



Citylogue

SCM '93-'94



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THE EDITORIAL

For years now, attempts have been made to define Bombay, to locate what its image is, if not itself. If anyone had succeeded in this, it would have been incomplete. The image has changed vastly from the most beautiful natural harbour in the world that western travellers came to, and the fast-paced glamour city as it is perceived today.

The unique identity of Bombay which confounds chroniclers, is perhaps due to the fact that Bombay does not have its origins in a 'historical' past, but in pure trade.

A port city, a harbour, a trade point. All sorts of people flocked to it. In fact by the time Bombay became the lodestone for people within the country, it had already become home for foreigners from Africa and Portugal.

It was the British who first realised the importance of the city which then grew to rival Delhi and Calcutta in politics and culture, but more significantly, in economic and social matters.

With economics becoming a premium point, caste barriers began - not to disappear - but to fade. Class barriers came into being but they could be changed within one lifetime. The state of flux within the city continued.

Thus the city belongs to a people whose cultural origins though distinct, have now interfused, to make colours which are distinguishable and yet whole.

While we do not attempt to define a city as amorphous as Bombay, we are trying to know it. Thus, we coined 'CITYLOGUE'. We are trying to understand it, by talking about it, by having a discourse. CITYLOGUE was basically inspired by the word 'dialogue' which really means conversation - an exchange of words, and thus interaction between people. Finally we have echoes of a city 'log' - a record of events, changes, people, in the city. A charting of jottings along the course that we, and the city have travelled.

Finally, we try and get an insight into the people who belong so integrally to the city, and make it what it is. It becomes a fascinating circle of influences on influences, so that now, a people emerge, because the city has made them so. The city can do this, because its people have made it so.

CITY SCAPE

A sojourn through time and space.

The city of Bombay was originally a collection of seven swampy islands inhabited by the Kolis, a fishing tribe. Bombay, as we know it, has been born out of a history 350 years old. These islands came into the hands of the British East India Company in 1665, who rented it from the Portuguese for the princely sum of ten pounds in gold. Taking advantage of the area's natural harbours they set up a trading factory and made big profits. The E.I.C. eventually fortified factories and built a fort in South Bombay, on the eastern waterfront. This area, today known as Fort, was the core of the city, until a fire in the 19th century destroyed a large part of it. This forced native settlements to move into the peripheries of the Fort. Today, Bombay's ever expanding city limits are bursting with a population of over 12 million people. That is upto 16,432 people per square kilometer.

During this long period of history, Bombay has been known by many different names. Some say the city derived its name from the Goddess Mumba Devi, traditionally worshipped by the Kolis. Others say the British anglicised the word "Bom Bahia", Portuguese for "beautiful bay", to Bombay. "A precious stone set in the silver sea, sparkling in the sunshine and glorious in the monsoon."

Crowded, busy, polluted and expensive. Yet, it does not prevent the migration of

300 families a day to their 'city of dreams'. The sea which laps Bombay's shores is intrinsic to the city's search for more land. Areas like Churchgate, Versova, Govandi, Cuffe Parade, Bandra Reclamation, are all built on land that was once a part of the continental shelf of the western coast. The city can grow only northwards, with the main business centres remaining in South Bombay.

There are only two major road networks, both totally linear, creating bottlenecks at the outskirts of the city, where traffic congestion and pollution have reached unbearable levels.

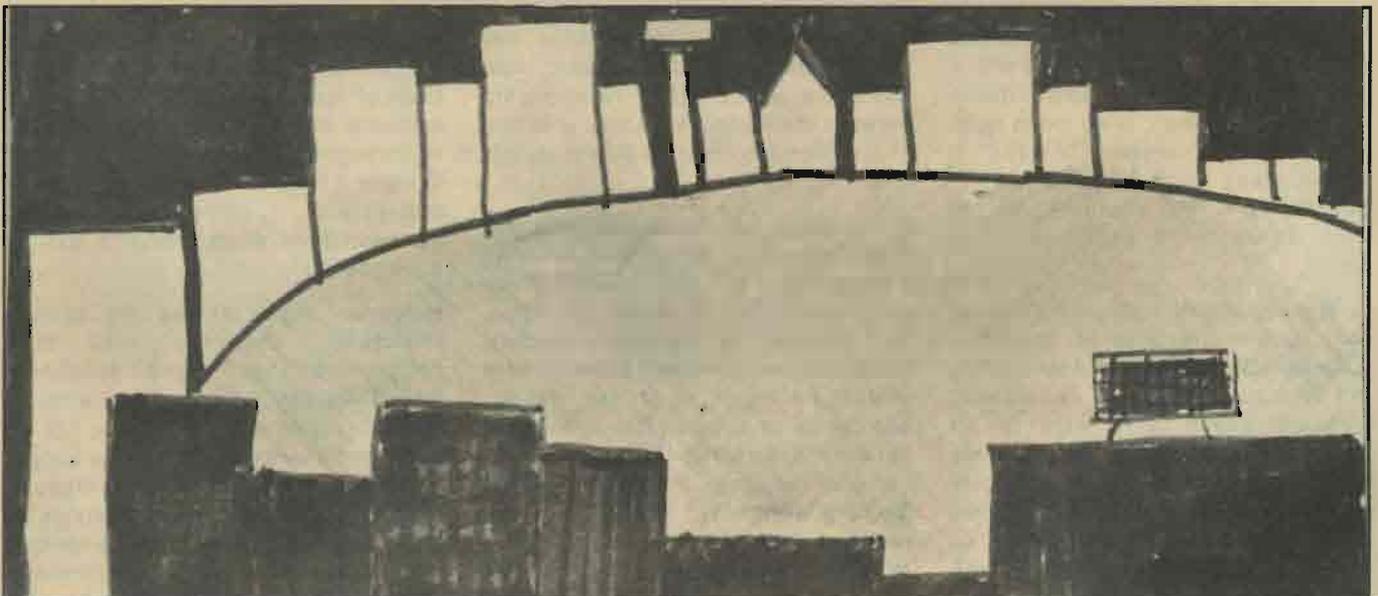
Where do over twelve million people live? Half of Bombay's population lives in hutments with makeshift roofs which let in the sun, wind and rain. There are no windows, just rows and rows of tiny huts with families of six to ten in each, separated by sewage drains. Dharavi, the largest slum in Asia, is in Bombay.

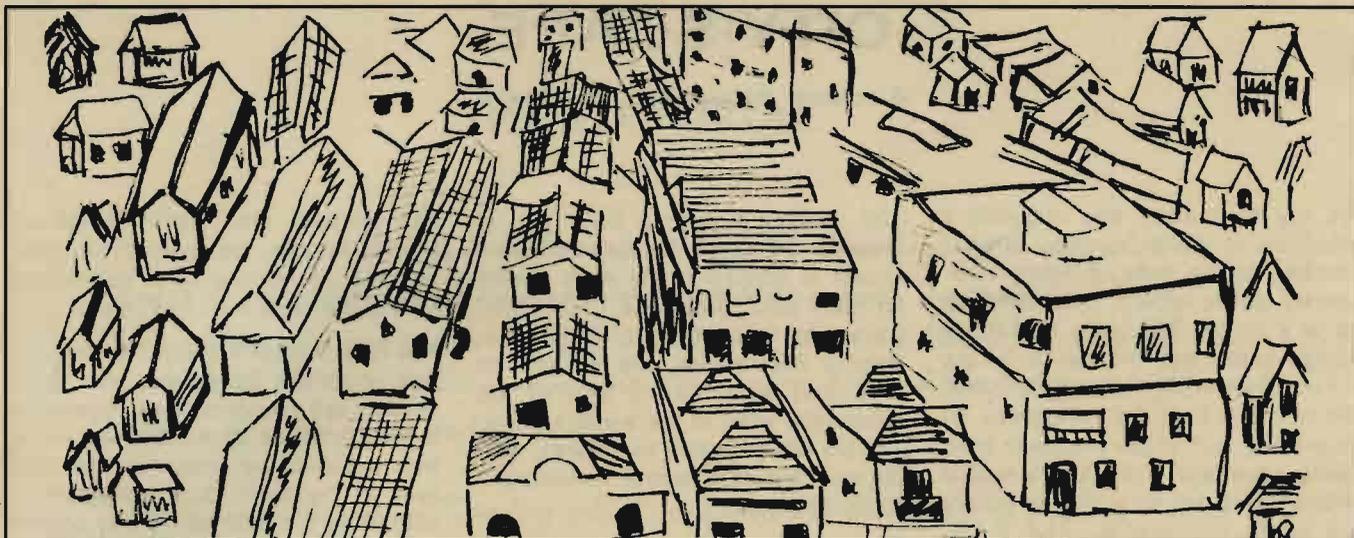
Even for the middle and the upper classes, housing is a problem. One bedroom flats shared by six to seven persons is a common phenomenon. Mr. Gomasia, a former resident of Pedder Road, sold his one bedroom flat and moved to Andheri as his three daughters grew up and the space proved insufficient. "Now", he says, "the girls spend a minimum of three and a half to four hours commuting to and from college everyday". The skyrocketing prices in 'town' due to the lack of space

has forced the city's mammoth population to move into satellite suburbs, increasing their commuting time to the city's business centre.

The local transport system is almost a way of life for Bombayites. On trains vendors sell everything from vegetables to kitchen knives. Says Laya, who works with a publishing house in Fort, and lives in Dombivili, "half my dinner is cooked on the train on my way home." If you take a 360 degree turn at any given point, there will be at least a hundred people within your vision. Jostled and pushed in crowded buses and trains, the sea of humanity rolls on.

