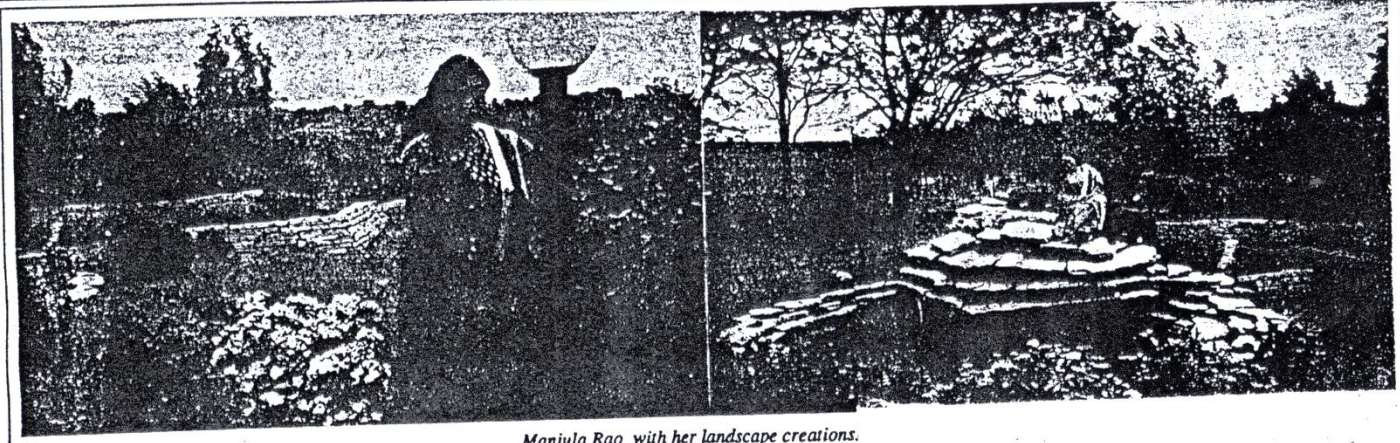


## Community Front



Manjula Rao with her landscape creations.

INDIA TRIBUNE-July 5, 1997

Article by -J.V. Lakshman Rao

Manjula Rao-  
'a landscape architect with  
miracle touch'

(This is the first article as soon as  
Manjula started her position as a  
landscape professional in Chicago,  
Illinois)

### Manjula Rao - a landscape architect with miracle touch

by J. V. Lakshmana Rao  
Chicago: She has a touch of magic. Anything that she touches becomes colourful – green, red, yellow, white, purple .... She can make a barren stretch of land into a lush green blooming fairyland in a couple of weeks.

Landscapeing is a passion with Manjula Rao Juluri of Hyderabad.

This famous award-winning landscape architect bagged the lucrative post of Director, Marketing/Design with Kotnour's Landscape and Nursery, a Chicago-based registered landscape architecture firm.

Manjula has not come to the US in search of a job. She was quite well off with her profession in India. She came to the US to be present at her son's graduation ceremony at an engineering college. As she was surfing through the Internet, her attention was drawn to an advertisement of Kotnour's Landscape and Nursery. She applied for the post. Within days, she got an interview call and she was offered the job.

Hardly. All this happened within

15 days of her landing in the US.

"It is a miracle. It is yet another blessing of the Goddess, Vaishnovodevi," she said with a sparkle in her eyes. She is a staunch believer of Vaishnovodevi, because she did landscapeing design for the hilly and rocky terrain on the path between Jammu and Vaishnovodevi temple in Katra.

Speaking to India Tribune, Manjula, who is full of vigour and enthusiasm, narrated her work, achievements, accomplishments, the awards she won and the encouragement she got from her husband.

Married when she was still in her teens, she had all the time because her two sons grew up and went to college even before she entered her late thirties.

This freedom gave her a lot of time to pursue her education doing a couple of courses in landscapeing in Holland and the US, before she became an established professional. She started her own firm called "Foliage & Flowers, which has an annual turnover of

Rs. 60 lakh.

As a child, she had a passion for Indian classical dances and Urdu poetry. She is the eldest among five sisters and a brother. Her geologist father encouraged her to pursue these two passions. But her husband, Jagannath Rao, who is the former vice-president of Stork Pumps, has been even very practical. He said one can be a dancer upto a certain age, but as a landscape architect one can excel all through the life.

Though her artistic mind did not agree to switch over to this new field, she relented and she said she is really thankful to her husband for all the fame and name she has achieved now.

It was in 1982, she initially started a plant boutique and grew plants at home and supplied flowers and plants to parties for decoration. The real encouragement came in 1987, when she met V.R. Deenadayalu, the then chairman of Madras Refineries. From then on there was no stopping in climbing her career ladder.

Among the major landscapeing

works she executed were for Madras Refinery, South Asian Federation Games village, Hindustan Teleprinters, Bank of America, Indian Bank, Indian Additives (a subsidiary of a US-based Chevron Chemical Company), Tamil Nadu Housing Board, Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Madras Metropolitan Development Authority, noted Kattipara traffic island where Nehru statue was inaugurated by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and the Vaishnovodevi temple route.

She designed more than 200 landscapes and several of them were shown on the television for their visual excellence. She won the best landscape designers award recently.

She said: "Landscapeing is not just laying gardens. Like a painter, who tries to use colours on a canvas to create a work of art, landscapeing is an art of creativity. One gets ideas while one is on job."

Now, her job with Kotnour's has opened up unlimited opportunities to express herself in this vast country of varied climates

and soils. She is not new to the US because she did a couple of landscapeing courses here. Manjula toured the US. She is confident, she can put her vast experience in her profession to good use here.

Her company, Kotnour's Landscape and Nursery, believes landscapeing is an art. It is an expression of human skill that contrasts and enhances the beauty of nature.

Enjoyment, energy, imagination, flexibility, understanding, knowledge, commitment, professionalism, and personal ethics are the foundations upon which Kotnour's has built its design approach to each and every project it has executed.

With the creativity and skills of Manjula, they are now confident that they can take up landscapeing work all over the US.

For more information, please call Manjula Rao Juluri, director, marketing/design.