

CHAPTER- 4

CITYSCAPE AND WORKPLACE: POLEMICAL

STIRRINGS IN SUKETU MEHTA

4.1 SUKETU MEHTA: AN INTRODUCTION

Suketu Mehta was born in 1963 in Kolkatta. He was raised in Mumbai where he lived there, till 1977 and then he moved to New York along with his family and has been staying in U.S.A since then. His work *Maximum City : Bombay Lost & Found* was published in 2004 and gives an autobiographical account of his experiences in the city of Mumbai, India. He has been a writer of travelogues, memoirs, articles, fiction and screenplays of films. He joined the New York University Journalism Faculty in 2008. Presently, he is working on a book about the New York City immigrant experience. He has two sons and is divorced from his wife Sunita.

The book in question, relates with variegated hues and colours of Indian society painted boldly and exquisitely. It has the elements of social, political analysis of the history, people and culture of Mumbai. Mehta writes about the personages and their traits from two angles, as an outsider to the area and also as someone who has lived his childhood in the city and always longed to comeback on a treat. As he returns to the city of his dreams Mumbai as an adult, he experiences frustration with everyday life in the nation. He visits slum areas and comes to an understanding as to how people can crop up anywhere even alongside the railway tracks. In dealing with details about slums, he delves deep into the

politics of modern Mumbai- Hindu versus Muslim territories, the criminal and underworld underpinnings in Mumbai and the after maths of 1993 Bombay bombings. There is description of dance bars, Indian film industry, school he studied, his relatives, modelling career, lives of individuals, Jain community, and an engineer who gives up a promising career to become a poet in Bombay footpaths.

The voice Mehta employs is melodramatic with every sentence having the tinge of sadness, mixed with nostalgia for something the author had left long ago in his distant childhood. It is an exciting, perceptive and very well written personal description of the magnificent city called Mumbai. Mehta has the grit to meet the murderers and gangsters while risking his own life. The clarity of vision and his neutral insight is clearly visible which gives a stamp of outsider letting out the intricate details.

Mehta has won many prizes and awards owing to his contributions in different forms of writing. He has won the Whiting Writer's award in 1997, Henry Prize for his short story *Gore du Nord* published in Harper's Magazine in 1997. He has also been honoured by the fellowship of the New York foundation for the Arts. He has been awarded Guggenheim fellowship in 2007. His *Maximum City: Bombay Lost & Found* is a 2005 Pulitzer Prize finalist. It is also chosen as one of the books of the year 2004 by the Economist. He has won Kiriya Prize in 2005.

The book present major aspects and dominant personalities of the city and gives them each a detailed and comprehensive analysis. He has tried to portray the ugly side of the city covering poverty, over-crowding, crimes, ethnic conflict,

black marketing and also there are in depth character sketches of people surviving the dark circles of Bombay. Mehta has been criticised for writing an elitist book, told by a diamond merchants' son who has no empathy for the common Bombayite. Critics claim that the book is meant to be written for foreign audience which is told by a person who hasn't been able to cast off the American mask and hasn't descended to the likes of common Bombayite man who commutes daily by train. The dance bars and Bollywood film industry have been handled with the same terse and strict notion but the episodes of Monalisa and Honey are handled with subtle and delicate touches.

Nevertheless, the effort put in by Mehta in dealing with the large landscape of Bombay is worth admiring. He is strong willed to risk his and his family's life in dealing with the terrorists and war lords. There happens to be certain gaps here and there in writing and some of the episodes are over elaborated but that do not diminish the standards of writing anyhow which he has tried to establish.

4.2 LOCALE

In 2008, the Globalization and World Centre Group (GAWC) has ranked Mumbai as 'Alpha World City' which is third in the category of Global cities. It is ranked among the fastest cities in the country for business start up in 2009. The city life of Mumbai and its business and trading networks have been referred in the previous chapter.

In 1996, the newly elected Shiv Sena led government renamed the city of Bombay to the native name Mumbai, after the Kol goddess Mumba Devi. So, the names of the city, Mumbai and Bombay have been variably used in the study. Now, it has become the crime city of India. Many bombing incidents and terrorist attacks have tried to diminish the important citadel which Mumbai has been thriving upon but no amount of violence has faded or dimmed the image of Mumbai and its crowning glory.

4.3 THE ISSUES

The book provides a glimpse of post modern Bombay which is sprawling and vibrant. It is epic and bold, as it explicates the Mumbai world laden with gangsters, bars, night life, typical of a metropolitan city in twelve chapters. Each chapter gives an elaborative and entertaining detail about the quirks, memories and pitfalls of Mumbai. Many issues and ideologies have been experimented & questioned in the book which represents a vast array of problems attached to the city.

Many criminal organisations have become a part of India. Mafia is the term which refers to the syndicate which instigates criminal activities in India. The D-company is the name given to the organized crime group controlled by Dawood Ibrahim. The underworld and gangsters all form a part of mafia. The first part is titled 'Power', which is inclusive of five chapters dealing with multifarious aspects.

The first chapter of the book presents the geography of Bombay and then, narrates the discomforts of writer when he comes to resettle along with his two sons & his wife Sunita.

Metropolitan Lifestyle: One gets a true picture of metropolitan lifestyle in the book. People living in a city where privacy is seemingly non-existent with one or two rooms housing a dozen inhabitants, where the utilities including the availability of water operate sporadically. There are so many societies and buildings coming up, which gives one very little privacy and people can watch you

from different floors. All the dust, garbage, plastic bags are sucked in and leave the rooms unhygienic and disorganised. The material used in constructing the flat is of poor quality. Every now & then, cracks appear on the walls & urgent repairs are required. The repair work is to be done by plumbers, electricians & carpenters, all fix up their rates & mending job is done temporarily.

There are long queues for payment of bills. City is congested with vehicles & traffic. There are no open spaces for children to play. The food & water is adulterated which becomes the cause of many diseases. Theft is a very common phenomenon. Even in closed flats and houses taken care by the guards, it has become a routine practice. Perhaps, it is the linkup between the guards & the thieves which gives them easy options to grab their chances. Getting admission in the schools is also a tough task which demands channelizing of all the resources, be it money or through pursuance by a commanding authority.

The narrator encounters all these problems when he tries to settle down in Mumbai, where even finding a decent place to live in is very difficult & expensive. His children find it very difficult to adjust in the new scenario which is altogether different from the world they have grown up in.

Mehta comes from a family of diamond merchants from Gujarat which was settled in Bombay. His father and uncle moved from Bombay to USA. Mehta's mother was born in Nairobi, went to college in Bombay & then settled in New York. Since, Mehta spent his childhood in Bombay, he was nostalgic about the city but what he confronts is altogether different. He finds that people living in the city are more than the continent of Australia. He explains in the text, "With fourteen

million people, Bombay is the biggest city on the planet of a race of city dwellers. Bombay is the future of urban civilization on the planet. God help us”(3). He finds the shops along with the buildings & experiences that “Bombay is all about transaction dhandha”(15). It is a city of gold and nobody starves to death in Mumbai. It is a city of maximum and a country of numbers where every facility & every resource is available but difficult to operate and consume.

Even in the twenty-first century, the situation has not improved. Rajiv Gandhi, the former late Prime Minister had the notion that in the new century “India derives modernity, it desires computers, information technology, neural networks, video on demand”(25); but still having the third largest pool of technical labour, a third of its one billion population can’t read or write. They can develop supercomputers but can’t maintain them properly. Mehta believes that Bombay is an imitation of a western society just like Chicago of 1920’s which immediately leads us to the concept of ‘Westernisation’ given by M. N. Srinivas. India has been trying to ape west and following modern trends and western ideals but in the process they are losing their own identities and strengths which have sustained them in a highly competitive world.

The second chapter is ‘Powertoni’ which presents a glimpse of the riots of 1992-93 in Bombay, which followed the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. It also deals with political and underworld nexus, and how they promote religious & social distinctions.

