



WAHEEDA RAHMAN

Designing Dreams on Gold

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An illustrious entrepreneur of the Assamese fashion Industry is Waheeda Rahman. Her name needs no introduction in the jewellery industry. Starting with a vision to revive the lost glory of the traditional Assamese jewellery, she has come a long way in this field. She not only retrieved the lost glory of the traditional Assamese jewellery, but has excelled in it and made it popular among the people. Her vision to do something different, something on her own and independently has really placed her in one of the most coveted positions of the fashion industry.

Born to parents Mr. Ohidur Rahman and Mrs. Nadira Rahman, she can rightly be called the daughter of the soil. Born in 1969 in Gauhati on the 3rd of January, She is the eldest among her four sisters and two brothers. She did her schooling from Panbazar Girls' High School, and Higher Secondary and Graduation from Handique Girls' College and Arya Vidyapith College respectively.

Waheeda feels that her grandmother had a great influence in her life in shaping her career. She remembers

the stories told to her by her grandmother. The stories read out to her, helped her develop her imaginative capacity and this developed a creative impulse in her. It was her grandmother who taught her to have foresight, have confidence in herself and in what she does.

Being an excellent craftsman and artist at heart, she started designing jewellery and clothes for herself and for her friends at an early stage. This slowly graduated into a passion and later into a business. Ambitious she was from an early age, and was confident that she would make a mark for herself someday. This ambition, confidence and drive in her have made what she is today. Her jewellery is a brand in itself and people from all over India, crave for a piece of her jewellery because of the innovative designs, authenticity and designs with a traditional character. She has created inroads in the world of jewellery designing with her own recipe of blending tradition with modernity, to produce the finest example of work on gold and other precious metals. She travelled long distances, all over the north-east to collect designs, which were long forgotten by our own people, and recreated those with a modern touch. Her creative designs are not only for the young people, but also for those, young at heart. Waheeda recalls, that success for her was not easy. She had to struggle for recognition, had to fight different odds at different times. For three years, she had been running her business without a single piece of jewellery being sold. But still she kept her business going, did not stop for a day, remained undaunted, creating new designs and searching for new avenues to market her products. Her spirit to carry on, her ability to stand by her product, whatever comes her way, and her belief and confidence in herself that she would make it one day, are the qualities behind her success today.

Today, she runs a boutique of her own. She is the first designer to have her own store of traditional Assamese jewellery. She started designing high quality products, which slowly started gaining reputation for her work and she started hiring people to work to meet the increasing demand. Though she started as a designer of Jewellery, she has subsequently extended her concept to sarees, salwars, mekhala-chadars and many more. Today she exports to places like the U.K, the USA, Mauritius, Thailand, Mumbai and Punjab. When asked, what her initial source of investment was, her instant reply was, 'I sold off all my jewellery that I got in my marriage.'

Waheeda has participated in various fashion shows and still continues to do so off and on. Some of her shows were, viz, Kapil Dev Charity show, shows for Artfed, show on the northeast. She participated in jewellery shows along with Asmi, Nakhshatra and Ritu Kumar. She participated in shows held in Birmingham, Mauritius, Rio, Sao Paulo and Bangkok.

She designs jewellery for everyone – from the simplest kind to the most gorgeous ones. According to Waheeda, money is not a factor for success in life. Determination and confidence are the main factors behind her success. And quality, according to her, should not be compromised at any cost. □□