



The Main door

"The door is a piece of furniture which acts as a barrier by which an entry is closed and opened."

Such is the significance of the door that every definition seems bland and inadequate. Decorating with rangoli and mango leaves toran for welcoming the gods or hanging an ash gourd for keeping away the evil spirits, in every tradition many customs have evolved from the associations people have with the main door. The *gadapa*, *dehleez*, or threshold of the vernacular tradition is a physical manifestation of the inherent symbolism associated with the entrance door. It may be seen as an articulation of the very act of coming in or going out. Also, deterring rodents and pests

from entering from the clearance below the door shutter.

In vastu, the entrance of a house is considered to be the most powerful amongst the *padam* (modules) of a building. It is said to be deeply associated with the fortunes and tragedies of a family. The north and east are the most favourable directions for locating the entrance. Also referring to climatology, since the sun is harshest in the west and south directions it makes sense not to have the main entrance facing those directions in a tropical country such as ours.

The standard dimensions of a door are 3'6" x 7'0". The height is derived from the measures of an average male, standing with his arm extended upwards. The

width is derived from the optimum space required by two persons to pass through at the simultaneously. While dimensioning, knowing the 'why?' is as important as knowing the 'what?' for making deviations from the conventions to suit your specific needs.

Fine-tuning is what makes the difference between an ordinary and an extra-ordinary composition. With the door having the responsibility of portraying the personality of the owner, introducing the interiors as well as blending with the surroundings every 'nut' has a role to play (pun not intended). Over-powering the visitor with its huge size, or meekly hinting its presence is the prerogative of the owner. Having ornate wrought iron hinges inspired by Mexican designs or carved wooden members derived from traditional Keralite designs are some of the options. A creeper crawling over the doorframe, a terracotta idol sitting on one side or a dash of colour lent by *haldi* and *kum-kum* on the threshold all speak about the owner's passions, interests and beliefs.

A shutter, a frame and a threshold and possibilities-immense, give you ample scope to express individuality. The right materials can go far in making the desired impression. Teakwood for the shutters and frame, brass and steel for hardware, are the materials generally preferred. Glass (clear or textured) can also be



used since it allows one to see the person outside but adequate measures should be taken to ensure safety.

Pondering over the design of a door and its effect on the rest of the house one agrees, that truly "God is in the details."

*Quote by Mies van der Rohe, an architect noted for his passion for detail.



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