Hindu-Muslim Riots: The riots in Bombay lead us to Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, India. There was a mosque which is believed to be constructed by the Mughal

Emperor Babar over the birth place of Lord Rama (a Hindu God). The mosque was a cause of friction over the rights to gain control over it by Hindus & Muslims. The mosque was demolished on 6th December, 1992 by a Hindu mob, which led to widespread destruction in Bombay. It was a tragedy in three acts. Firstly, there was a fight between Hindu Police & Muslims. Secondly, there was a more serious war in January 1993 caused by the Shiv Sena in which Muslims were particularly identified and targeted. Thirdly, it was the revenge of Muslims when powerful bombs exploded in the city killing many people including, Muslims. Mehta discusses about the riots and various gangsters who were instrumental in burning & killing Muslims but did not experience any kind of pangs of self consciousness for the wrongs they had committed. One of the gangster comments: “Many wars begin with an act of rape, real or imagined. It is always the men who are disturbed enough by the rape to go to war”(45). The gangster Sunil is in cable industry & has several clients who are Muslims. He visits a dargah for divinely help but he has no remorse for the people he had killed or shunted out of their lives. One of the speaker comments “An eye for an eye is a terrible thing”(51). Muslims were devastated by riots but when bombings took place in Bombay, they avenged it.

Slums: A slum is a heavily populated urban disorganised settlement which has substandard housing & living standards. Most of them lack sanitation facilities, clean water, electricity & other basic amenities. Rural to urban shifts forms one of the main causes of development of slums. Urban poverty encourages the formation and demand for slums. The link between urban slums & armed violence is fairly visible. The culture of masculinity, little faith in spirituality, different social

organisations such as gangs & militants & availability of arms pose a common sight. Domestic violence against men also exists in slums.

We do witness a pathetic side in slums. Dharavi in Mumbai is the largest slum area. India is home to the second largest Muslim population in the world. The Hindus & the Muslims in slums, live apart in separate areas out of their choice. There is a problem of pure drinking water. Much of the slum area is a garbage dump. Every person gets two buckets of water for household needs. In Hindu areas, each one of them has a tap while in Muslim areas eight or ten lanes have one. The sewers are open & very often children while playing fall into them. Some of the toilets are there in Hindu areas while in Muslim areas they are not in working condition. Otherwise also, the toilets are unclean & in unhygienic conditions, stagnant water & stench pervades the area. No municipal officer or the concerned official takes due action. So, various organisations & groups have started to somehow take control of the situation. One of the groups described in the text is a women's group 'Rahe-haq' which means the Right Path. They have started their work in Jogeshwari slums. Finally, with their efforts some of the toilets get cleaned and are put to use. The water supply in the area is improved. Slowly, they have started helping the women with legal advice. The people who are residing in slums are comfortable living there and don't wish to move away and settle elsewhere. They form a community and are attached to it.

One gets a glimpse of mass culture or popular culture in the slums. The culture of the lower groups who are subdued & exploited by the elite is clearly witnessed in these areas. The culture of Bharat as represented by masses is

dominated and exploited by elite Indians. It represents a constant struggle between the dominant & the subordinate where the dominant moulds the subordinate to maintain its hegemonic position.

Political Scenario: In India, political parties are generally woven around their leaders, the leaders actively play a dominant role. The role of leadership is transferable for generations to follow. In India, political parties act on ideological basis. They are formed on the basis of race, religion, caste etc. The leaders are interested in their own selfish pursuits. Every now and then, the news of scams follow, the Land scam, the Fodder scam to name a few. They have lost their conscience and a will to serve the nation. They have their troupes of ministers & guards and gangsters at their command ready to grab the bait.

Shiv Sena, the ruling Hindu activist party had an important role to play in the riots. The Shiv Sena was formed by Bal Thackeray in 1966, after the seventeenth century Maharashtrian warrior king Shivaji, who was an expert in guerrilla warfare. The Sena Shakhas acted as a parallel government and helped people solve out their problems. They tackled a variety of issues – trade unions, student’s movement, women’s living, employment network, cooperative banks, newspaper etc. They had the powertoni - it meant a contraction of power of attorney- the wonderful ability to act on someone else’s behalf or to have others do your bidding, to sign documents, release the wanted criminals, cure illnesses of people, get people murdered. It is explained as :

Powertoni: A power that does not originate in yourself; a power that you are holding on somebody else’s behalf. It is the only kind of

power that a politician has : a power of attorney ceded to him by the voter. All over Mumbai, the Shiv Sena is the one organization that has Powertoni. And the man with the greater Powertoni in Mumbai is the leader of the Shiv Sena himself, Bal Keshav Thackeray.(63)

He had the remote control of entire Bombay, right from the police to the gangsters when he was alive. The ministers and Bollywood stars came to meet him. In March 1995, the Shiv Sena came to power in coalition with BJP. They changed the name of the capital city to Mumbai. They instigated the riots after Babri Masjid demolition. Many Shiv Sainiks killed & thrashed Muslims during the riots. They were burnt and looted. The riots of 1992 & 1993 were a milestone as it brought different worlds together with an explosion. The monster was out of the slums. Many people were recruited as Shiv Sainiks and the task they were assigned was to kill. The Shiv Sainiks were fanatics but they were held by the principle that fanatics were needed to fight fanatics. When Shiv Sena came to power around five percent of Bombay Muslims voted for them as they wanted law & order out of stability.

The dreams foreseen by the leaders like Gandhi & Nehru, who wanted the leaders to be role models, thinking of people & nation as a whole has lost its count. Nowadays, there is Bhaiya Raj or Gundaraj blossoming under the patronage of the so called leaders & rulers.

Election Scenario: Elections in India generally, involve political mobilisation and organisational complexity, the will and the need to hold the seat of power. Politicians have their own source of money during elections which include

businessman & contractors. People generally have a notion that politicians come to them for canvassing only after five years during the election time. They listen to the problems of slum dwellers and provide certain relaxations and contributions to them. They visit slum colonies but rarely visit posh colonies to demand votes. They know that these high class gentry won't come down to support them. Eighty eight percent of their vote bank comes from slums. One very common sight that can be observed during the casting of vote is that someone steals, someone's right to vote. Money is usually paid to the voters to cast votes in favour of particular candidate or party. The workers who help the leaders during canvassing & even afterwards are suitably rewarded. They are provided special treatment and gifts. It may include- the financing, the construction of a particular building or any gifts, besides healthy amount of money. The new leaders that are coming are corrupt, which is in sharp contrast to the leaders of the previous times. They were Oxford educated and were wealthy in their own right and as such they did not plunder the riches of India to fill their own purses.

As Mehta elaborates in the text:

The new inheritors of the country- and of the city- are very different from the ones who took over from the British, who had studied at Cambridge and the Inner Temple and come back. They are badly educated, unscrupulous, lacking a metropolitan sensibility- buffoons and small-time thugs, often- but, above all, representative.(81)

The gangsters and the poor people who helped the politicians are themselves given the party tickets and they become the rulers. They illegally

occupy government lands and areas and use them for their own purposes. The dominating bloc tries to project its own ideology by taking mass cultures into the hold, the values of societies and the concept of ideal nation and statehood are the things gone by and long forgotten.

Exploitation of Women: In the developing countries, thousands of females are forced into prostitution. Sexual exploitation which is inclusive of sex tourism and sexual violence such as rape & harassment has escalated in modern society.

A Shiv Sainik in the novel who works for the party is a married man, having children. He has had affair with five women in the neighbourhood as he himself says, “Sex and death are very close in Bombay”(97). He very explicitly discusses his relationships and also deliberates upon the sexual encounters of other slum residing man and how they take undue advantage of the weaker sex. “They go after the women who are vulnerable, the very young, the children or wives of drunkards or women not right in the head”(98).

The gang rape case in New Delhi in 2012, where a twenty three year old woman was raped in a moving bus, stresses the urgent need to promote safety of women & girls in India. Women in India continue to suffer due to lack of awareness, and oppressive practices & customs. This is the dilemma & disgust of the modern cities & cultures.

