

2.

November 1909. Vijayalakshmi was full term. I wasn't yet complete. Nanabhai decided to move into this new house. Ichchharam was opposed to the idea. If something unwarranted happens in the delivery it might become a blot on the house. Yet Vijayalakshmi delivered in the new house within a week and Tara was born on 11 November 1909.

Since Mashruwalas started living in 1909 it should be considered my birth year too.

In 1909 Akola was in Berar (बेळगांव) province of Nizam state. 7th Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan was the ruler but under the British rule. The Viceroy of India was Minto. Heads of Britain were King Edward VII and prime minister H H Asquith.

In 1909 Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was sentenced in sedition case to Mandalay. Hutatma Madanlal Dhingra was hanged for assassination of Curzon Wylie. Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj and freedom fighter Aruna Asaf Ali were born in this year. The year also saw that for the first time a telegram could circumnavigate around the world. A telegram was an important way of communication in the 20th century. Now, however, it is resting in peace.

Ironically in my birth year two important things happened which became related to my *raison d'être*. First one was Minto-Morley reforms or Indian Councils Act 1909 which gave limited access to Indians in governance of India. And second, Mahatma Gandhi wrote a book called *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule*.

Nanabhai's construction activity continued. Outside the house, towards the south, he built a set of toilets and a bathroom. He also built a soak-pit between the house and bathroom.

Toilets were elevated platforms with a large hole. Under the hole a bucket was kept to collect the faecal waste. The buckets were cleaned by the lowly persons of those days.

Bathroom had several drums. There was no piped water. There were specialist people called *Bhisti* who would fill all the water storage.

Nanabhai also built a magical implement. On the south wall of the bathroom there was a half-funnel at about 4ft level. At the half that level was a spout under which a bucket was kept. Now, if one poured cold water in the funnel, hot water came out from the spout. Actually behind the wall was a furnace and the spout was connected to the upper level of the water.

There was no town drainage and waste water went into soak-pit.

Akola, the new town plan, was sparsely populated. Towards the north, Kalal ki Chawl, the court, and the station. There was such a huge ground in front where mini or micro cyclones were formed and children would chase them. They also brought lots of soil in the house. On the east

were Arya Samaj and Alliance Church (1889). To the south was the Civil Hospital. And to the west were old Mashruwala bungalow and Municipality. The main road (now Gandhi Road) was populated with small houses. The road dipped to a low level iron truss bridge over river Morna and over to the old town.