



Vaastu & Homes

Mrs. Deval Gandhi

VAASTU & HOMES

Devol
Timeless Weaves...

Shahi Baug Days

I was born Deval Jiteshbhai Dhuldhoya, the first of two daughters of Jiteshbhai and Mudraben Dhuldhoya. I was brought up in Ahmedabad, more particularly the Shahi Baug area. I did my entire schooling at Sharda Mandir and then joined HL College to do my B.Com.

Prior to independence from the British Raj, my great-grandfather had several textile mills.



Mrs Deval Gandhi with her husband Devanshu

Those were the Golden days. My great grandparents lived in a palatial Havelis with a lifestyle full of grandeur, luxury splendor. Sadly, a bitterly contested legal battle in the London Privy Council which my great-grandfather fought and lost put an end to that chapter. The textile mills, the Havelis and everything else went; what remains till today is the Dhuldhoya family name and the Dhuldhoya compound behind the old Kalupur railway station that still stands silent witness to the old times.

My grandparents and then my parents picked up the lost threads and quickly re-established themselves and settled down in a comfortable bungalow at Shahi Baug. It was here that we were born and spent our childhood. It was



AFRICAN SAFARI - Holidaying at Nigeria

from here that we two sisters got married and only after then, that my parents finally moved out from Shahi Baug to their present bungalow at Navrangpura.

Textile Design

After graduation, I went to Mumbai to join the two year diploma in Dress Designing and Trade and Manufacturing at Sophia College. I did well there. In 1993, after passing the diploma exams with flying colours I returned home to a career in fashion fabrics and garmenting that I carry on even today. Actually, I had not planned to start away immediately but when I returned from Sofia college with my diploma, a lot many friends, relatives and neighbors wanted me to design something special for them. That's how I started - with the good will, enthusiasm and encouragement from my near and dear ones.

I began on a small scale getting my work done from a selected few of skilled and trustworthy craftsmen. I also had a single tailor and a few embroidery workers who worked from their homes. Many of those workers are still with me. Today, I have workshops in Kutch, Lucknow and other remote areas.

My work with Indian craftsmen has shown me the true creativity of the Indian textile tradition.

Dr Rao started narrating things that had happened on that plot. Things no one could have ever known or guessed. The history of the place rolled out in a few minutes was straight out of a supernatural movie.

It has also taught me to value and to cherish authentic, natural fibre and weave. I am lucky to have people around me who share similar values and who come to me regularly for their fashion wear.

The Gandhis

When my engagement was finalized with



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Devanshu we were all in awe. Devanshu was from a big a business family with a huge reputation. They were in the big league. They owned the famous Vadilal Ice-cream company. My parents and friends and everyone else I knew were proud to no limit that their Deval was marrying into the Vadilal family.

Yet, the reality was that, my in-laws were the simplest and humblest of folks I ever met. My mother-in-law always sided with me and was as devoted to me as any mother would be to her only daughter. My father-in-law, the late Shri Laxmanbhai R Gandhi stood head and



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shoulders above all in his society. Though successful and very busy he always spared time to help out others be it business or a social matter.

Devanshu and I have had – and are having – the best of times. Our years together have been full of sharing and of supporting each other despite the fact that we do have different views and attitudes . I am the easy-going type while Devanshu full of purpose, energy and business plans and strategy. He has consolidated and expanded his ice-cream and processed foods business. Under him, Vadilal has not only grown several fold , it has also won several awards as “National Brand”

in the All India Ice-cream category.

I look after my two daughters Aakanksha and Bhavisha. For me, it is a full time job and I love every moment of it. They study at the Ahmedabad International School. Aakanksha is studying for her Cambridge board exams while Bhavisha is in class three. Every morning I drop them there and every afternoon I go to pick them up. I have been doing this from the day they went to school. No driver. No tuition teacher. Nothing! Just me, with my girls. Earlier I was teaching them in the evenings but now Aakanksha is old enough and manages by herself so I am concentrating on Bhavisha.

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Mrs Deval Gandhi interacting with her workers at her home



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The Gandhi home at Navrangpura, Ahmedabad after Vaastu re-engineering

I have my share of “well-wishers” who warn me about getting too much of Vaastu under my skin, but now, for me it doesn’t matter. What matters is that my family is happy. From inside as well as outside.

Vaastu

I'll begin our Vaastu story at the beginning.

Devanshu knew Dr. Rao. How he knew him, you will have to find out from him, but I do know that not only did Devanshu know Dr. Rao but had good contact with him. Around 2001, Devanshu told me that he was calling Dr. Rao home for a Vaastu visit.

I replied, “Devanshu. Please! Nothing of that!” I was completely opposed to any Vaastu person coming and upsetting the apple cart.

Good, bad or worse, I was happy with what we had and the way we were going. I was too afraid to risk an “attack” from Vaastu. If I recall correctly, I said as much to Dr. Rao too.

This bought us time. A full year, or maybe a little more. Then, one fine day at 7:30 in the evening, Devanshu called from his office, saying that Dr. Rao was on his way to the house. He was coming straight from the airport and would make a ten-minute halt at our place. What should I say about the meeting? He came. He went. But ...

While I was preparing for Dr. Rao's visit, I had images of an ageing pundit in dhoti with a white flowing beard and wooden sandals and saffron clothes. What I saw was a young well-dressed man totally from the modern world of today. That was the first shock. What happened next was even more shocking. He started narrating things that had happened on that plot. Things no one could ever have

known or guessed. The history of the place that rolled out in a few minutes was straight out of a supernatural movie.

After he left, I warned Devanshu against getting into this Vaastu business, yet another time. But this time, I lost. Step-by-Step, over several meetings and months Dr Rao navigated a not-at-all-good-Vaastu house into a Vaastu-acceptable place.

The results are there to see. Many things have set themselves right. Our business was favorably impacted as also was the case of our children's education. Most of all, our own sense of confidence and self-esteem has got a big boost.

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As a family we have bonded together and for me as a housewife, this has been the biggest bonus! ■