The third chapter is titled ‘Mumbai.’ Mumbai is known for the blasts of 1993; 1971 war with Pakistan and the explosion of the *Fort Stikine* on 14 April 1944. *Fort Stikine* was a ship carrying cotton bales and a secret cargo of gold and

silver and also explosives. The explosives caught fire and all the precious ammunition was destroyed and all gold was lost. The chapter also traces the problems faced by people in Mumbai and the deteriorating architecture of the city.

Problems Faced by Bombayites: The Rent Act has made the life difficult for the tenants. The provisions are applicable to commercial buildings, corporation and government enterprises. Rich people reside in rent-controlled bungalows but the problem remains for the new onlookers of the flats. After the Act, the pugree or key money system was started which meant that a tenant would be bribed by the owner to vacate his flat.

There is water shortage in Mumbai. Municipal Corporation supplies water to people which is roughly seventy percent of the total demand. People have adopted the habit of stealing water passing through pipelines.

There is sanitation problem in Mumbai. People don't have the access to the basic toilets to ease themselves. Dirt, stench, garbage, plastic bags, betel spits, all can be observed on the roads of Mumbai.

Deterioration of Historical Monuments & Sculpture: The quality of architecture in Bombay is tattering out. The newly carved pillars at Elephanta caves are showing signs of destruction. The structures have been built in stones which are in sharp contrast to the original statues built by the Rashtrakuta kings. The Victorian buildings, railway terminals, university and court buildings are built on the gothic style and have their own splendour and charm while the modern architecture which is coming up is devoid of refined tastes. Older buildings are intact but the new

structures can't compete with the old stuff. The material and articles used in new buildings fall below the normal standards.

The construction is taking place at Nariman Point, the whole plan of New Bombay is all the more congested. While making, one big island of Bombay, seven islands were filled but due to new constructions the whole symmetry is being disturbed. Frequent rains are destroying the ill constructed structures.

Steps should be taken to control the situation in Mumbai. Private companies should step forward to invest in the city. Government should understand its duty and responsibility towards the citizens. The physical structure, the landscape of Mumbai needs to be transformed. "It now, has to sell brainpower: ideas, data and dreams"(137). Rules and laws should be made for the benefit of masses not for their exploitation. As the text elaborates, "Bombay is both the beautiful parts and the ugly parts, fighting block by block, to death for victory"(137). The need to preserve the heritage as well as, the need to render good services for the prestige of the city is urgently required.

In India, names of many cities have been modified. Bombay has been changed to Mumbai, Madras to Chennai, Calcutta to Kolkatta. Similarly, there is a demand to change India's name to Bharat. This policy is being adopted to connect with the idealized past. The cities were renamed by colonisers but now the same cities are considering the name change to re-establish their forgotten identities. It is a shame that the safeguarding of the historical structures & monuments is not being implemented and there is a talk of lost identity. It is a sheer apathy that even after entering the new century, people do not have access to the basic needs. The goods

& services provided are far below the norms and lead us to ask pertinent questions about India's future- how can Indians match the quality and the competition at global level, when there is lack of basic amenities. The struggle between high & low caste continues and there is no bridging the gap even if they are reformed or westernised.

The chapter number two 'After Scotland Yard', highlights the treatment meted out to the criminals in custody. It also relates with their lives and complexes. Gang war is a common phenomenon in Mumbai where different gangs put up a fight with each other on one issue or the other.

Torture in Police Custody: While in Police custody, the suspects are not allowed to sleep. Electric shocks are provided to them. Some kind of load is tied to their legs and they are mercilessly beaten. Bullet shots are given to them close to the ears. If physical torture doesn't work special methods are used. The family is tortured and threatened and the suspects finally yield to the pressure.

Police extract information through their informers. They have a proper channel to provide information about the underworld. Police has become a non profit institution as they are provided a meagre salary, substandard equipments & inefficient lawyers to handle the court room proceedings. No doubt, Police has become corrupt. They torture people in custody. Even the ladies are not spared. They are exploited, butchered up and beaten mercilessly in jails.

The D-company and gang wars: Inter-gang rivalry is a common sight in underworld. The reason for the gang war is the struggle for supremacy.

In Mumbai, the underworld can strike anywhere. Their centres are located at Karachi, Dubai, Malaysia. All the terrorist activities are funded from outside India. That's the reason police is not able to control their activities. There is also collaboration with different terrorist groups such as LTTE in Sri Lanka, the ULFA and PWG in Andhra Pradesh. Whatever money they extort from unsavoury means and through revenue, the sixty percent of it goes to the bosses through hawala & remaining forty percent is for the gang workers & others who perform any kind of activity. These groups and companies try to convert their black money into white by opening various hotels, departmental stores, resorts, banks & investment in entertainment industry. They are also involved in drugs & human trafficking. "The boys don't refer to the organizations they work for as 'gangs', they call them 'companies' and there is indeed something corporate about the organization"(155). Boys have their own support system which is spread out in different jails. Special meals & facilities are provided to them in jails.

The gang wars branched out in Mumbai after the bomb blasts of 1993. Bombs were planted in Bombay to take revenge of anti-Muslim activities. Dawood Ibrahim the leader of the D-company, exiled & settled in Karachi, was the mastermind behind the blasts. Chotta Rajan, his lieutenant and a Hindu, broke with him & formed his own Nana-Company. The two dons control their territories from outside the country & have been at war since then.

The gangs have the best aims, the best lawyers to fight their case which is in sharp contrast to Police who are responsible for curbing the crime & do not have access to quality arms and ammunitions. Supari or contract killings have become

common in India which costs around five to ten thousand rupees. Poverty has become a virtue in India. Those who are poor, they are not pressurised by the underworld while the rich or the financiers when they celebrate the marriages, they book a low profile venue to maintain distance from the extortion bids by the underworld. They have a parallel judicial system while in India the civil cases take at least five years together to settle for want of evidence while in many cases, the final appeals take at least two years to decide “The ‘Parallel economy’, a travelling partner of the official economy, is always there, turn your head a little to the left or right and you’ll see it”(192). There is a whole lot of backlog in courts while there is an alternative system which provides help to the needy. The justice system of gangsters is speedy & effective.

The next chapter is titled ‘ Black Collar Workers.’ It reflects the grim picture of animal slaughter and the network of gangs and how do they operate.

Animal Slaughter: The area described in the chapter in Madanpura, which is also called mini Pakistan. The festival of Bakr-Eid is being celebrated and the goats are sacrificed in tandem. They are helpless and don’t even struggle to escape.

Cows & bulls are slaughtered for their meat which is after all, a controversial situation as Hindus worship cows. They don’t accept the notion of Muslims eating cows which is considered as sacred animal by Hindus. After the animals are slaughtered they are left in open in the most unhygienic conditions. Some people give this justification, that everything on this earth has been created for enjoyment and human beings and animals are a part of it. This theory does not go well for the humanists who condemn it and are votaries of animal rights.

Cruelty to animals also called, animal abuse is the human affliction of suffering or harm done towards animals. Animal cruelty covers a wide range of actions. It can be for specific reasons such as killing animals for food or fur. In Indian system, animals are also slaughtered and offered as a sacrifice to appease Gods. Even, in the metro cities these kinds of activities can be observed which reflects the superstitious and baseless ideology of Indians.

Political System and Gang Wars: The city is notorious for the presence of criminals & the workers of D-company, Abu Salem & other gangsters. Mehta meets various categories of gang workers. Each one of it has his own story to narrate, own experiences to describe. They can murder anyone even for a petty amount and they earn handsomely by following the dons order. They go to jail and the company provides money to their families. They execute people as per the orders given by their superiors. They use gun shots, knife, rods etc. for killing someone. They usually prefer a motor bike for execution. If they are caught by the Police, Police will negotiate with their bosses for their release. If the negotiations fail, these shooters are tortured & have to suffer. Some of the shooters run away to Dubai, to escape prison. They miss out their life in India, family, movies, going out to eating joints etc.