There are few pockets of green on this island city. "I have no time to smell the flowers on the way." says Anjali, a student of a city college. What flowers? They are confined to pots atop high rise apartments, or are closed inside small parks. All this has led to the festering claustrophobia and a number of psychosomatic problems in the minds of Bombay's citizens. Although subdued and often invisible from the surface, many of the city's elderly people get lonely because of the lack of public parks and clubs. No matter what, filthy beaches with the stench of stagnant sea water cannot compensate for brisk activity in clean, bright air. Little school children suffer because they have no space to play in, no playgrounds and parks. Their recreation is restricted to the parking lots and streets of the





matchbox structures that Bombayites call home.

Yet everywhere, there is an ingenuity in the use of limited space. A small street vendor can provide all that any kitchen needs from masalas to brooms. Balconies in Versova shelter a dazzling variety of plants that would do a garden proud in Nasik. The streets have trained more national level cricketers than all the playing grounds in the rest of the country.

Multifunctional rooms are a way of life here. In a way, interior design is as much an art as it is a booming business. Offices are crammed into decrepit buildings, but yet the pace of work is frenetic.

Yet, for how long can this go on. It is only a matter of time before traffic on the streets will no longer move. Over a hundred cars are added to the roads daily. In the not too distant future it will be impossible to breathe on the roads

without a gas mask. Schools, hospitals, trains, offices are already over crowded. Unless drastic steps are taken essential services will have to be renamed impossible services.

Yet, Bombayites will exchange this place for no other. The land retains its magic.

DEVIKA BAHL
MAYA MIRCHANDANI
AINDRI MURUGESAN

OF GHUNGROOS AND GRACE

Traditional and Modern dancers of Bombay.

If music is a medium of expression, then it is dance that interprets it for us. Classical dance styles emerge, rooted in the place they are born, each with a theme in the time it was created. Indian Classical dance then, is so much more than mere movement. Instead it encompasses socio-cultural norms, religious beliefs, customs, all of which are steeped in traditional Indian culture.

As Bombay moves progressively away from such a lifestyle, so does the audience for this form of dance. They find it more difficult to understand Classical dance in its entirety. Of course, it is easy to appreciate agile footwork, a dancer's grace or the beauty of her costume. Yet, few have the time to reflect on her 'abhinaya', or expression, that complements the

technique to make the performance complete. To understand a 'padam' or item, within Bharat Natyam dance, one has to understand Carnatic music, must know the mythological relationship between the Gods the 'padam' is talking of and of course, must be able to identify 'taal' or rhythm.

Every artiste has found their own way of dealing with an audience and building a rapport during a performance. Some have innovatively adapted their styles. "It is discouraging to dance to an empty auditorium but you don't have to" says Jhelum Paranjpe, an Odissi dancer. She continues to train extensively under her guru, Kelucharan Mahapatra. Yet in her performances she tries to include modern elements. While her base remains Odissi, her themes include evolution and 'maya' or illusion. She

has also choreographed dances. Keka Sinha, a Kathak dancer agrees, "at least people understand the music since it is in Hindi. Still we can rarely perform the kinds of items we want to. The Bombay audience doesn't have the patience to sit through a serious recital. We have to make it lighter and easier for them to understand. I often give lecture demonstrations when I have a foreign audience".

However, those of the old school completely disagree with this compromise. Says Protima Chaudhary, Bharat Natyam dancer, "It is artistes who can preserve a dance form, not an audience. If we choose to pollute a style then it is our responsibility, not theirs." Nowadays dancers depend on critics to promote them. "The only things we can do is leave our bio-datas with various

organisations. Then, we can only wait to be discovered."

For the audience to learn and actually be able to discern the dance form for themselves, they must be exposed to the dance form constantly. Dance experts have suggested that the only way to do this is to inculcate an interest in the art from a very young age. "By the time they are 14-15, atleast they have a base in dancing. From then on the academic pressures become greater", says Protima Chaudhary. Most dancers agree that these dance classes are a crucial part of their income. As opposed to concerts these are a more regular source.

Western dance classes are tremendously popular. Shiamak Davar, Farida Peddar and Arshad Warsi who teach jazz ballet, have 30-40 students per class. The reason for this could be the emphasis on fitness and health. Shiamak's classes have students of all ages. They may not all become great dancers but it is important that they have funds and stay fit. According to Shayaan, student of jazz ballet, "Dance doesn't have to be an intense serious affair. Everyone is so hassled with their own life that they need some light entertainment also."

The Bombay youth have been exposed primarily to Western dance. Whether it is in the form of entertainment in discos or jazz ballet class or even watching Broadway type musicals like "Evita" or



"Cats". Says Vikas, a student of St. Xaviers College, "I think MTV stands for modernism. It keeps us in touch with the rest of the world." This is obviously easier for them to identify with and is much more glamorous. In comparison, dance that depicts age old traditions and beliefs which are unique only to India are almost outdated in today's global

trend. Western dance shows, usually have full audiences. Such shows have little trouble raising money. Sponsors realise that they are a fairly reliable investment.

There are some who have used the universality of the language of dance. They have created a form which is reflective of this dynamic nature of Bombay. The style fuses the classical with the modern without compromising one for the others. Artistes like Astad Deboo or Asha Kurlawala do this through modern dance. Within the range of Indian dance forms 'Chauu' or 'Kathakali' retain their traditional base, yet their highly stylised form is more modern than any newer style. The audience for this kind of dance is also growing.

The Bombayite remains undecided about the type of dance which is more appealing. A form that gives the audience a sense of moving ahead but is not divorced from its roots seems to be our best bet. After all that is what life in Bombay stands for, combining the old and new, East and West to form a balance which is distinctive to the city.

PEREENA COLABAWALA
SUPARNA GUPTA
NAMEETA PREMKUMAR



Illustrations: Courtesy *Classical Dancers and Costumes of India* by Kay Ambrose



CHRONICLING BOMBAY

Bombay has been written about many a time and yet manages to defy all definition, each writer seeing the city in a different light.

"PRIMA IN INDIS
GATEWAY TO INDIA,
STAR OF THE EAST,
WITH HER FACE TO THE WEST."



Bombay, endlessly alluring yet bound by time. In her realm the modern sprawling slums dwell amicably with ancient architectural delights. The heart of the city vibrates with an infectious excitement. It seems to offer endless desires and opportunities.

Those who live in the city cannot but be affected by it. Bombay disturbs their equilibrium but not always favourably. Writers and Poets who have made the city their home have sketched portraits that reflect the time, her spirit and their feelings about the city.

Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay in 1865 and lived here till the age of seven. This was a time when the British empire in India was at its zenith after the quelling of the revolt of 1857.

"My first impression" wrote Kipling in 'Something of Myself' (1937), "is of day - break, light and colour and of golden and purple fruits at the level of my shoulder. This would be the memory of early morning walks to the Bombay fruit market with my Ayah..."

He recalled the city's lush greenery, "Our evening walks were by the sea in the shadow of palm groves which, I think were called the Mahim Woods. When the wind blew, the great nuts would tumble and we fled... to the safety of the open."

Salman Rushdie born in Bombay in 1947, writes about the city nearly a hundred years after Kipling's childhood, in his celebrated novel "Midnight's Children".

Mumbadevi, the goddess from which the city got the name had been replaced by the "Elephant headed Ganesh" in the "Peoples' affections". He writes about "Ganpati Baba" who has his day "Ganesh Chaturthi", when huge processions are "taken out and marched to Chowpatty bearing plaster effigies of the God which they hurl into the sea."

He laments the displacement of Bombay's original inhabitants, the 'Koli fisherfolk' squashed now into a tiny

village in the thumb of the handlike peninsula, they have admittedly given their name to district - Colaba.... A fort, and afterwards a city, took their land, pile drivers stole (tetrapods would steal) pieces of their sea. But there are still Arab dhows spreading their sails against the sunset.. In August 1947, the British having ended their dominion of fishing nets, coconuts, rice and Mumbadevi were about to depart themselves."

Adil Jussawala, Poet and Columist was born and schooled in the city. In his poem 'Sea Breeze, Bombay' (Missing Person 1976) he sees Bombay as a harbour for refugees who find their haven in the city and rebuild their lives in it.

"Partition's people stitched
Shrouds from a flag, gentlemen
scissored Sind..
An open people, fraying across the cut
country,
reknotted themselves on this island."

Yet these refugees are part of the island culture, not concerned about its history and perennially a bit unsettled.

"Communities tear and re-form, and still,
a breeze,
Cooling our garrulous evenings,
investigates nothing,
Ruffles no tempers, uncovers no root.

And settles no one adrift of the mainland's histories."

Nissim Ezekiel who spent his childhood in Byculla, a predominantly Jewish locality made a conscious decision to keep the city his base. In spite of his attachment to it, he recognises its stark ugliness and its stunting effect on the individual in "Island".

"Unsuitable for song as well as sense
the island flowers into slums
and skyscrapers, reflecting
precisely the growth of my mind.
I am here to find my way in it..."

Among contemporary writers, socialist, novelist and columnist Shobha De has made Bombay the venue of all her tall

tales. Her impressions of Bombay are those that one might perceive from a South Bombay skyscraper or an air-conditioned car. Though she mentions in passing "Memories of the Dadar chawl" of going to the Virgin Mary at Mahim Chrch...", her Bombay, reflects more of "going to her favourite jeweller Tribhovandas & visiting their new, ritzy, Arab trap showroom in the Oberoi Hotel." (excerpts from her novel "Starry Nights").

