

# **DHIRUBHAI AMBANI – THE MAN I KNEW**

**By KOKILABEN**



**Smt. Kokilaben D Ambani with Shri. Dhirubhai H Ambani**



**Smt. Kokilaben D Ambani releasing her book  
'DHIRUBHAI AMBANI - THE MAN I KNEW ' on February 24, 2007**

( From left to right - Shri. Bhadrashyam Kothari, Smt. Nina B Kothari, Smt. Tina A Ambani, Shri. Anil D Ambani , Smt. Kokilaben D Ambani, Shri. Mukesh D Ambani, Smt. Nita M Ambani, Shri. Dattaraj Salgaocar and Smt. Dipti D Salgaocar )

Behind every successful man, so goes the saying, there is usually a woman. In the life of the legendary Dhirubhai Ambani, that woman was his wife, Kokilaben. She was his fount of inspiration and support in a life that began in extremely

trying and modest circumstances but blossomed into the greatest ever success story in the annals of Indian industry.

In a moving personal memoir, Kokilaben pays tribute to her husband. Having lived and learned with Dhirubhai for close to half a century, Kokilaben is uniquely placed to tell the story of his life and his meteoric rise in business as well as personal life.

The memoirs have been simultaneously published in English and Gujarati. While the English version is titled *Dhirubhai Ambani – The Man I Knew*, the Gujarati edition is named “DHIRUBHAI AMBANI – MAARA JEEVAN SATHI”. Here, in her own words, Kokilaben describes her life with Dhirubhai and her belief in a man who was born to be a legend in his own lifetime.

The memoirs depict the remarkable life of Dhirubhai Ambani in all its richness, beginning with his childhood in the village of Chorwad to his early youth in the 1950s as a migrant worker in Aden, then a British Colony, to his later years as one of India’s great industrial visionaries.

Kokilaben has long cherished the desire to compile a book on Dhirubhai based on her personal memories. This dream has now seen the light of day. Helped and assisted by daughter Dipti (Ambani) Salgaocar, who worked with her mother in conceptualizing and putting together this immense labour of love, the book reveals Dhirubhai not just as an industrialist par excellence but also as an extraordinary human being.

The book contains over 300 pages, comprising rare pictures of places and people associated with Dhirubhai as well as inspiring and intimate personal anecdotes of his life and work.

As Kokilaben writes: “During all those years, I had never seen him in a miserable or a desperate state of mind. That does not mean he never faced difficulties. But when engulfed by difficulty, he used to resolve it with courage and imagination.”

Kokilaben’s insights into their life together draw upon reminiscences, and information about their early years and through it one man’s determination, resolve and struggle to reach the very pinnacle of success.

Few industrialists have had the kind of impact on the people of India that Dhirubhai Ambani had. Hailed as the ‘Man of the Century’, he established an empire that was to change the face of Indian industry.

In his private life too, Dhirubhai fulfilled every role and responsibility with aplomb. He was a caring husband, a loving father, an indulgent grandfather and a loyal friend. He devoted a great deal of time and energy to his children’s learning and to the development of their personalities. Everyday, over dinner, he would take time out to update himself on what his children were doing (and learning) and to encourage them to further expand their horizons.

He took the word ‘impossible’ out of his grandchildren’s vocabulary and inspired them to see the world as a place of exciting and limitless opportunity – a place where you could make things happen not because you were wealthy but because you were had the courage, boldness and initiative. ...In doing so, he bequeathed to them a legacy far more precious than what any wealth could bestow.

Talking of the reasons behind her decision to write on Dhirubhai, Kokilaben says, “I felt, all these facts from his life should be recorded for posterity. The world has seen him as a successful industrialist; but I have seen him in the role of an excellent man. I wanted to draw his personality as a humane individual, and that’s how I was inspired to write this book”.

Dhirubhai held dear the accolades he received, but the Wharton Dean's Medal was especially significant as he was the first Indian to receive it.

On the occasion of the first Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Lecture held in Mumbai, Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam, President of India, had talked of Dhirubhai as a man whose "guiding hand and loving nature" will always be missed.

The book will go some way in making up for that sense of loss.

The Bhagwad Gita states "The actions of a great man are an inspiration for others. Whatever he does becomes a standard for others to follow".

One hopes this book will bring Dhirubhai closer to the people so that his life and actions become an inspiration and a standard for others to follow.