The shooters are fond of bar girls. For just rupees one fifty they can enjoy with any girl they want. They can exploit anybody by keeping the gun on the head of the family members. They are all passionate lovers, who if avoided can go to the extent of killing their beloved.

Muslim terrorists believe their work to be related to their tribe, of the universal nation of Islam. They are not governed by the boundaries of nations & states. Muslims are spread out in different countries while Hindus are restricted to India only. Muslims live by the idea that their honours have to be protected & they have to fight the evil.

The gangsters are religious a lot. They believe in God and say their prayers regularly. They are highly philosophical like one shooter Satish believes that “God is like smelling money that you have earned. There is no smell, really, but you have felt him. We are all part of god’s game”(237). Politicians & shooters nexus go hand in hand. Politicians are taken to be the worst culprits as they work behind the scene. They are not honest towards their country, job or people. This has been admitted by the gangsters. The protectors and rulers themselves become the killers and exploiters. The moral fabric of the nation as a whole has gone awry. The enlightened people need to come forward & demand for the rights they can exercise to control the disarray. The masses have to unite, necessarily to bring about a change and curb exploitation.

The second part of the book is entitled ‘Pleasure’ and deals with pleasures of different kinds which one can enjoy in a metro city. The first chapter describes the bliss of family life; the second chapter leads to Bar industry while the concluding chapter is a Bollywood extravaganza.

The first chapter ‘Vadapav-Eater’s City’ describes typical life of an ordinary citizen. The two most elusive qualities in a metropolis are intimacy and silence. During the week days people work like animals; while Sundays are meant

for relaxation & enjoyment. Power and influence work in India at every level. Babudom and netagiri are typical Indian traits which cater to the pleasures of own self at the cost of others. The personal touch and family feeling are the assets of Indians. Rich people have adopted the new culture easily as they have the means to accomplish it. They are spending money on lavish accessories but the feelings of togetherness and solidarity cannot be compensated which is missing out from their lives.

Indian children mix freely with each other. While in western countries, the feeling of personal touch & intimacy are missing. Indians have an exposure to different varieties of culture and habits which is a stamp of Bharatiyata or Indianness. They nurture their relationships and neighbourhood. Rich people go for movies, parties and other sources of entertainment but poor people do not have access to such kind of facilities. They work till late and when they come back home, they want the children to be awake so that they experience a spark of joy in their dull life which gives them a purpose to move on. During the holidays, they enjoy with their kids and live their life to the fullest.

Indians have adopted the metropolitan & westernised outlook but not the zeal of it, not the true meaning of it. They follow the pattern of long working hours and enjoyment at weekends but have not imbibed their work culture. In West, people have set time-span or limit of working hours & two days holiday but Indians have forgotten all about the time slots. They have unlimited work hours, less pay, more targets to achieve, only one day relaxation which makes them spend less time with their families in the corporate world.

The next chapter 'A City in Heat' describes the night life of Bombay. Sex workers and bar dancers are available in Bombay. The biggest whore house in Bombay is called Congress House, named after the headquarters of the Congress Party. Pila House is the name for Nepali whores. Labourers and coolies go to these places. Bachu-ni-wadi is a place for mujrawalis.

Bar Industry: The term refers to adult entertainment in the form of dances by well covered women which are performed in front of males in exchange for cash. They were usually present only in Maharashtra but later spread out to many cities. Dance bars were banned in the state of Maharashtra in August 2005.

The narrator finds the night life of Bombay fascinating as he finds everything here, "Money, sex, love, death and show business"(285).The gang workers spend huge amount of money on bar dancers. Nepali girls are good for Bhaiyas (low class people) while gang war boys are interested in bar dancers and some of them are taken as mistresses by the gang workers. All types of people gather at bar. They could be rich or simple workers. "This is one place where the classes meet, where the only thing important is the colour of your money. The amount of money which you spend correlates to the attention you get"(329).

Bar girls are brought in the bar line when they are thirteen or fourteen years old by their parents, or through an agent and they become old for the profession when they are in twenties. These girls live in rented apartments. They drive their cars and use mobile phones. They send money to their family members back home. The narrator visits a bar Sapphire, where he finds teenage girls performing on Bollywood numbers. The girls have a technique & dancing style to attract the

customers. They are dressed in traditional attires. Mehta views and discusses the lives of Monalisa & Honey which have been explored in the next part of the chapter. Both of them reflect about the changing trends in the industry as the people don't want the girls to be dressed in traditional sarees but highly provocative dresses.

Since, the ban on dancing has come to stay, many bar girls are rendered jobless & have migrated to Dubai or similar places.

The next chapter 'Distilleries of Pleasure' gives a glimpse of entertainment industry– Bollywood, modelling, censorboard, Bollywood underworld nexus etc.

Bollywood: Mehta portrays the filming of the movie 'Mission Kashmir' and how the censor board network exercises its will, to go in for cuts for the controversial scenes, the filming of 'Sangharsh' & how the Bollywood & underworld relations operate.

In Madanpura, the shooting of movie 'Sangharsh' is taking place. Tanuja Chandra is the director, Preity Zinta is the heroine. Mahesh Bhatt is the producer. People are thronging in the area to get a glimpse of their favourite stars. Many gangsters have to be employed to control the crowd. Finally, the film is made out to be shown before the censor board. The censor board clears the film with minor cuts.

The Indian entertainment industry is expanding. T.V. has also taken its due place. With the coming of a number of channels, the cable network has established

its root in every household, “There are now more T.V. channels available in Mumbai than in most US cities”(376).

As and when people enter theatre, the suspension of disbelief begins. The people feel themselves so attached to the characters or the cult figures they represent, that they take them to be icons. Amitabh Bachchan and Rajnikant have a massive fan following. Indian movie goers are still engrossed in patriotism, motherhood, true love while in comparison; the western movies have found a new range. They have movies on variegated themes while Indians are floored by song, dance and action sequences.

Indian Film makers are also looking for overseas market to fetch more money. “The diaspora wants to see an urban, affluently glossy India, the India they imagine they grew up in and wish they could live in now”(378). Films are teaching new ideals, about open & free life but at the same time, romance and wedding extravaganzas are still happening. The horizons are expanding, film makers are also working on themes which appeal to NRI and also the western society, the shootings take place in foreign locales and people identify and connect with these places.

Bollywood–Underworld Connections: While the filming of movie, both the underworld and the stars are in awe of each other. The gangsters and the crowds want to see their favourite stars while the stars wish to see the real gangsters. It is reflected in the text, “Gangsters and whores all over the world have always been fascinated by the movies and vice versa, the movies are fundamentally transgressive. They are our eye into the forbidden” (374).

Many of the activities which are reflected in movies are never observed in real life by the audience. "Cinema is an outlaw medium, the flashlight into the darkest part of ourselves. For the criminals and prostitutes who live these outlaw lives, the movies are close to realistic"(375). The gangsters, the bar dancers, the common people who are not able to lead an idealized life on their expectation levels, may find solace by envisioning themselves in particular characters of the fictional world. The whole effect is cathartic. The underworld or the gangsters help in movie distribution. Pirated movies are shown on the channels by offering certain amount of money, even, the film release date can be delayed for some time. The underworld finances many films as it is the easiest route for channelising the illegal money of the dons. Moreover, if the film is a hit, it provides the fourfold gain to them of the initial investment. Bollywood gets the inspiration of subjects through these gang operations and then, are projected into the movies.

Underworld also extorts money from the stars. Actor Hrithik Roshan's father Rakesh Roshan was hit by a bullet. They wanted to extort money from his father as Hrithik's movie was a hit and he was much in demand. They also wanted the star to act in their movie. Hrithik, on his part wanted to settle his scores with underworld as "underworld and dream world in Bombay they are reflections of each other"(453). Gangsters are prone to giving extortion calls to various people involved with the film world. Abu Salem ordered the killing of Gulshan Kumar, the music magnate of the industry because he did not pay the desired amount to the don. The gangsters also have their kingpins in the industry who provide them up-

to-date information about the industry. Police is of little help as they themselves are afraid to nab the gangsters.