In direct contrast to this aerial view of Bombay is novelist Ashok Banker. Banker sees himself as the chronicler of contemporary urban Bombay life in his books. He says that if there are 200 books to be written about Bombay, he wants to write 50 of them. He writes about specific areas making them easily identifiable. An example of his inclusion of detail is "they could catch the bus to Grant Road station, No.155 comes by every 20 minutes : Rs.1.50 for both of them (this is about 2 main characters in his first novel "Vertigo").

Ashok Banker sees Bombay as a city that offers anonymity that is in dark contrast with the cold distant namelessness of life in other cities. Bombay he feels is "very warm and caring". At the same time he feels Bombay offers you the opportunity to lose yourself in superficial talk, and thus avoids socialising saying he "prefers to live life rather than talk about it."

Bombay's dynamism is clearly visible in the way she has been written about. From Kipling's lush tropical city to Banker's city of hustle bustle and grime, Bombay's cultural diversity and even changing facades offer endless opportunities for interpretation.

Every page written in a mutable reality. Now immortalised now distorted, Bombay, stands kaleidoscopic, 'really' unreal.

PRIYANKA KAKODKAR
ANUPAMA KATAKAM
MINOTI MAKIM

THE MUSIC MAKERS OF BOMBAY

*Do the city and its music makers harmonise in melody?
We delve into the depths of notes and chords to discover....*

An ear turned to varied and exciting sounds and sensations. Breakers against rocks. Children yelling and laughing. Whistles, and horns blowing. Notes of music flying. Bombay - a cauldron of sounds. Bombay - the Mecca for most music makers of our country. The city holds a certain opportunity and electricity which other cities lack. It attracts young talent, and those wishing to make a career in music.

Along with an active theatre culture, Bombay has a very active music culture. Various choirs, music groups and individual singers exist and thrive in the city. Regular performances and shows are held and they never fail to attract ever widening audiences.

music festivals - the I.M.G. Music Festival organised by the students of St. Xavier's College. However, a constant complaint is that the I.M.G. does not give enough exposure to young singers who are not yet established. Nevertheless, the heartening thing is that there is definitely a good balance between Western and Indian music.

Maharashtra has always had a rich history of music and has contributed to the entire gamut from classical to light classical music. It has produced musical greats like Pandit Wamanrao Sadulekar, Parveen Sultana, Lata Mangeshkar and others.

It was in Bombay that singing Western songs as a profession was encouraged

successful career in music would gravitate towards an organised infrastructure.

If one walks down the streets of Mahalaxmi, beggars, godmen, lepers are vying for charity, but what really catches the attention are the bhajans playing in the background which are extremely unusual - they are prayers swinging to the latest Hindi film songs - such is the dominance and the influence of Hindi film music in Bombay. However, this does not hamper the demand and appreciation of other kinds of music, be it Indian or Western, both pop or classical. At the semi-classical level, both theatre and music merge in shows like 'Evita' or 'Butterflies Are Free'. At the classical level, several choirs and groups like the Bombay Chamber Orchestra exist and thrive in the city.

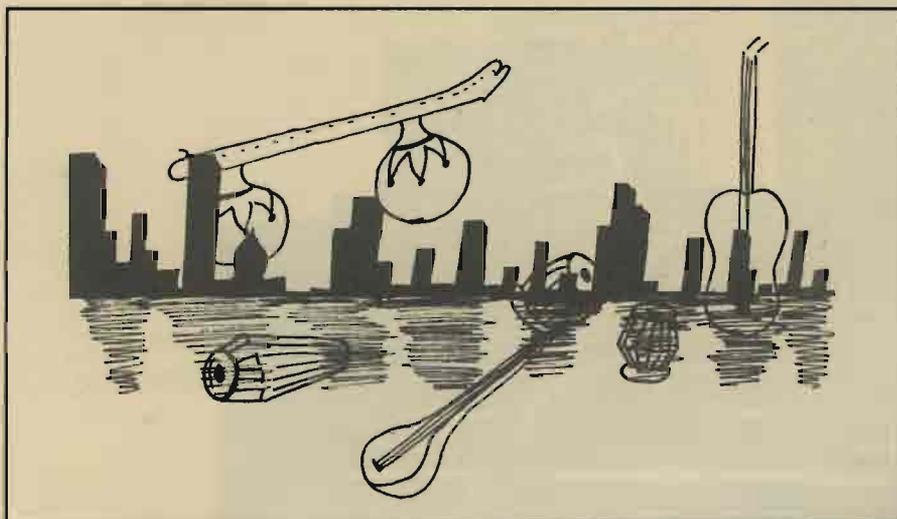
Sharon Prabhakar, feels that Bombay is 'spoilt' - it is very used to good music. She calls Bombay a 'Violin' - "Whatever you do it has to be the best. It is very discerning. The rest of the country likes 'volume' and 'formula' and the 'entire shabang.' Delhi is steeped in rhythm and likes 'tamasha'." Jagjit Singh agrees with this and he prefers to call Delhi a 'dhol' because of its love for rhythm and the participative reaction it evokes. Bombay for him is like a 'Tanpura' because it warms up slowly.

He calls Calcutta a 'Sitar' as they (Calcuttans) are more tuned to instrumental music.

However, the disheartening aspect of the music scene is that Bombay does not have enough formal training institutions, compared to the number in Delhi or Calcutta. Singers tend to have 'personal Gurus' to train them. Almost all professional singers like Sharon Prabhakar and Anuradha Paudwal have 'individual Gurus'.

Today there is a realization that tradition and modernity run parallel and they are no longer inimical. The youth of Bombay is caught in a contradictory situation where they are hooked to MTV but still live in a fairly orthodox and traditional society. It remains to be seen how they adjust to such a life in the cosmopolitan city of Bombay.

**SALONE MEHTA
PRIYA SRIDHARAN**



The cultural scene gets underway in Bombay especially between the months of November and March, a season that is timed to coincide with the most pleasant part of the year. It is at this time that one sees regular 'mehfils' and 'baithaks' of singers and instrumentalists.

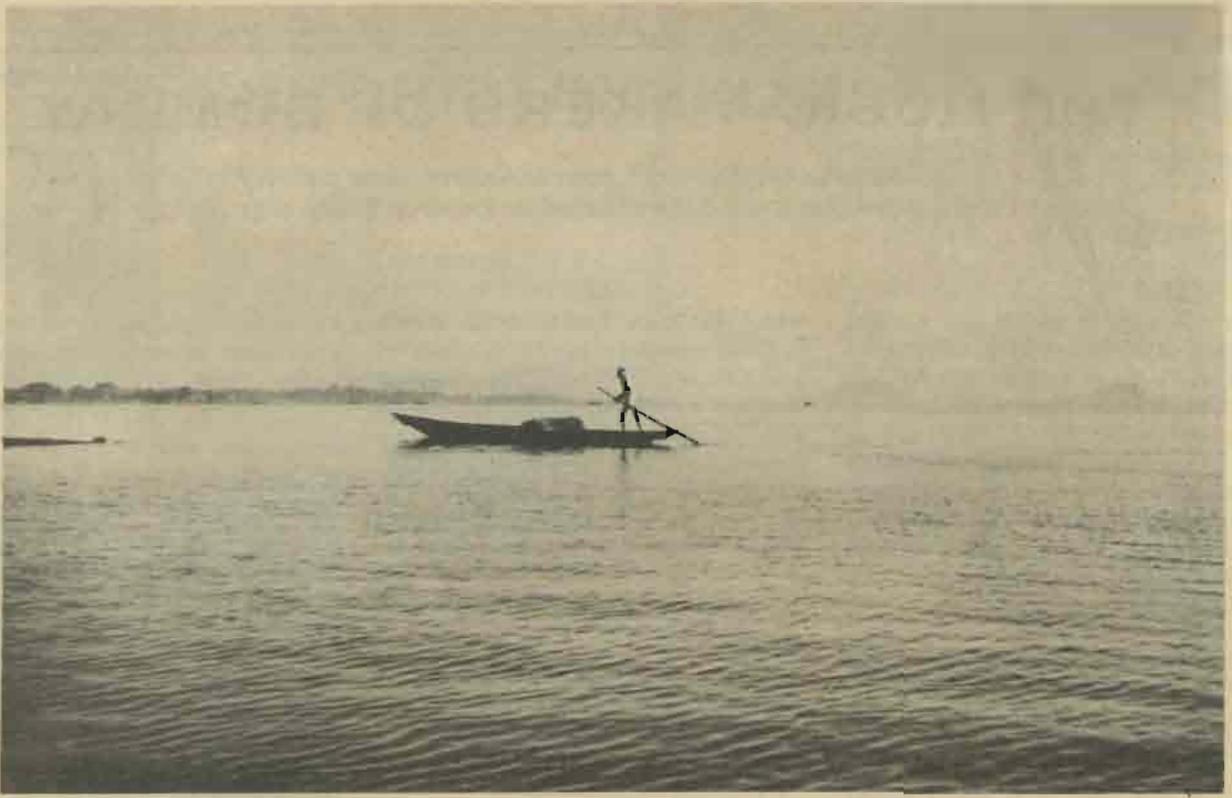
Bombay is considered to be one of the most westernised cities of India, which is true to a certain extent, but Indian classical music, both Hindustani and Carnatic is in safe hands here. The younger generation's fascination for 'Khayal' happily coincides with their love for computers and MTV.

