



Shefali Razdan Duggal

PRESS CLIPS



Shefali Razdan Duggal, a realization of the word successful

Peta talks with a woman who can clearly be looked upon as a role model for the many working and non-working South Asian woman in the United States. She is an example of the proactive American dream.

by Peta Cooper



Shefali has been involved in many causes and organizations over the years. She was a political volunteer for the Al Gore campaign back in 2000 and she is now heading up major efforts for Sen. Hillary Clinton. She's been helping with supporting Senator Clinton's presidential campaign with a special focus on Bay Area fundraising events and recruiting in the Indo-American and young professionals community.

Needless to say, its impressive to see someone in her position take action towards a cause or agenda, which she strongly believes in. With this in mind, Shefali recently became the National Executive Director of INDUS WOMEN LEADERS, an organization based in San Francisco that nurtures and supports strong and successful South Asian women leaders through networking and mentoring.

We're proud to be able to showcase Shefali, read on and become inspired!

Peta Cooper: You are obviously a multi-faceted individual Shefali, but for our readers, what is your background?

Shefali Razdan Duggal: Well, I was born in Hardwar, India in 1971 and we moved to the US when I was only 2. I lived in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati as a child. I have been married for almost ten years to Rajat and have two children, a 6 yr old son and a 3 ½ yr old daughter. Rajat and I grew up together in Cincinnati, OH and attended the same high school. Our families were very close as well, so it just all fit together.



PC: What is the background of IWL, when was it founded, by whom, etc.?

SRD: Indus Women Leaders was established in 2001 by Lovely Dhillon and Lata Krishnan to create a national network that addresses the unique challenges faced by South Asian Women Leaders.

PC: Now that you've become the National Executive Director for Indus Women Leaders, did you always want to get into this position? What's your vision for Indus Women Leaders in 2008?

SRD: I have admired Indus Women Leaders for a long time, and I am absolutely thrilled and honored to be entrusted with leading such a fantastic organization. My vision for IWL is to greatly expand our base by encouraging many more talented South Asian women to join the organization. We currently have chapters in San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, Washington D.C. and New York City. My goal is to meaningfully increase the number of cities across the US represented by a local chapter. The core value of IWL is to provide a network of strong South Asian Women who are able to leverage each other's experiences and strengths to better each of us individually. By expanding our base, we are able to further our shared learning which will allow us to collectively become stronger and more effective leaders.

PC: Where is IWL based?

SRD: Although IWL's leadership is spread across many cities, IWL's national infrastructure team is based out of San Francisco.

PC: What does it take to be part of the IWL?

SRD: Although the profile of current members is quite impressive - over 80% have a Master's degree or higher and over 95% have at least 5-7 years of experience - the key requirement is a desire to connect with other South Asian women leaders. One of my key goals is to expand the profile of members we are able to connect with by embracing both younger women with less experience and also those who have chosen not to be in the work force at this time for whatever reason. The easiest way to join is to enroll on our website at www.induswomenleaders.org or anyone should feel free to contact me directly at srazdan@aol.com.

PC: What has been your biggest accomplishment in life?

SRD: Without a doubt, my biggest accomplishments in life are my two wonderful children. Their existence brings clarity and perspective to everything I do.



PC: For women who want to start a new chapter of the IWL in their city, what would you require and expect from them?

SRD: To begin a chapter in a new city would require a strong South Asian woman willing to devote the time and effort to recruit new members and establish an infrastructure team. This person would ultimately be responsible for coordinating with the National IWL leadership team to ensure the values and strengths of the organization are appropriately reflected. I would welcome any inquiries to meet and speak directly to commence this process, for any given city.

PC: Why are you supporting Senator Hillary Clinton for President?

SRD: After a 5-year hiatus to raise my two children, I attended a fundraising event for Senator Clinton earlier this year. Although I was well aware of Senator Clinton and her accomplishments, this was the first opportunity I had to meet her in person. I was incredibly impressed with her intellect and depth of experience and the humble and low-key manner in which she engaged the audience. I was particularly drawn to the genuine warmth of her personality. She was quite gracious when we were first introduced, and even though it was quite early in the primary season, I embraced her vision and candidacy and reengaged fully in politics, specifically in support of her campaign.

As the campaign has progressed into the primaries, I have only become more convinced that Senator Clinton is the leader who can not only remedy the mistakes of the past eight years, but who also has the experience and passion to create substantive and meaningful change for our country. For over 35 years, Senator Clinton has been an agent for change and I have no doubt she is now our best hope for the future. I know that she has the experience, strength and vision to successfully lead the country in a new, and better, direction.

PC: What do you feel she has done for the enhancement of the South Asian demographic in the US?

SRD: As it relates to the Indian-American community, both Hillary, as a Senator, and Bill Clinton, as President, have been vocal and active supporters of creating a real partnership between India and the United States. In fact, Senator Clinton co-founded and became co-chair of the Senate India Caucus. With this history of dedication, I believe strongly that Senator Clinton would be the most effective of any of the Presidential candidates, Democrat or Republican, in continuing to build an enduring relationship with India. On a more "local" level, Hillary has been an active proponent of increasing the number of H-1B visas, a



key issue for many Indian-Americans.

PC: What are your final thoughts?

SRD: Overarching all of this, I hope to be a model for those who believe that they are too busy to become politically involved-and to show that every person can make a difference. I believe that the Indo-American community, though dramatically successful in so many different realms in the United States, has not fully embraced the political process and the opportunities it can provide for us and, more importantly, our children. We come from the most populous democracy in the world, to the country with arguably the greatest democracy in the world. I hope to do my small part in helping to bridge these two democracies and invigorate the Indo-American community to become increasingly involved and devoted to the political process.

For more info on IWL or to contact Shefali, please visit induswomenleaders.org.

What are you doing to expand our Culture? **E-mail us** to let us know.