Consumerism: Consumerist practices are rampant in film industry. The rights of film distribution are taken over by some companies for extra profits. Other companies and products chip in film promotions, in dialogues, scenes, or some posters. The film is to be sold in various territories. The distributors lure & exploit the film makers over distribution rights. The payment to the star depends on whether the recent film of the star is a hit or a flop. The stars have to sign the contract for a film. The language used in the contract is diabolical and it is not easy to understand the intricacies of the written document. The money paid to the stars also includes the bonus, if it is a hit. The number of songs used in the music album, also works on the principle of economics. The production house sells the music rights in advance, which helps to finance the film.

The music industry has also changed. It is based on electronic equipments. Synthesisers and hip-hop have taken the place of old instruments. The tunes and tactics of different cultures like African rhythms, samba etc are integrated with traditional music and instruments.

Religious Controversies: Hindu-Muslim conflicts, religious issues, all sorts of controversies find a channelisation through the movies. They either try to excite or subside the curiosity of the audience. 'Mission Kashmir' is a movie about the conflict in Kashmir. Vidhu Vinod Chopra along with, Abhijit Joshi is working on the script. Amiabh Bachchan & Shahrukh Khan are to play the lead roles. When the script is written, the Kashmir issue & other associated problems like economy,

the rebellions- all are sidetracked. Extra care is taken not to hurt the sentiments of any community. The movie has to pass through many channels before it is released. If it has critical issues, it has to be passed through censor board to get the certificate. Or, it has to be cleared via politicians or the government panel.

Vidhu Vinod Chopra, the director, wants the film to propagate the ideology of 'Kashmiriyat' where both Hindus & Muslims are allowed to worship in the same country. But, both the actors are not ready to take the calculated risk & hence back out. Then, he signs on Sanjay Dutt, Hrithik Roshan & Preity Zinta to play the lead roles. The film opens up to a mixed reaction from the crowds. The songs are enjoyed in Pakistan even. Similarly in the movie 'Sangarsh', trouble is created by the censor board but it is cleared of with minor cuts. Mahesh Bhatt, another director is working on a film about Hindu-Muslim riots. The film is about his mother who was a Muslim & his father who was a Gujarati Brahmin, a producer of B grade movies. Bhatt knows that he has purpose in life although he feels sick of the industry – "We are distilleries of pleasure"(408). The film is named 'Zakhm' & faces a problem at censor board. They raise certain issues & want to give it, an A certificate. The film is passed from one ministry to another since, they believe that the film may instigate communal riots & hatred. The producer & the director work through, day & night, to get the film steer through various political & bureaucratic channels. The film is screened in the presence of government officials. Certain scenes are re-shooted & the film is finally released. It also wins an award in the category of the Best feature film on National Integration.

This is a sham world. At one stage, the film is not cleared due to commercial constraints and in the next stage, it wins an award for upholding integration. The internal politics and indifferent approach, the callous attitude of officials, all reflect the negative role of so called, Indian technocrats.

Film trade magazines have an important role to play in declaring a movie hit or a flop. These writers deal with the strugglers. Out of the hundred girls who approach the films world only ten are selected and undergo a series of exploitations. Not just the actors, the scriptwriters, musicians, dancers also work as strugglers. One such struggler is Eishaan who left his flourishing business in Dubai & came to Bombay to become a hero. He changed his name as it was a fashion to change the name. He took on acting, action & dance classes. He was offered roles in C grade movies & television serials but he declined the offer since he wanted to be part of A grade movies. He is a devout follower of Goddess Durga. After waiting for a year, he was finally offered a B grade movie, and that too, a religious one, which he finally accepted. It is a low budget movie & the makers do not have enough food to feed the actors and the unit members. Although, it is a religious movie but all the traits of masala films are incorporated. Eishaan is caught between orthodoxy & modernism. Finally, he leaves his struggle & goes back to his family business. The lure of Bollywood has captured many hearts but one needs to be practical in life. No doubt, it is glamorous but full of risks and insecurities.

The last part of the book has four chapters which point towards the problems and facilities available in Bombay. There is also a reflection that all classes of people blend together reflecting multiple cultures & personalities. It

portrays the shifts & struggles of common man, rich people & the virtues they relish and identification of the narrator with the city.

The chapter 'Sone ki Chidiya' highlights certain features associated with the citylife which provides a clear perception in understanding the real nature of Mumbai.

The Feeling of Togetherness: Mehta points towards the associative & unified attributes in the city of Mumbai. Every type of service is available in the city. There are carts where old notes are exchanged for the new. There are groups of letter writers who perform various types of services for literate as well as illiterate but these letter writers are experiencing losses in their business because of the availability of modern technology such as mobile phones. The new culture has created hurdles in their business but they are strong people who have the will to survive despite complexities & obstacles in their lives.

“Bombay is a fast paced even hectic city, but it is not, in the end a competitive city”(529). People here do understand the meaning of the term adjustment. In a crowded city like Mumbai people have to adjust, be it, in trains, buses or buildings so the competition never arises for them to reach their destination. If somebody is pushed out of a moving train, he will be pulled inside also. It has been described as a cattle shed, when the station arrives, one must be in a position to move out before the complete stop of the train because if one delays, a rush of people will get inside & one will be swept back. People enjoy their groups, playing cards, eating food, singing together. All can be witnessed in a simple compartment of train; if one is getting late & train is leaving from platform many

hands would come forward to grab you. They would adjust & make space for you. They are neither Hindus nor Muslims but people who are conscious of the problems which one have to face on account of missing the train. This is how the real Bharat survives the ordeal, which is visible in the lives of common man.

The children in homes understand their responsibilities towards their parents & family. They understand that they have to earn their living, when the parents get old. Seven or eight members of a family live in a small one room or two rooms flat but they have space for everybody. They share the attribute of togetherness with the community. If there is a marriage in the household, the entire neighbourhood gets together in rendering any sort of help.

Negative Attributes: Besides, the attributes of togetherness, some negative aspects are also visible. Still, people have stereotyped thinking and do not appreciate inter-caste marriages. As per the construction norms in western countries, new multi-storey buildings are coming up in Mumbai but the quality of material used, is inferior. The illustrations provided in the brochure sound convincing but in reality the construction is poor & substandard material is used. Drinking water is not available in slum areas & people have to make a payment to get water. Drainage system is not adequate.

A struggler like Babbanji, has to face hardships in Bombay. It is not an easy life to withstand the tortures of a metropolitan city. There are long queues & lines even for the basic necessities. One has to really struggle hard to carve a niche for himself. The problem of begging is rampant. People can earn & work, still can be seen demanding, an easy access to income. Whatever they earn, they consume it

for liquor. One arrives in a big city with a vision of charisma and brightness but it is the few significant ones who get the opportunity to realise their dreams.

The next chapter 'Memory Mines' describe the childhood memories of author's school days. He visits the school and reconstructs his childhood as an adult.

Corporal Punishment: It is a form of physical punishment which involves the deliberate infliction of pain for the purpose of reforming or disciplining the wrong doer.

Corporal Punishment is banned in schools but schools in Bombay still continue with the practice. There are reports of child thrashing. The writer cherishes the memory of childhood in his heart.

The next chapter 'Goodbye World' describes his visit to the house of a Jain family, a diamond merchant who is renouncing the world by taking diksha. The chapter is in sharp contrast to the earlier ones where slums & common life has been reflected pragmatically. It explores the lifestyle of the elite strata of the society. The family of five is renouncing the world to attain moksha. The ceremony takes place lavishly. They are squandering their wealth to attain their new roles of sages. They need to collect food from various homes & walk barefoot on the road, which is a difficult task. Still, they are persisting and are adapting to the new life. The women have gone their separate ways and are not mentioned but the boys are not comfortable in their new roles. Leaving a life of worldly pursuit and adapting to the life style of a sage is indeed, a very challenging & difficult task. The way they squander away their wealth, the royal robes and ceremony

reflect, the lifestyle they have supported. The elite strata have their own ways but to think of renunciation in the modern times is remarkable and praiseworthy.