Every year in January, Bombayites are treated to one of the most prestigious

and furthered. Western music singers like Sharon Prabhakar, Remo Fernandes and Alisha Chinai started their careers here. Even our rapper, Baba Sehgal had to leave his home town Delhi and come to Bombay and launch his career as a singer. The famous ghazal singer, Jagjit Singh, trained for 10 years at the Punjab D.A.V. College after which he moved to Bombay, as he perceived Bombay as "the only place to make music a career".

The infrastructure for music and recording is very advanced and well developed. Bombay is the industrial capital of India and most advertisements and jingles are recorded here. Some of the best studios for recording have been set up here. A singer who wants a

GAURI VIJ



ANUPAMA KATAKAM



MINOTI MAKIM



PEREENA COLABAWALLA



KIRTI KAUL



*"FROM STONES AND POETS YOU MAY KNOW,
NOTHING SO ACTIVE IS, AS THAT WHICH LEAST SEEMS SO."*

- FRANCIS THOMPSON

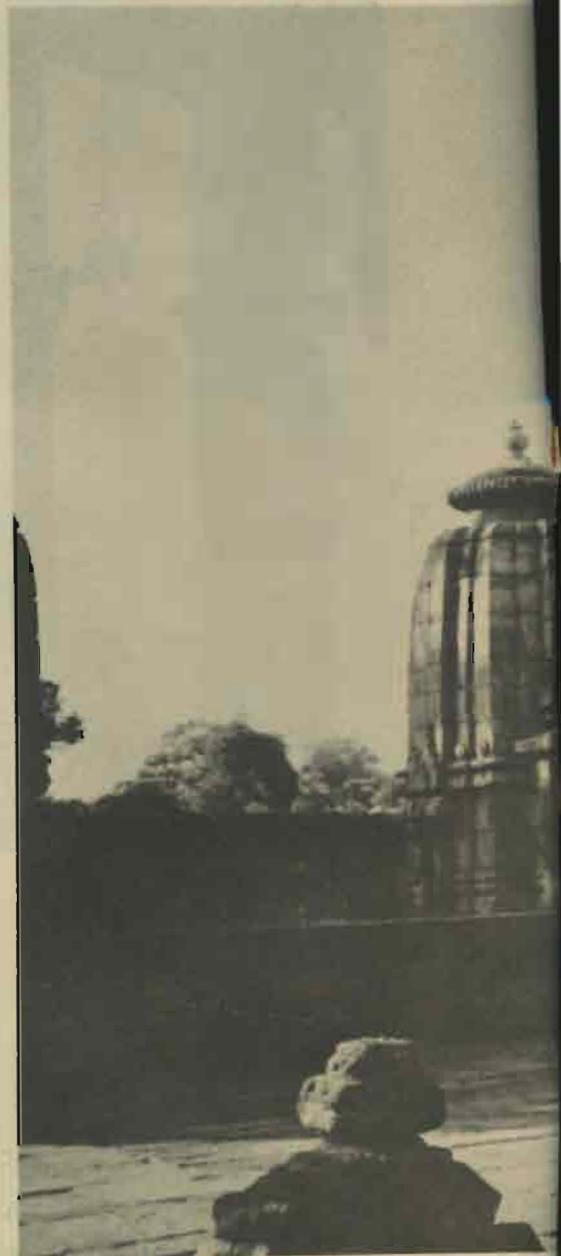
MINOTI MAKIM





DEVIKA BAHL

*"SO LONG AS MEN CAN BREATHE,
OR EYES CAN SEE,
SO LONG LIVES THIS, AND THIS
GIVES LIFE TO THEE."
- WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*

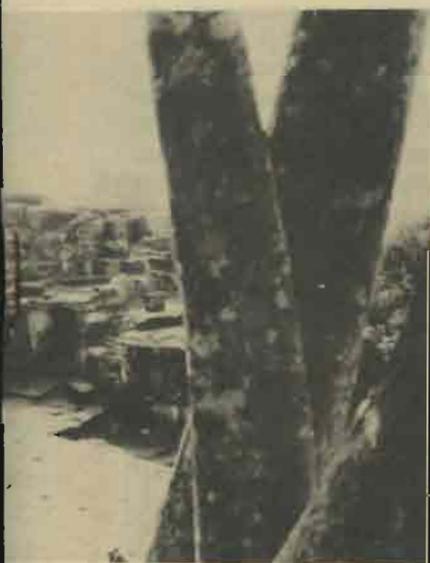


MANDIRA BEDI





DEVIKA BAHL

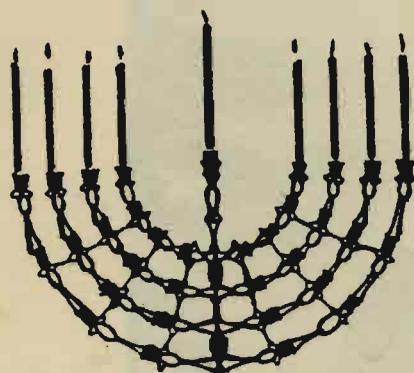


MANISHA SHARMA



SRABONEY GHOSE .

AGAINST THE GRAVE-DIGGERS



The Jews of Bombay : Legend and Fact.

"The Jews are not a historical people and not even an archaeological people, the Jews are a geological people with rifts and collapses and strata and fiery lava. Their history must be measured on a different scale."

- Yehuda Amichai : 'The Jews'

'Next year in Jerusalem', occurring at the end of many prayers, this ceremonial phrase hangs in the air like a scroll without a passport. Yet another year has been shuttered away for the Jews of Bombay. The light streams into the Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue on Forbes Street, through rosettes of cobalt blue stained glass.

At the far end of the hall filed away in a cabinet, the *Sepher Torah*¹ occupies its Ark. The caretaker opens the cabinet, exposes the scroll to a light that cannot decipher it.

The carpenters continue to faithfully varnish empty chairs disciplined into neat rows. Two huge Elijah chairs - used in the ritual of circumcision for Jewish male infants - sit squat, wrapped in dust covers, memorising exile and silence.

Deathwater and Departures

Posthumous-ity subscribes to blue veins of legends embroidered by refugees into citified traditions. From the city, the refugees look back through the subscription weaves of legends : " .. the ancestors of the Bene Israel left northern Palestine, possibly fleeing the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes around 175 B.C., or perhaps later, and were shipwrecked near the village of Navgaon on the Konkan coast of western India, 26 miles south of Bombay².

Eighty percent of India's Jewish population consists of the Bene Israel; the Baghdadi³ and the Cochin Jews⁴ account for the rest. The Bombay Jew is, invariably, Bene Israelite : in the mid-eighteenth century, the community began to move from the Konkan villages to the towns of Pen, Panvel, and Thana, and thence to Bombay. The colonial port-city had widened its occupational jaws to feed its ever-increasing need for skilled artisans and traders of all kinds.

Moreover, the British East India Company was expanding its native regimental force : many Jews found employment in its ranks.⁵

As the community took root in Bombay, the demands of communal life began to be articulated. In 1796, the city's first synagogue, the Sha'ar ha-Rahamim (Gate of Mercy) was built. It still stands in Samuel Street.

People "only remember what they want to... I don't mind lies (as far as)... the story is interesting."

So says one of the raconteurs in Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*. Origin myths compete, likewise, over the founding of the synagogue. The scholar Joan Roland observes that "during the Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84), a Bene Israel commandant in the British Native Infantry Regiment, Samuel Ezekiel Divekar, and several other Bene Israel soldiers were captured by Tippu Sultan's forces. Divekar vowed that if he were released, he would build a synagogue."⁶ Eventually, Divekar was released - the Sultan's mother being sympathetic to Jews, a People of the Book - and on his return, he constructed a synagogue in Bombay's Jewish quarter. The legend is current in other versions, too.

Stories can lie, but they can also borrow colours. From their Hindu and Muslim neighbours, the Bene Israel assimilated certain social customs "such as laws of inheritance, ceremonial food offerings and observance of certain marriage and funeral customs, but these did not affect Jewish ritual."⁷

Cut off from mainstream Judaism, they had gradually forgotten the Hebrew language, and most of the prayers. All that remained were dietary laws, circumcision, and the observance of the Sabbath. Their names, inevitably, were Indianised; they adopted the regional

dress and the Marathi tongue. Besides farming, they engaged in oil pressing, and in consequence, came to be known as the *shanwar telis* (Saturday oilman) in the Konkan hierarchy of occupational castes. They also internalised the Hindu caste system, as is evident from the subcaste - like relationship that obtains between the Gora (White), and the Kala (Black) Jews.⁸

The nineteenth century was a period of intense self-questioning for the community, as a result of pressures applied from three sources. Documentary evidence shows that the Bene Israel came under the influence of Cochin Jews, who published prayer books for the "lost tribe."⁹ Alongside them, worked Christian missionaries, in whose schools Hebrew was taught, as a step towards reclaiming the Jews from native life. These efforts coincide with those of the Baghdadi Jews, patronising merchants who condescended to share their supposedly superior religio-cultural wisdom with the "strayed lambs" of the Bene Israel.

The Baghdadis contributed as pioneers and catalysts, to the industrialisation of Bombay. Their fortunes, founded on the Gulf trade and the opium boom, sustained both speculation and philanthropy. Families like the Sassoons established the first of the large-scale textiles mills and fishing wharves. Against the grave-diggers of forgetting, these intrepid Baghdadis were compulsive commemorators : they live on, in the schools, hospitals, libraries, and orphanages which they endowed.

