the GB is extremely thankful to the CEO, the Supervisors and all the staff at Mumbai and Panvel, who are the backbone of WIT and most of whom have worked over the years capably and loyally.

I would like to renew my membership/become an Ordinary/ Life Member of Friends of WIT.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel. No. _____ Mobile No. _____ Email ID _____

I enclose Cash/Cheque for Rs.400/- Annual Membership, Rs.5,000/- Life Membership.

Please make out your cheque in favour of WIT, Women's India Trust and forward it to 23, Bombay Market, Tardeo, Mumbai 400 034. • Email : witardeo@gmail.com • Website : www.wit.org.in