The final chapter 'A Self in the Crowd' is dedicated to the narrator himself. The narrator yearns to find his true home, he craves for his identity & he is at peace in the end, when he traces it up within his family.

Importance of Family: Mehta highlights the virtues of family, his wife and two sons. He understands that it is not just the parents or the grandparents which matter, but the extended family is equally important - uncle, cousins, aunts etc. He finds his reasons to go back to USA, "The Battle of Bombay is the battle of the self against the crowd"(580). It is a city of many dreams which conglomerate to form a mass dream. The individual dream survives and makes way for one to survive & struggle in the city. He discusses the question of survival as, "The battle is of man against the Metropolis which is only the infinite extension of men & the demon against which he must constantly strive to establish himself or be annihilated"(580). The writer opines that people of the city will merge with him and they will identify with him in reflecting his opinions & attitudes.

4.4 NOVELWISE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERS

Different character personages provide a peep into the glamorous world of Mumbai. The characters are real life sketches and a source of revelations for frantic, tragic, gruesome, selfish, lively, entertaining emotions which form a part of modern society.

Bal Thackeray – A Symbol of Tiger: Bal Thackeray's father was a teacher by profession. He was also a social reformer and a writer. His mother wanted him to become a government servant but his father wanted him to be an artist. He started his career as a cartoonist at the free press Journal. In 1960, he launched his own cartoon weekly. His cartoon weekly turned into a forum for the 'sons of the soil', the Maharashtra Movement. People started reading and writing to his weekly. So in 1966, he formed his own political party- the Shiv Sena, after the seventeenth century Maharashtra warrior king, Shivaji who was an expert in the guerrilla warfare. Thackeray insisted on the original name Hindustan and hated calling it India and attributed the name India to Jawahar Lal Nehru for his love of Muslims after the partition, who were calling it as India. He insisted, "Hindustan is the original name and proper name for the country"(109).

Thackeray believed in the industrial dynasties. Much of his money came from the leading businessman of the city. He adopted a diabolic policy as far as religion was concerned. Shiv Sainiks went after acclaimed painter, M.F. Hussain for his nude paintings of Goddess Saraswati. They believed that Hussain has displayed Muslim fanaticism. He has depicted Hindu Goddess in nude while he could not show disrespect to Muslim Gods but Thackeray and his Shiv Sainiks

changed their cultural attributes in case of Michael Jackson. Jackson came to India for his performance after getting the blessings of Bal Thackeray. Then he categorically stated that Jackson represents certain rules in America which one should accept but he did not accept the cultural values of other religions and other communities. He protested against the celebration of Valentine's Day. Sena stormed on the stage at a concert by Ghulam Ali, a Muslim. No Pakistani entertainers could stage a concert in city. "The sahib's diktat comes down: No Pakistani entertainers can stage a concert in their city, no Pakistani sportsmen can play. The gentry of Mumbai suffer the shutting down of the concert without a peep"(94).

Bal Thackeray felt pride in giving details. Many politicians, film stars and high-profile people came to meet him with their problems. He was running a parallel government and meted justice to them. He did not favour crowding of Mumbai by outsiders especially, Bangladeshi Muslims. He had a role to play in 1992-93 Bombay riots and Babri Masjid demolition.

In March 1995, Shiv Sena in coalition with BJP came to power. The new government looked at "problem plaguing the city, the infestation of corruption at all levels of the bureaucracy, the abysmal state of Hindu-Muslim relations, and took decisive action. They changed the name of the Capital city to Mumbai"(66).

Bal Thackeray and his party were implicated in the aftermath of riots after Babri Masjid demolition. An independent commission headed by a retired judge, Sri Krishna conducted an inquiry. When the report came, Thackeray charged upon

the judge of being biased against Hindus while he himself was biased against Muslims. It has been clearly related:

The Shiv Sena Pramukh Bal Thackeray, like a veteran general, commanded his loyal Shiv Sainiks to retaliate by organized attacks against Muslims... the attack on Muslims by the Shiv Sainiks were mounted with military precision, with lists of establishments and voters lists in hand.(87)

In the Sri Krishna's report thirty one police officers were named for killing people, seventeen were charged in 2001 but none of them was put on trial. Cases against Thackeray were also got ridden of as he was arrested and let off within forty five minutes. What they represented was a mockery of justice.

Bal Thackeray died in November 2012 but his policies and ideologies still persist in Shiv Sainiks. He tried to expand his political base by adopting Hindutva agenda and believed in anti-Muslim views. Bombay being the economic capital of India could have excelled as an important global city but its infrastructure is still in poor shape. Bombay was a cosmopolitan, modern and multi-ethnic city but Thackeray's ideals changed the city, as he converted it into Mumbai and not just in name alone. His party had used violence to ban or disrupt events. He had a major role to play in Bombay riots & instigating communal classes.

The political leaders have to be role models for the upliftment of the weaker sections and nation as a whole. They are to refrain themselves from giving biased & prejudiced opinions against any community as India is a secular country.

Dawood Ibrahim & D-Company: The gang war in Bombay is the fallout of the bomb blasts of 1993 in which bombs were planted in Bombay to take revenge on anti-Muslims programs. Dawood Ibrahim, the don of the D-company, settled in Karachi was the master-mind behind the blasts. His lieutenant Chotta Rajan who was a Hindu, broke with him and formed his own Nana company.

Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar was born in Ratnagiri on the Konkan coast in 1955. His father was a Police constable in the crime branch named as Ibrahim Kaskar. Dawood started a small business in Nagpada in Central Bombay.

Haji Mastan, a gold smuggler was dominating Bombay at that time but he was humble by nature and always thought of the poor. Then, he was taken over by Pathan gang, Karim Lala from Afghanistan. Dawood Ibrahim came into conflict with Pathan gang chiefs. They murdered Dawood's brother and Dawood avenged the death by killing them. Then, he moved to Dubai and started his gold smuggling business. Later, he was involved in extortion, real-estate and film-financing business. He was joined by Chotta Shakeel, the head of gang operations in Bombay.

Chhota Shakeel: He is referred to as Seth or Haji Saheb or pawn takla by his friends because he is bald from the front. His father worked as a technician at the docks and later on as a ship painter. His mother was involved in sorting grain. Shakeel started out with repairing T.V. then, he got himself involved in counterfeit watches, debt recovery etc. Later, he started smuggling gold. He was followed by customs people but owing to his connections he fled to Dubai. He has a family and is a very helpful man by nature. He wanted to be a military officer but all his

designs could not materialize as he risked his life in Bombay, so he moved to Dubai. The don uses internet and electronic media for collecting information. He is fond of reading spy novels. He believes in the power of youth which can be nourished for future. He compares politicians and criminals :

The difference is that all the criminals do their work on screen, which the public can see. Politicians work behind the scene, which the public can't see. It is the same, whether you work from behind or in front of the screen. Politicians are bigger criminals than us. We fight among ourselves, but these people are ruining the whole world. Today the Shiv Sena have ruined Maharashtra. Good government has been done in the Congress rule.(266)

He reflects about the scams & scandals in which the politicians are involved. He asserts that they do not have a plan for future.

He opines that extremity and religion have their own separate territories and usually do not criss-cross but he does acknowledge that some steps should be taken for safeguarding religion and everyone is to be involved with it at some stage or the other. He believes that "The gangwar will never end. Enemies die, but not the enmity. An enemy dies and another is born"(267). In his view Chotta Rajan split from the D-company not because of the bomb blasts but because he became a traitor.

Underworld has their opinionated minds and networks which operate throughout the country. Mumbai has been the centre of all action in terrorist

activates be it riots, blasts or Taj hotel attack. Their system is working because of politicians and mafia-nexus. Criminal gangs enjoy the patronage of the politicians of various parties and protection from government functionaries. Although, the dons have changed their locations and territories but their terror is still visible in different forms.