Towards the end of British rule, however, the list peters out, amidst closed mills, vanishing businesses, victims of a changing cultural economy. And in 1948, a millennial dream was realised, with the establishment of the state of Israel. At that time, the Bene

Israel in India numbered nearly 20,000; with systematic emigration from the newly independent India to the newly gained Israel, they have now dwindled to 5,000.¹⁰

The dust covers were pulled over the Elijah chairs. "Next year in Jerusalem" had become a reality; no longer an utopian threshold, phrased at the end of many prayers.

Decision and Dilemmas

Before it acquired a cartography, Israel, more fluid than solid, had been a liminal space¹¹ for its worshippers : a space of imagination, usually sacral or ritual, in which the participant, through the enactment of a prescribed form, literally enters a parallel area of consciousness. The imagined becomes the real, momentarily.

When liminality is transformed into actuality, however, "fact" loses its aura of fiction, settling into fact. At the Jacob Sassoon High School, 7 Jews out of a class of 25, would like to permanently settle in the promised land, Sharona Malekar, one of them says, "I know that if I ever go to Israel, I may not get a job or a home but I'd still like to go there."

Community life continues along traditional lines, for the Bene Israel combine the past with modernity; a rabbi comes from the USA to minister to spiritual needs; the AJDC (American Joint Distribution Committee) helps train the youth in various activities. The older generation has either adopted the middle ground of compromise, or a romantic futuristic vocabulary.

Salome Parikh¹², born of a Baghdadadi Jewish mother and Muslim father, is married to a Hindu. She feels that Indian Jews "ghettoise" into tight, self-sufficient groupings; yet goes on: "I feel bereft of community here. I did not know what it meant to be an Indian, quasi-Hindu, half-Indian, with a westernised education." Identification with Israel has helped her cope with an identity crisis: "When I went to Israel for the first time, in 1984, everything, every turning seemed familiar. The Bible stories are still alive there."

Benjamin Abraham, the Hebrew teacher at the same school, works for Israel's Education Department. In 1983, out of the 80 Jewish students he took to Israel, 35 chose to remain behind, there. When questioned about the state of constant belligerence surrounding Israel, the conscription of youth into the Army, he

replies in superlatives. "Honour" and "patriotism" are sufficient explanations for him; the conscription is "voluntary enrollment". We, as witnesses to his glorificatory enthusiasm, can only attempt to understand this compassionately as the expression of a racial psyche that has survived centuries of pogroms, culminating in the Holocaust.

People like Abraham have clearly set their sights on Israel; as a carrier of dreams, he categorically states that "Indian Jews don't mix citizenship with religion." But how do they acclimatise themselves to their new homeland? The scholar Shalva Weil reports that "the Bene Israel are consistently described as a 'closed' group who have not 'succeeded' in Israeli society either politically, economically or socially."¹³ Weil adduces factors of language as being responsible: the Bene Israel tend to withdraw into themselves, into a Marathi-speaking shell which leads them to largely ignore the Hebrew-speaking, Ashkenazi - dominated reality outside.



Sassoon Docks

For all those who have chosen to stay on in India, the poet Nissim Ezekiel speaks in a clear voice: "I have made my commitments now/This is one : to stay where I am/As others choose to give themselves/in some remote and backward place. My backward place is where I am."¹⁴

Then there is Elijah Jacob, dynamic Country Manager of the AJDC, who has, with Nissim Ezekiel, rejuvenated the organisation's agenda : youth camps, a free lending library, history trips, a kindergarten, unemployment doles, the care of the aged and infirm, are some of their contributions. "I prefer to remain here", says Jacob; "or else, there would be nobody to continue this unique Bombay Jewish culture." Believing that it is a greater effort to pre serve the ancient rituals in their home of the past two thousand years, rather than in Israel, where all the amenities of religion are accessible, Jacob says; "I would like a Sabbath candle wherever it is to light up all parts of the world."

1. Joan. G. Roland, *Jews in British India*, Pg. 268 : "Sepher Torah.... roll of parchment upon which the five books of Moses are written and from which the designated portion of the Torah is read in the synagogue."
2. *ibid.*, pg. 11
3. Elijah Jacob *et al* (eds), *Jewish Landmarks in Bombay City*, page 5 : "The Baghdadadi Jews... have a history of only about 150 years in India. They hailed from Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Afghanistan."
4. *ibid.*, page 5: "It is believed that the earliest Jews fleeing from their tormentors in Iberia and Middle East landed on the Malabar Coast and sought refuge in Cranganore about 1524."
5. See Joan, G. Roland, *op.cit.*, page 13.
6. *ibid*, page 275 - 276
7. *ibid.*, page 13.
8. *ibid.*, page 4 : "The so-called white Jews of each group considered the others "impure" because they were believed to descend from non-Jewish mothers or from those who had been converted."
9. Elijah Jacob *et al* (eds), *op cit.* page 5.
10. *ibid.*, page 5
11. As conceptualised by the sociologist Victor Turner and extended by other researchers.
12. Salome Parikh is the honorary director of 'Shalom', India-Israel Centre which is nurturing an information cell to create awareness about Israeli culture.
13. Shalva Weil (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel), *The State of Research into Bene Israel Indian Jews in The Indian Economic and Social History Review* Volume XVII, No.4. Weil writes of the 1980's, later observers report no particular change.
14. Nissim Ezekiel, Background Casually.

NANCY ADAJANIA
CYNTHIA RODRIGUES

Illustration on facing page:
Hanukkah or eight-branched
candelabra. The central one is
the *Shamash* or lighting candle.

Courtesy: *Shalom News*.

OF PEOPLES AND TIMES

The Chinese of Bombay - a vanishing gentility.

An unassuming lot. A hardworking people, merging into the varied cultural fabric of Bombay. These are the Chinese who for years have been an inseparable part of this city, sharing in its happiness as well as its tribulations.

Driven by the importunate restrictions of the communist regime in the 1920s, their exodus into India was not an easy one. Seeking refuge, they landed in the port city of Calcutta. Says Stephen Chow, who migrated here with his family when he was a child, "before I could realise what was happening, we had packed and left China never to return again."

The first lot of the Chinese arrived in Calcutta and transformed a part of it into "China Town" more precisely known as "Tengra". But, it was the safety and splendor of Bombay that lured them here. Jennie Leong who runs 'Elegant', a beauty parlour at Kemps Corner says, "I came to Bombay because it guaranteed me safety and economic stability."

The entry of the Chinese into the shoe markets of Bombay marked a new era for the shoe industry, while their paper decorations lent colour to many a home. They had complete mastery over their art. The art of shoe-making which was highly intricate and delicate was perfected by these craftsmen. Once they entered the markets of Bombay, they established a definite monopoly over others in the industry. In a short span of time, they established a reputation for themselves as master craftsmen.

In a new place, with new people with new purposes, the process of adjustment was undoubtedly a difficult one, but not unaccomplishable. For years now, this community has merged with the cultural diversity of Bombay and yet they have retained their own ethnic identity.

However, during the Indo-China war of 1961, the community was constantly under suspicion, and their loyalty to

India was put to test. It was tough coping with ostracism and poverty at the same time. Many of them were forced to close flourishing businesses and take to menial work. This was a mean blow to their spirit of self-reliance. British patronage was no more and since many of them could not recover from such a setback, they were forced to live in chawls. The feeling of being betrayed by the people they once trusted made them bitter and led to further segregation. This resulted in a certain confinement within professions they had mastered. Even today the Chinese have restricted themselves to the restaurant business, beauty parlours, dentistry, shoe making and paper decorations.

The master shoe makers were confined to Colaba. Lee and Co., Billy Bhang and Co. were names synonymous with British bureaucracy. Gone are the days when their shops were major centres of activity and would be perpetually over crowded. Now they bear a deserted look and the crowd that would once throng the shops are nowhere to be found. Lee Bhang, a shoe maker finds this reversal of both time and fortune almost unbelievable. His son, George Bhang, has taken to handicrafts to sustain a living. Says he, "Shoe making is now a dead art : I had to switch over in order to exist."

Many young people seeking better opportunities emigrated to Canada and the United States. "No wonder the community is fast shrinking in size" says Nelson Ling, an elderly Chinese gentleman, regretfully. Their number in Bombay has dropped from more than fifteen hundred in the 1960's, to less than a thousand now. Thomas Lee, who has lived in Bombay for nearly half a century looks upon this with disapproval and helplessness. "They have all gone away," he laments.

Of the remaining Chinese population, the more affluent amongst them have moved to modern and contemporary professions. The reason for such a partial shift, stems from the high risk risk involved in any kind of business in

comparison with the more lucrative professions like engineering, medicine or even computers.

However, the fascination for traditional jobs is still strong and relentlessly being pursued by some of them. Christopher Hou, a student, dreams of starting his own Chinese restaurant. He says, "My father wanted me to take up engineering, but my interest lay in catering."

Conditioned by their community, and the fear to take on a new field, has led to the propagation of old patent professions. However, this conditioning works both ways. People seem to forget their true identity and associate the Chinese merely with their work. Though they feel a sense of pride in this association, the feeling of losing one's identity is quite disturbing. Many a time they have resorted to measures like changing names. This speaks for the fact that though most of them are Buddhists, they have Christian names.

The Chinese temple at Mazgaon is the congregational centre for any auspicious occasions. Be it the new year, the moon festival or the 'Konein', the Chinese meet here without any restrictions of religion or caste. Even those converted to Christianity, meet here to seek blessings of 'Kwan Tai', the God of war and learning.

However, each year the jostling crowd at the temple has been dwindling. Many young people who go abroad do not come back. With these people gone, the intricacies of their art also seem to fade from the memory of the city and its people.

