

Shri Kirtilal K. Doshi - Biography

Shri Kirtilal Kalidas Doshi was born on October 12, 1922, in Palanpur, in North Gujarat to Shri Kalidas Sankalchand Doshi and Smt. Diwalibai Doshi.

He has been an avid reader and a scholar throughout his academic career. As a child and young adult, Kirtilalbhai has been a voracious reader and built a library of his own comprising over 5,000 books which he has now donated to various libraries across the country.

He graduated with Honors in Economics from the Elphinstone College, but his patriotism led him to discontinue his studies in economics and law in 1942, so that he could join India's freedom struggle. Soon after he joined his family business of gems, which at the time, represented Valensa & Co. of Antwerp.

In the year 1942, at the tender age of 20, Shri Kirtilal Kalidas Doshi stepped into his father's shoes and started importing polished diamonds into India, under the company Kirtilal K. Doshi & Co.

With the intent of backward integration, by 1956 he also started importing rough diamonds to India thus pioneering the imports of rough diamonds to India and after cutting and polishing, he exported them across continents.

Thus began a life-long journey, a quest to be the best in the gemstones industry, a journey that has successfully weathered 8 decades.

Not only is Kirtilalbhai a man on a mission, but a man with tremendous vision- A vision and dream to put India on the world map of the gemstone business. He soon envisaged the rising need of coloured gemstones across the world and India's potential in these precious stones business.

Kirtilalbhai grabbed the business opportunity and with extensive and widespread travel, capitalized and developed his diamonds and precious stones business. This ambition propelled enormous growth for his company through the development and promotion of diamonds in the country.

His vision has been to see India as the shining star on the world map of the gemstone business. He visualized the immense scope and rising demand for coloured gemstone in the world and also the potential that India has in the precious stones business.

In order to promote the import and export of precious stones in India, the “Precious Stone Importers & Exporters Association” was established in 1955 with assistance from stalwarts like Bhogilal K. Patel, Pravin M. Nanavati, Padmakant H. Zaveri, Pransukhlal Dhayalal Makanjee to mention a few.

The establishment of this Association was the beginning of his dedication to the service of the Gem & Jewellery Industry of India.

In the late 1950’s and early 60’s, the Government of India sought his assistance in framing the import export policy for gemstones.

Kirtilal Doshi was instrumental in formation of the “ Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council ” in 1963, yet another major contribution and achievement by him for our industry. He played a key role in the preparation of the constitution of the GJEPC as well as Bharat Diamond Bourse. He was elected as the Chairman of the Council in 1971. As the chairman of the council and member of its executive body, he worked tirelessly towards the formation of Jewellery Policy between 1969 and 1971.

Kirtibhai was appointed by Central and State Governments as a member on various committees for nearly 2 decades. He has served as a member of the elite panel of customs valuation for diamonds and coloured stones and also expert advisory committee for Gem & Jewellery by the Government of India.

Shri Kirtilal K. Doshi laid the foundation of Shrenuj & Co. in 1982. Shrenuj & Co. Ltd. Has been one of the first few public limited companies in the Diamond Sector and was among the leading diamond and jewellery manufacturing companies in the world. Apart from his own business, he has mentored many others in the diamond industry, some of whom are now leading diamantaires of the world.

In 1965 some of the young enthusiastic and farsighted gem traders like Shri Kirtibhai and other veterans and visionaries like Shri Rajendrabhai Shah, Shri Himmatbhai Jhaveri, Late Shri Padmakant Jhaveri and Late Shri Pravin M. Nanavati among others decided to establish an educational institution for the study of gemology in India. Finally in 1971, under the dynamic leadership of Shri Kirtilal Doshi, their dream of setting up a Gemological institute in the country turned reality.

GII took up the mighty task of overcoming the traditionally restricted Indian markets and educate, enable and empower its students to accept a scientific approach to working in the gemstones industry using the latest globally accepted best practices.

From its humble beginnings, GII grew from strength to strength and today boasts of all the latest gemstone instruments in the world and the best faculty and resources who have found success in the Indian gem industry.

The dream once conceived by Mr. Kirtilal Doshi has not just taken full flight, but soaring and reaching new heights.

Kirtibhai is a philanthropist to the core. He is associated with number of public charity trusts and educational institutions and other CSR activities.

He was the Chairman of Mahavir Jain Vidhyalaya a century old educational institution. He contributed to the cause of education in Jainism by setting up the Kalidas Sankalchand Jain academy at Maharaja Sayajirao University in Vadodra. He even donated generously to National Centre for Performing Arts (or NCPA) in Mumbai and the Shankar Nethrayala in Chennai. Due to advancing age, he has resigned from all institutions, except for his own charitable trusts. He also contributed generously to GIA and is on the list of their "League of Honour".

He was the Trustee of the Palanpur Jain Kelvani Fund, Shri Jain Bhojanshala, Shri VadilVishrantiGrah and Diwalibai & Kalidas Sankalchand Doshi Public Charitable Trust. He has sprung into assistance for many fund-raising projects for flood and famine relief and other humanitarian causes.

Kirtilalbhai is a lifetime trustee of the Precious Stones Importers and Exporters Association Relief Fund which was set up to serve the nation at a time when the country's industry was threatened by foreign forces like China & Pakistan. Kirtilalbhai with his colleagues and friends was instrumental in setting up a House for the aged in Palanpur.

In spite of all his multifarious activities he has found time to join the Rotary movement.

Shri Kirtilal Doshi's major lifetime achievement can be encapsulated as:

- He was the pioneer of coloured stones and diamonds trade in India.
- Founder of Shrenuj Group with a foot-print across 15 countries.
- One of the founders of Gem & Jewellery Exporters' Association (GJEA) and Gemmological Institute of India (GII).
- He's among the First few Indians who traveled extensively across the globe developing diamond exports from India.
- Kirtilal was the first in India to start diamond cutting and polishing using modern laser technology.
- He has also published 11 volumes in English and Gujarati containing quotes and wisdom of words collected by him over 5 decades.

Shri Kirtilal Doshi, now in his 100th year of life, will continue to reign supreme in our hearts as among the Pioneers of the Gem and Jewellery Industry in India. His life and work is an inspiration for generations to come. He has laid a very strong foundation for the gem and jewellery industry in India and the industry will continue to thrive for many more centuries to come.