Chhota Rajan- Nana company: Chhota Rajan split up with D-company and started his own-Nana Company after the Mumbai bomb blasts. He swore to eliminate all those involved in bomb blasts. The dons control their organizations from outside the country.

The real name of Chhota Rajan is Rajendra Sadashiv Wilkhalje. He was born in 1960 and was named as Chhota Rajan to distinguish him from his mentor Bada Rajan. He was a small time black marketer of cinema tickets. He made his mark by avenging the murder of his mentor. He arranged the killing of several important members of Pathan gangs. He was appointed as the head of gang in Bombay by Dawood Ibrahim, when Chhota Shakeel had to run away to Dubai but Chhota Rajan broke up with D-Company.

The Gang war presents a common phenomenon, as one gangster leagues & joins other gang due to change in policies and practices which culminate into gang wars on one pretext or the other. This reflects the urgent need of the gangs to establish their supremacy in various territories.

Ajay Lal: Ajay Lal, the police officer has the look of an intelligent boxer. His hair is short; he is well dressed and well spoken. His personality is like that of an army

officer. He is happily married and has two kids. Ajay Lal's wife, Rita gave up her career and her dream of studying abroad after their marriage. She is satisfied raising her kids but the pressure of being a wife of policeman is not easy to handle. Ajay is a hard cop who is known for his encounters and gruesome interrogations.

Ajay as a policeman came into service in 1981. He had worked in various areas around the city. His father was a producer who suffered losses in film industry. So, he joined the Police Force. He believes "in the uniform there is power"(168). He doesn't drink and doesn't take bribes. He has a clean reputation. He desires to go abroad to study terrorism. He wishes to see how other democracies fight the internal enemies. He feels there is global network of terrorism which is widespread and which involves Muslims gangs. He foresees "... a global linkage of the Muslim militant organizations- in Afghanistan, in Chechnya with the Muslim criminal gangs in Bombay and in Russia" (170). They want to cripple India via Bombay. Osama Bin Laden is taken as their messiah or a saviour although he was the second richest man in Saudi Arabia.

As a parent, Ajay Lal is concerned and worried about the safety of his children. Security guards are provided for the safety of children when they go to school. The freedom of children is curtailed. Ajay is also not able to spend quality time with his family.

This is the enigma of a common bureaucrat. There is an expectation & the will to conquer but the planning and defences are faulty. There are no adequate safety systems for all those people who risk their lives for the country. Many top

officers and shooters lost their precious lives in the terrorist attacks because of faulty and substandard equipments.

Monalisa–Bar Dancer: She is a Gujarati girl. Her father & brother are diamond cutters. Her real name is Rupa Patel. She has studied till tenth standard in a Gujarati school. They used to stay in a village. The family moved to Bombay in a jopadpatti(slum). Her mother had an affair. The father came to know about it and he divorced his wife. He took along his two children to the village. Later, he remarried and left his children to their mother. Monalisa was deeply attached to her father, but she stayed in Bombay. The mother was busy in her affairs while Monalisa used to do all household work. She was made to leave her school. She watched television and got interested in dance shows. She participated in dance programs and boys were after her. Her mother got her engagement fixed but she called off her marriage and was severely beaten. Her mother was working as a waitress in a beer bar so, she put her in bar dancer's line. She was seventeen years old at that time. She strongly hated her mother.

When the author meets her, he tries to understand the girl, Monalisa as an individual. She has cut marks, and cigarette burns on her hand. Her hand is surgically attached. Presently, she is twenty years old. She is very smart and attractive. She is working at Sapphire, a bar and the author is attracted towards her dancing style, she being the tallest was different from others. She has had her customers from all over India and abroad-America and Dubai. She goes for shopping, discos, pools, drinks etc. She is full of self confidence. She wears a

sacred black thread in her neck which shows her faith in Goddess Meldema of Sundernagar.

She came in contact with many people. Some of them used and exploited her. She had serious relations with Samar and Minesh. Samar is the grandson of a don and he wanted to marry Monalisa but family was against it but Monalisa left him because he was teenager and had no money, still she kept friendly relations with him.

Minesh loves her deeply but she is not willing to marry him. He is not at all good looking and balding. He is thirty two years old and chews tobacco. He is a law graduate and is involved in exports business. He refers to bar line as, “the industry. He and the other regular customers are as much a part of the industry as the bar dancers or owners. ‘All the men who go there are dissatisfied with life or have an inferiority complex’.” (328)

He wants attention from his family which is not provided to him, so he finds a via media where he spends money & girls come up to him. He does not want Monalisa to enter the film industry and modelling since they exhaust people sexually, mentally and physically.

Monalisa lives two lives. One is at the dance bar and the other, when she is some other girl-watching television, going to discos and sleeping all the day. She has her own flat at Juhu. She has adopted another girl, Muskan at the bar who is thirteen years old. She talks in bambaiyya accent. She has the suicidal tendencies which run in the family. The narrator gets her to meet the fashion photographers to

click her pictures to get some modelling assignments. “Monalisa is caught between these two worlds, the one she aspires to but can never be accepted in and the other, which she wishes to leave but which keeps pulling her back”(369). She aspires to win the Miss India crown. She wants to become a fashion designer or open up a boutique but she doesn’t know if she can really do that.

The Sad Story of Manoj/Honey: Honey is a man, Manoj who dances dressed up as a woman. The narrator refers to him as, “Honey is a woman who was born as a man by mistake”(346). He is a Sindhi, born in Bombay and is twenty five years of age. Manoj was drawn into the bar line by Sarita Royce when he performed at a dance party & was well appreciated. Manoj’s mother used to smuggle appliances to Singapore. His father collected receipts from theatres for producers & did not want to depend on his wife. Manoj studied till eighth standard in a school at Khandala. His father did not like his son dressed as a woman but finally he reconciled and was dead soon after. Honey worked in different bars before finally settling for Sapphire, he was sixteen years old at that time. Honey was innovative about dancing. He has performed for celebrities like Stevan Segal & others. He has customers from Africa, Jakarta, Mauritius etc. and even Chhota Shakeel, the don. His relatives created problems for him but he managed them. He has bought flats for family and a shop for his brother.

Honey got into drinks, drugs and marriage. It started with vodka, then corex bottles, which he gulped eight to nine bottles a day. After that, he left Sapphire for another bar as he had a fight with a customer at Sapphire. He was married to a Pune girl, Jyoti. He has been married for four years but doesn’t love her.

He wants to go back to Sapphire as his earnings have dwindled. He has worked for nine years in Sapphire. He used to guise himself as Honey, so there are rashes and bruises on his skin. He has to pluck hair from his face. His wife helps him to dress up as a woman. Manoj keeps two personas of his, separate. Some people think he is a gay or a eunuch but he dresses as Honey because of economic necessity. When he is in bar, he is feminine & when he is with his family, he is masculine. He never blends the two roles, that's the reason that he has managed to hold in the bar. He feels that he has not fallen in love; that helps him to maintain the twin personalities. He believes "Love is the blade that cuts down the ladder towards your goal in life. In this line we have lost our identity. And a sense of your identity is essential to being able to truly love"(360). With the passage of time, Honey is losing the looks. He has put on weight. There are solid lines on his jaw. His skin has become messy with pimples & tweezing of hair and he is taking diet pills to lose the weight. People know his identity and have accepted him.

He goes back to Sapphire. His earnings increase tenfold. He is happy with his customers who take her to be a new bar girl. He is in a happy phase of life as his wife is expecting a baby. He also, has his passport by the name of Honey. He has had gall bladder operation and finding it difficult to dance. Now, he wants to come out of the guise of Honey to establish himself as Manoj. He realises that the industry is changing and he could not match with the newer concepts.

Bar dancing has been banned in Mumbai with effect from 2005. There have been protests by the dancers for their relocation & now they have shifted their bases to new locations.

Sanjay Dutt-A Film Star: Sanjay Dutt is indicted in the court against TADA charges. He has already served in jail for two years. Ajay Lal, one of the cops mentioned earlier interrogated him. Dutt shares his experiences of living in prison. All the film industry turned his back on him. He started taking drugs during his boyhood days. He lost his mother and wife to cancer. He sought treatment to his addiction.