A community characterized by gentility as mirrored in their delicate arts is now on the brink of extinction.

DIVYA GOEL
KIRTI KAUL
CANDY MEHTA
GAURI SATHE

AN ECHO OF DIFFERENT SOUNDS

The Anglo-Indians - a community drowning in the aftermath of receding glory.

The setting, a Ballroom. Flowing satin gowns swirl to the strains of the 'Blue Danube'. Belgian chandeliers, the tinkle of champagne glasses, velvet gloves, serve dark skin bearers. A Wonderful evening for the whites only. But gradually the music fades, the sheen of satin is no more and what remains today is an empty hall, worn carpets and chipped furniture. The Anglo Indians, once so proud of being the only group of people the British could trust, are drowning in the aftermath of a receding glory.

The Anglo Indians, being products of mixed marriages between Indians and the British, were rejected both by the natives and the rulers, but at the same time served as a necessary link between them. Consequently, the Anglo Indians were used by the British as a buffer between the whites and the natives. In India, their services included the post and telegraph, railways, teaching in schools, nursing and jobs in the army.

Mr. Eddie Saxby, vice president of the Anglo Indian Association, Bombay, says that during the days of the Raj, jobs were easy to get. For about fifteen years after Independence, there used to be specially reserved jobs for the Anglo Indian Community. But from the '70s, the reservations were terminated and the Anglo Indians had to stand on their own feet. Several of India's Anglo Indian community left the country, due to their economic instability. Even today, with the proliferation of travel agencies all over the city promising 'job packages' abroad, many Anglo Indians are migrating.

Inevitably, some have stayed back. But here in India, as a community the Anglo Indians have been left behind in education says Mr. Saxby. Their complacency to an extent can be attributed to their colour and fluency in English. Thus most of the Anglos in the city continue in the profession as typist, clerks, school teachers, receptionists, and telephone operators.

Col. Proudfoot, the nominated M.L.A. who represents Anglo Indians in the Vidhan Sabha, broadly categorises Anglos as those who have stayed back



'NET' SURVIVAL

in India due to their love for the country and those who like to live here, but do not have the means to do so.

The latter though are fewer in number. As Proudfoot himself claims that he is 'an Anglo Indian physically and an Indian mentally.'

The Anglo Indian Association in Bombay operates from a members residence in Colaba. The Association realises that the burning need of the Anglo Indians today is for education. It brings out a bi-monthly bulletin called 'Bombay Branch News' which effectively communicates with the members of the Association who are four hundred in number. The editor who of the bulletin says that the main function of bulletin is to create an awareness amongst the community. The editorials encourages and motivate the youth of the community to go in for higher education. Mr. Saxby says that there are about 7,000 Anglo Indians in Bombay most of them concentrated in the Byculla area.

In 1947, Clement Attlee, the Prime minister of Britain had remarked 'Anglo Indians are the true orphans of the

world. England never had them, India never claimed them.' This may seem like a hyperbolic remark especially now, when the community has been assimilated into the Indian Culture along with remnants of colonial overtones. 'Most of the Anglo Indians in Bombay follow the same practices as other Roman Catholics', says Mr. Donald Middlecote, Manager of Shalimar Hotel, Kemps Corner, who is now married to a Goan.

For a decade or so after Independence, most Anglo Indians had the feeling of a shared cultural empathy with the British. But now, home to the Anglo Indians is India.

The empty space that was once a ballroom, has now been rented out and holds weddings and various cultural functions. The music has died out and glass slippers do not waltz any more: an echo of different sounds.

ANUPAMA GUMMARAJU
SANJUKTA GUPTA
DEEPAI YADAV.

NETTINGS OF STONE, FISH AND WATER.

The Fisherwomen of Bombay : their life and work

In the background of every 'chuck' as the blade cuts through the fish, the squelch of feet in puddles of mud and fish water, the cacophony of crowds, is the steady whirring of the knife against the stone. The stone with its rough texture steadily smoothens and sharpens the edge of the knife leaving it glistening, ready for use.

A visit to any fish market during peak hours is sure to have the knife-sharpener fixed to his seat, pedaling away vigorously, while the fisherwoman busies herself with her task. The sight of the knife against the stone epitomizes the life the fisherwoman.

Notorious for her capacity to shower abuses on anyone who dares incur her wrath, city life makes her thus. Each day her life completes tiresome lifecycles, fraught with troubles.

The fisherwomen are a unique facet of Bombay. The number of women involved in the trade are possibly greater than in any other city. They are very conspicuous by the way they talk, walk upright and confident as they steer by train clamorous crowds and take life as it comes each day. "They are so confident - you see that by the way they carry themselves", says Anuradha Kulkarni, a student who frequently travels by train.

"Aggressive", "petty", "unaccommodating" are only some of the terms that come to mind at the mention of these fisherwomen. People who travel

frequently by train will be only too glad to vent pent up emotions and take off on a long tirade on what these women are :

"They block your passage on the train and refuse to budge."

"The whole god damn place stinks - thanks to them."

"Last time one of them dropped water on me, she was entirely unapologetic and I stank the whole day."

"Completely avoidable?"

Evidently no one likes them much. On the other hand all admit that Bombay would not be the city it is without them. They are tougher businesswomen and better sales people than their male counterparts. The common man is in awe of them for their business acumen and for their ability to manage both home and hearth.

The fisherwomen have the other side of the story to tell. Each day begins at four in the morning. The women collect from Vashi, Ghatkopar and Worli, and meet at various docks. They visit three or more fish markets each day to select the desired quality and type of fish. They come by train to auction their wares, wheeling their large baskets of fish through the crowds.

The fights begin here. The bidding for fish is done each day, with no fixed price and no fixed supplier. Next comes the clamouring for a place in the tempo. The tempo charges Rs.5-10 per basket

or sack, to deliver the goods at the market. The fisherwomen feel it too exorbitant a fee; yet prefer it to the tensions of the trains.

The notorious train journey is only a very small part of their entire schedule. Most like to avoid it. Contrary to popular belief they are not all termagants, but take recourse to that stereotypical aggressive behaviour. "Paise hote to khud ka tempo leti", says Uma Mahadkar, sardonically.

Sales begin at 8.30 in the morning. The women sit at their licensed shack, from morning to noon, cutting, cleaning, and selling fish. Despite fish water dripping off coir sacks, the strong stench and the deaf cackle, the people are lured by pink pieces of prawn, silver coloured pomfret, black and white fan shaped clams and glistening 'surmai'. They wait patiently in the dirt for their purchase. Morning sales are followed by a brief afternoon break. They are united against anyone who dares defy them at the market place or on trains. Otherwise their ferocity is as much directed towards each other as towards outsiders. They have no trade union or co-operative and do not feel the need for one. As Asha Varlekar put it "Hum sub apne mun ka raja hai". The competition within the community and the tussle without, is one lone battle. It has however, not dampened their optimism.

The robust fisherwoman sitting on a low stool, wiping her bloodied hands on the 'coat' she has fitted around her knees, is proud to continue the family tradition, which is at least three generations old. She insists that neither distances nor disdain has deterred younger women from joining the profession. The teeming crowds at 6:00 in the morning at "Ferry Wharf" are ample proof of this.

From a day, to a life time, to generations, the life of the fisherwoman goes on, tireless and unchanging. The spark of life is sharpened daily as the cycle turns, whirring - slow, steady- in the background of every fish market, in every corner of Bombay.

GAURIKA CHAUDHARI
GAURI VIJ
ROZINA VIRANI



MAN, MONEY, MANIA

*A daily drama of frenzy, tension, high risk, despair, hope, quick decisions ...
and the theatre is not the stage...*

The super-structure soars high into the sky. Boisterous crowds queue up outside the lift to go to their cubby-hole offices inside the colossus. Breathless urgency seems to propel these people forward. Some don't even wait for the lift. They race up and down the stairs wearing a variety of expressions on their faces - intent, grim, sad and happy. The surging crowd speaks Gujarati, Hindi and English. Names like ACC, TELCO, TISCO are thrown around along with their prices. Together they form a discordant tune. Outside vendors sell pavbhaji, cold drinks, masala milk, share applications and cold beer too. The chaos outside is a prelude to the bedlam inside the building. Time spins here in the Bombay Stock Exchange where every minute is loaded with destiny. It is here that shares are traded and fortunes made. Strange that, till 1850, this business of trading shares used to be conducted under a sprawling banyan tree in front of the Town Hall, which is now Horniman Circle.

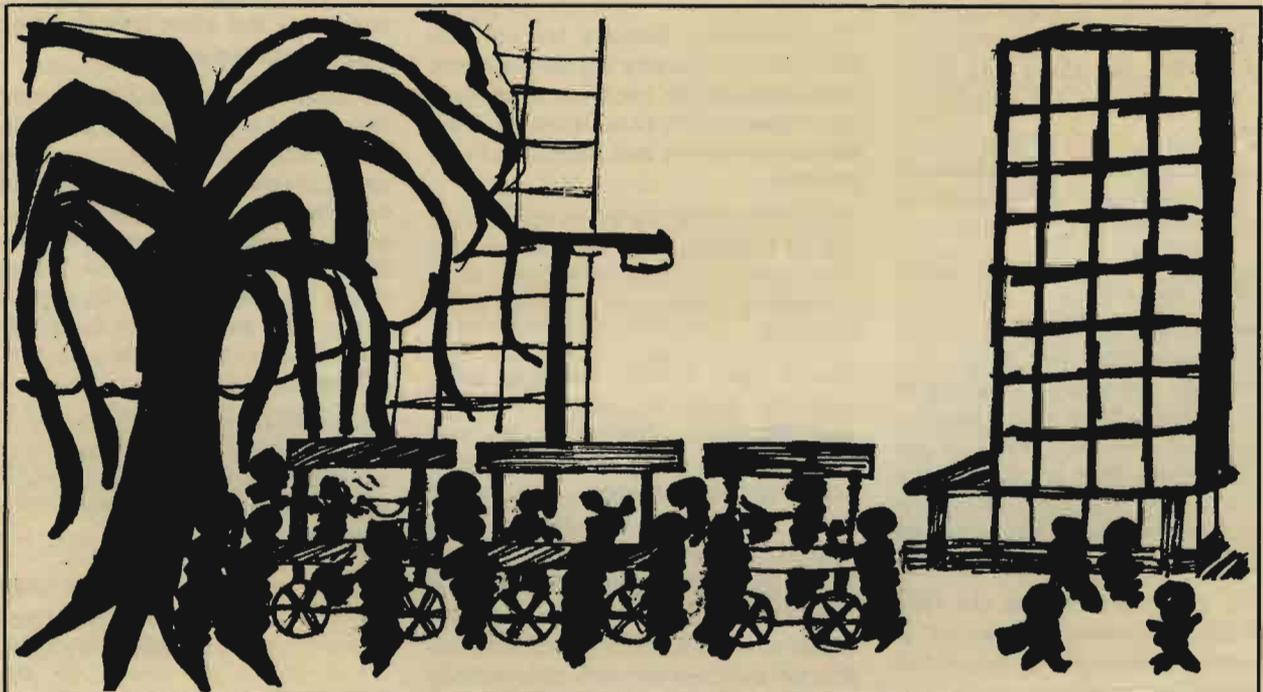
It was in 1874 that Dalal Street became the prominent meeting place for brokers. The Native Share Broker's Association was formed in 1875, which was the precursor of the present twenty-eight-storeyed Bombay Stock Exchange, now named Phiroz Jeejeebhoy Towers. At that time the membership fee was Re.1,

today it is Rs.55 lakhs. The Bombay Stock Exchange is the gateway to the country's financial markets, justifying the city's claim as the financial capital of India. Irwin D'souza, staff officer of Unit Trust of India, the premier financial institution of the country says, "All the main development and financial institutions are in Bombay. The Central Bank, The Reserve Bank of India and the Government Mint is also here. This has contributed much to the evolution of Bombay as the financial capital of India."

The main financial and commercial areas in Bombay are Fort and Nariman Point. The Bombay Stock Exchange is surrounded by both nationalised and foreign banks. Apart from their operating tables at the Exchange, the brokers have their offices at Fort and Nariman Point. The private finance companies operate mainly from Nariman Point and are served by a host of foreign banks. The transport system of Bombay and the communication network intermesh together to support the financial activity of the city. The commercial spirit is nourished by the entrepreneurial zest of the Bombayite. Brokers, bankers, middlemen, jobbers and the laymen, have one sole objective: to make "a killing", in their parlance, in the market. The Bombayite

is unique in this manner. He is willing to bet, to take high risks. He is also willing to lose a little. Above all he has patience. Suresh Sonkar, who has over the past 6 years built up a sizable portfolio says, "Yes, I have burnt my fingers last year. I had started investing heavily in December, 1991. When the Harshad Mehta scam broke in April 1992, all I had in my hands were worthless bits of paper." Asked if he would take the risk again, he replies "Yes definitely. I am hooked on playing the market."

Over the years, the people who regulate the financial activity of the city have changed. The brokering community came from Gujarat. They migrated to Bombay initially for trading activities. These enterprising people started trading in commodities at the Cotton Exchange in Bombay. During the British rule shares of banks like Bank of Bombay, Commercial Bank and Securities of the East India company were bought and sold. The men wore white crisp cotton dhotis and kurtas and white starched topis. They kept their accounts in a book they called the 'chopdi'. They ate the typical food of Gujarat - dal, phulkas, rice and bhaji. Their sons and grandsons today have taken over in Van Heusen shirts, Raymonds-suits and fine Italian silk



ties. The information and accounts today are kept in computers. The tightly held family brokering business is now a company with professionals entering the field. The life styles over the years have also changed. Today the brokers have exclusive membership to clubs, and think of holidaying abroad. Their weekend retreats are Manas, Alibaug and Mahabaleshwar.

Pradeep R. Jhaveri, owner of the stock broking firm S.D. Jhaveri and Co. got his membership card in 1934 for Rs.5.00. He bought another membership card in 1980 for Rs.5.00 lakhs to expand his business. His family, including his youngest daughter help him. Even though it is still a family business Pradeep Jhaveri says, "I had to recruit professionals like Chartered Accountants and Management graduates. Nowadays you have to study the financial prospects of a company thoroughly before investing in it."

Mr. Jhaveri has witnessed many changes from 1934 when as a failed collegiate of 18, he started going to the

Stock exchange with his 'Sauda' book. He says, "everything changes in Bombay. Girls started working from 1975. It was in the eighties that computers started trickling in, and now we cannot do without them." He shows us the Sauda book and comments, "this is the only thing that has not changed. We still use this memo book to record individual transactions." The constant ringing of the phones made Mr. Jhaveri smile apologetically. "We would be lost without these telephones. We transact around 9000 deals in a week. 80% of these deals that are over the phone. It is the big deals need face-to-face communication with the client.

The banker and the financial services too, have the same reverence for the telephone. In the 'Dealing room' of the banks, finance companies and brokering companies, the telephone is the star persona. During trading hours from 11 am to 2 pm, money, shares and securities flow from one telephone to the other. Ms. Udaya Rao of JM Finance says, "with the foreign institutional Investors coming into India and more finance companies getting into the act,

the infrastructure for communication will have to be strengthened." Already advertising agencies which specialise in financial advertising and a host of 'Money-Magazines' like *Capital Markets* and *Dalal Street* have helped to educate and encourage the Bombayite to "Play the Market."

The financial community is very hopeful about the future of Bombay. Dr. Ghonasgi, Director of Research and Training at the Bombay Stock Exchange says. "If our authorities put their mind to it, we can become like Singapore or any other international finance centre. We don't lack people with the entrepreneurial spirit." Pradeep Jhaveri too is hopeful, "We see our investors as a growing family. We will be facing competition from the foreign institutional investors, but we are ready for it." He showed us a copy of the *International Fortune 500* and said. "We have already taken the step towards going international."

AARATI DUTT
NANDINI RAJAWADE
KAVITA SINGH

OF VOICES YET TO BE HEARD

*Amidst the noise of trains, people, and announcements certain voices are all but drowned out.
But there's more to them than we know...*

"God could not be everywhere so God made the mother for every child".

Unfortunately, some children are deprived of this valuable gift. For Fatima, who is only twelve years old, her home and heart is the platform of Churchgate Station. The vendors there are her kitchen, the sticky and stuffy surroundings give her the security of belonging.

Meena and Raja are siblings who bring colour into their lives by singing for people on the train.

"My favourite song is 'Nayak Nahin Khalanayak Hoon Main' " says Raja. They earn about ten rupees a day by singing popular Hindi film songs. But there are days when these songs fail to impress anybody. Their 'music lessons' are usually in the early hours of the afternoon, when they sit outside the various tea stalls and Irani restaurants and listen to the blaring film songs on the radio.

India has a plethora of laws like "The Bonded Labour System Abolition Act" of 1976 and "The Child Labour Regulation

Act" of 1986 to protect its labour force. Unfortunately their implementation in actuality is far from satisfactory, and seems to have only academic and research value, even as the exploitation continues.

The railways in Bombay are not only the lifeline of the city but they are also the lifeline for the hundreds of children who make a living here. However, They are paid a measly sum after long hours of work.

The children who live at the stations are not all from Bombay. They have come here either because they have been abandoned or because of ill-treatment at home.

Govind aged thirteen, has been away from his home in Jammu and has adopted Bandra Station as his new home. He has worked here as a shoe-polish boy for two years, and has no desire to leave Bombay, atleast not in the near future. When asked what he wants to be when he grows up, he solemnly answers "very rich".

Seven year old Chintoo is less than four feet tall but does the work of somebody

double his age and size. He works and lives at Churchgate Station and his entire day is spent in collecting empty cold drink bottles, putting them in crates and carrying these crates to the drinks stall. He carries about 30 crates a day and for all this effort little Chintoo gets only two rupees each day.

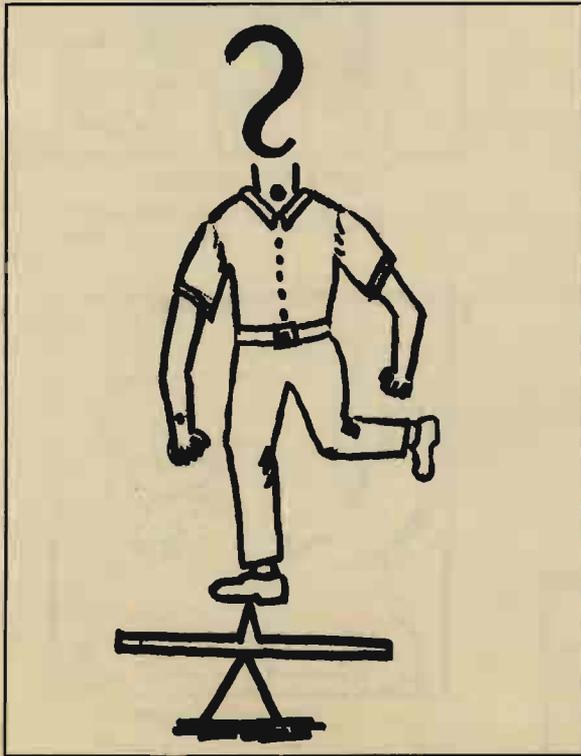
As one rushes through Churchgate Station, one sees six year old Zaher sitting where he can't be missed with ten different newspapers. He cannot read, but when asked for a 'Midday' he knows exactly which pile contains the required newspaper. Within a span of fifteen minutes he sells about twenty-five papers, and ends the day by getting ten rupees for selling over 250 newspapers.

These children add to the charm of the Railways. In spite of their hardships they seem to love Bombay as illustrated by little Champa's statement "Yahan mushkil to hai magar mein bahut khoosh hoon."

KAVITA BIKA
RADHA CHOUDHARY
SRABONEY GHOSE
R. PRIYA

THE YOUNG ONES

*An insight into the changing values of Bombay youth,
against the overwhelming pressures of the city.*



Vulnerable minds, idealistic thoughts, soaring ambition, unbounding energy - all embody the spirit of youth. But in the city of Bombay, this spirit seems to be losing face to the tremendous pressures generated by the complexities of urban life.

The Bombay youth find themselves trapped in a web of demands - demands of a largely faulty education system that stresses rote learning rather than enlightenment, over-ambitious pushy parents, and of ever-rising achievement standards in a society where money is becoming increasingly important. Apart from these, there are other pressures on the youth. Mrs. Usha Bhatia, ex-Councillor of Maneckjee Cooper School, Juhu, explains, "Lack of money, difficulties in dealing with the other sex, and peer pressure, often lead to problems like depression, drug addition and alcoholism."

Each of these burdens weigh on the young mind, suffocating its naivete, innocence and idealism. For instance, our education system, being focussed as it is, on exams and getting to the

next grade, leaves very little room for creative and lateral thinking. Delhi based neurologist, Amitabh Verma, expounds, "Taxation on the brain's left hemisphere, that controls, analytical functions, while under utilizing the right hemisphere, not only blunts an individual's power of observation and imagination, but also results in stress related behaviour such as irrationality, depression and insomnia."

Parents, who play a crucial role in helping their child face the pressures of education, often compound them by forcing their children into fields which exist at variance with their personal inclination. Sanjay Gupta

is one such victim of the dual demands of parents and education. Sanjay was unable to score the high marks needed to realise his parents dream of an 'engineer' son. Hounded by a sense of failure and worthlessness, Sanjay attempted suicide.

Why were Sanjay's parents so eager for him to become an engineer? Their reasons were not entirely selfish, for they were motivated by the dictums of a society that equals success to being rich. These values have perpetrated so deeply into the youth of today, that they no longer even question them. As one student from St. Xaviers College commented, "Meet the most influential man in our lives today - Mr. Money."

Money has become a very important factor for the youth. In fact, it is often the parameter by which they judge one another. So those who live up to certain standards, retain their place in the group. The need to conform, to be 'with it' often leads the youth into habits such as smoking, drinking and even consuming drugs. Ramesh Puri explains his dilemma. "When everybody is doing

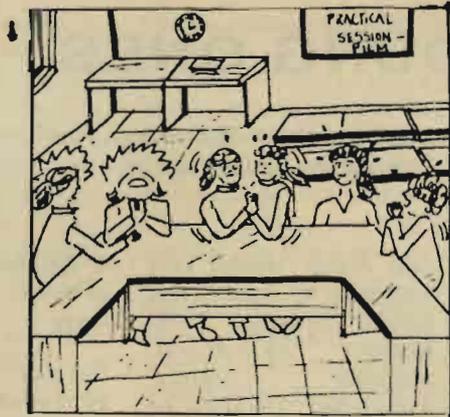
it, you feel quite silly refusing to smoke or drink. My friends, will think I am crazy."

But peer pressure can have serious consequences. 18 years old Amit Bhalla, coming from a middle class family, steals money from his house to sustain the lifestyle he is leading. "If you are living in Bombay, pocket money of a thousand bucks is not enough to take the girls out, and wear good clothes. So I take money from my house without telling my parents."

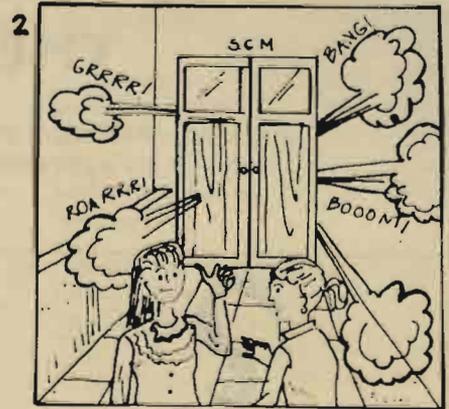
Amit's act of stealing is testimony to the degenerating values among the youth today. Very few are idealistic, very few are willing to do anything till it brings them something in return. One student exclaimed, "Me? Change the world, no. I'd rather change myself to fit society". Such an unidealistic attitude among the future generation is only going to aggravate the problems of corruption and violence that have left Bombay bereft and diseased.

There is however, a section of the youth who think differently, who feel responsible towards their country and are trying to bring about a change. Poonam Sahajwani, a 20 year old commerce graduate, helps her mother run a school for uneducated slum women. She feels, "If each one of us did something for our country, it would change things tremendously." Monisha Bajaj has been helping riot victims since the December 1992 riots in Bombay broke out. On a larger scale, groups such as YUVA and Akanksha, are all working towards improving Bombay. Youth organisation like AIESEC, AYBI and Rotaract, include projects aimed at improving Bombay. But their efforts need to be backed by the entire society. Only then can we build a better Bombay - A Bombay where the youth are not destroyed by drugs and alcohol, where the youth are not frustrated by a demoralizing education system, where the youth break away from the bonds of fighting in the name of religion. - A Bombay healthy in body as well as in soul.

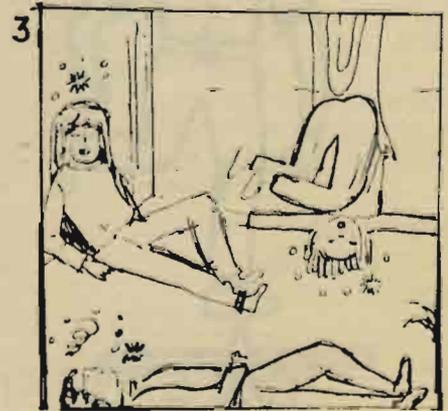
DEEPA BHATIA
MANISHA SHARMA
MEENAKSHI SHARMA



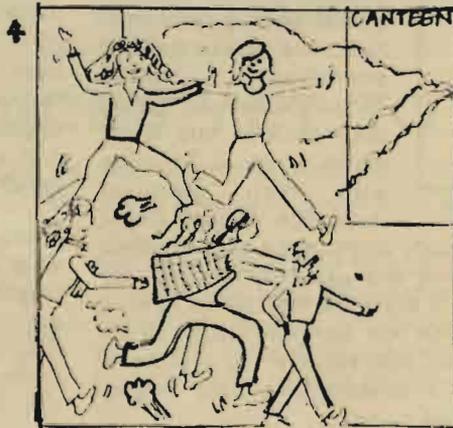
Before a Film Practical...
 "Madam bad mood mein hai"
 (Balaram's Tip-off)



During the session...
 "It's going to be our turn next"



... At the end of session-
 it was our own funeral.



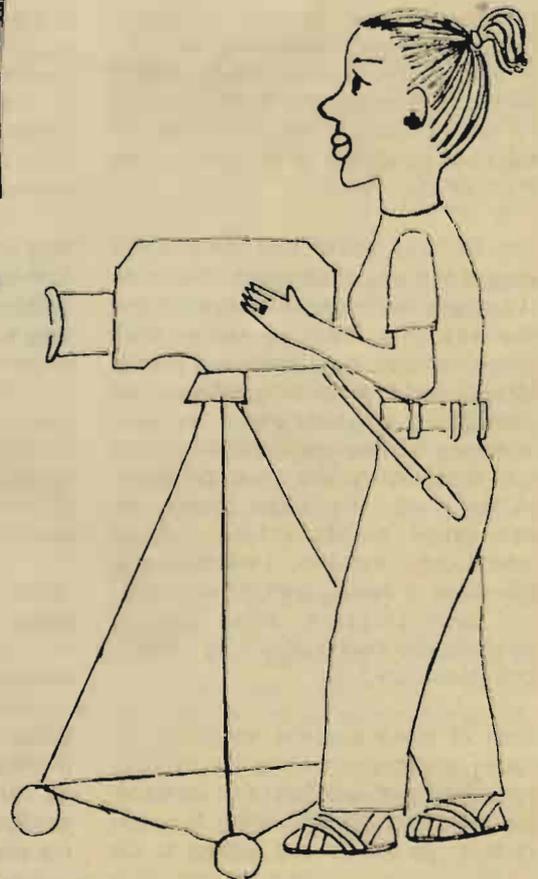
But that doesn't kill their
 appetite...
 "This batch of S.C.M. is always
 hungry"



Except when it's
 Mr. P.Sainath's class

LJFE AT S.C.M.

By
 Mandira Bedi
 Deepa Bhatia





When sensitivity runs in your veins it shows in everything you create.