He had extreme fascination for the guns. During Bombay riots, he wanted to protect his family. So, he consulted with the don and arranged for AK-56 rifles. In return for the favour, the don used his garage for the supply of guns, which were used in Bombay blasts. Various conspirators were interrogated and then the name of Sanjay Dutt was raked up. The gangsters tried to destroy the guns & gun powder at his place but some proofs were traced up and he was arrested. He was at the peak of his career when he was jailed. He believes that he was arrested at the behest of Sharad Pawar who was a rival politician to Sunil Dutt, Sanjay's father.

While in prison, he had to eat jail cooked food & was put up in a lonely cell. He became friendly with the beings of nature- birds and ants. Later, he felt acute loneliness & banged his head on the wall. He was given medical treatment & was shifted to a cell with twenty one hard core Sikh militants, who were very protective about him. He studied their lifestyle, met many shooters & how they were picked up. When he was released from the jail, he shared his experiences with the film world who expressed their desire to translate those experiences into movies.

He realized that these terrorists were God fearing people and not all were strong, physically. Sanjay rationalised & changed his lifestyle and lost his body

weight. He believes that these gangsters are honest people. In the courtrooms, the head master approach is generally practiced by the judge.

Presently, Sanjay Dutt has been convicted of illegal possession of arms relating to the 1993 Mumbai blasts case and has been sentenced to five years imprisonment, which he is serving. Dawood Ibrahim's links with Bollywood have never been a secret affair. Police investigations have forced mobsters to keep their activities subtle, otherwise many Bollywood stars openly displayed their mafia connections.

Babbanji-A Poet: Babbanji is a young poet from Bihar who meets Mehta in a writer's salon. He doesn't understand English and writes in Hindi. Mehta helps him to get a job but wherever he goes, his reputation of a Bihari creates a hurdle. Nobody wishes to take him into a job and they make fun of his education which they consider as fake. Biharis are considered as thieves. Babbanji makes a very pertinent remark, when he says as to why Hindi is considered a liability in India whereas, in other countries they promote their national language while in India people are adopting other's language and considering it as their status symbol.

He is not even seventeen years old. His father is a college lecturer in geology in a small Bihari town of Sitamari. He wanted his son to become a scientist. Babbanji had won science competitions at school level. Later, in the college, a girl fell for him and on account of the circumstances, which conspired he decided that he would leave science and will concentrate on writing. He went back home and wrote to his parents that he was leaving home and when he would return he would achieve something. He sat in a train for Bombay and suffered great hardships on his way but finally reached there. In Bombay, he did not eat anything

for three days & then started working with booksellers. He got rupees fifty per day. He used the money judiciously on food and other basic necessities. Whatever was left, he spent on buying books.

He availed public utility service. In the toilets there, is mad rush. There is no privacy when one takes bathe. There are clashes over water. He sleeps in open air and has no attraction for flats & cars. He finds open spaces comfortable for establishing relationships. “On the footpaths you can establish relationships, friendships. The footpath is the friend of the poor” (519.)

He believes that shayris are good for entertainment while poetry deals with truth. In his free times, he roams around the city and imbibes the rich culture, tastes & translates those experiences in poetry.

On the insistence of Mehta, he writes a postcard to his father. His father, a man in forties comes running to him as soon as he receives the letter. The father is impressed by his son’s skill in writing. He wishes that his son should get enroll himself in Ph.D. He wishes to return back taking along Babbanji with him but Babbanji has certain reservations but finally he is convinced. Babbanji feels he would not be able to forget Bombay as it has given food for thought, material for something to write on.

Bihari is a community in India which gets the least respect. Biharis are trapped in a cycle of their own making which is based on low self esteem and respect. This reputation they have earned because of the fake institutions and fake system which have been on roll in the region but now practical and progressive

Bihar has moved away from the shackles of discrimination. Most of the students, the intelligentsia selected in Indian Administrative Services are Biharis.

The Ladhanis-A Jain Family: Suketa Mehta meets the family of Seventibhai Ladhani, the patriarch of the family. The family has five members- the father, mother, a nineteen year old son and seventeen year old twins- a son and a daughter. They are rich diamond merchants with lavish house. They want to renounce the world in order to attain moksha(eternal freedom).

It took years for Seventibhai to reach this decision about his future course of action. He has stopped the use of allopathic medicine, petrol and electricity. He began a course with Chandrashekhar Maharaj about the Jain teachings and started taking his family along. His children were taken out from private schools and given the education in dharma. The children can read Jain scriptures and the languages Sanskrit & Prakrit.

The extended family of Seventbhai was not allowing them to leave but they had to accept it. The man and woman would go their separate ways. The monks have to travel for food gathering. Whatever they gather from different kitchens, they blend it together and eat it cold. They would be walking and observing the five vows - no violence, no untruth, no stealing, no sex, no attachments. They will wear white unstitched piece of cloth. The hair of their heads will be pulled out every six months. They can't bathe also. They can do a light wipe of the skins.

The family is taken out to attain diksha in an elaborate manner. There are drums, beats, people and elephants. The family is scattering rice, gold and silver coins. The guests are being fed for seven days & on the eighth day everyone has

been invited for a great feast. Jains are very strict in their diet plan. They believe in minimum harm to the planet. They don't take onions, garlic or potatoes in the food.

There are two sects in Jainism. One is Sthanakvasi fold which does not believe in worshipping idols. The other is Deravasi sect which is the idol worshipping sect. Ladhanis belong to Deravasi sect. Sevantibhai & his family are given new names. The silk robes which they are wearing are changed & the next morning they embark for a new journey. Sevantibhai has kept an insurance policy for his children if they wish to return back.

After seven months, Mehta again meets Sevantibhai. All the hair on his face head & lips has been pulled out manually in order to make the body strong. He has been reading Jain manuscripts. The boys do not seem to be very happy. The games of the children are of different nature like labelling the books, washing clothes once a week etc. Sevantibhai doesn't miss Bombay and he acknowledges that. The writer finds the life of Ladhanis rigid. They are against modernism, western education, consumerism etc. but still they are enjoying the freedom to live, the life of mind while others are busy in promoting their own selfish interests. Sevantibhai is free of all tensions of life; he has attained his win over death.

Ladhanis have chosen a very difficult life to live being a part of metropolitan society. It is hard to lead a nomadic life devoid of luxuries. The path to renunciation is fraught with problems but their effort is commendable. Whether they are successful or not is altogether a different story.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Suketu Mehta has exhibited an enthralling and riveting tale of an exhilarating city called Mumbai. One envisions a spectacular Mumbai which is powerful, impressive, intimate, subtle and heartbreaking inclusive of rendition of the moving and vibrant portraits.

William Dalrymple praises the book, as he relates to Soumya Bhattacharya:

Maximum city is the remarkable debut of a major new Indian writer. Humane and moving, sympathetic but outspoken, it's a shocking and sometimes heartbreaking book, teeming with extraordinary stories. It is unquestionable one of the most memorable non-fiction books to come out of India for many years and there is little question that it will become the classic study of Bombay.(n. pag.)

Each section of the book unfolds before us a picture of a world which is crushing and tottering out due to the extraordinary weight of sham culture & politics of a few who have the will to lead, to dominate through legal or illegal methods. Polemics of multiple cultures and ethnic strains are markedly visible in the modern society. One tries to adjust and cope with the struggles and dreams but complexities usher back as monsters ready to gulp down the victims who cannot escape or find recourse to their problems. They have to make compromises and undermine desires which lead to identity crisis. They have no option left as

political leaders, police, bureaucrats, technocrats, gangsters all like leeches are ready to squeeze and suck their blood.

India has a multiparty system, where there are a number of national and regional parties. The formation of coalition governments in state or centre reflects the transition in Indian politics towards smaller and narrower parties. The victory of Shiv Sena in the elections is a testimony to that but the leaders and party members are looking for their own profits, no one cares about national concerns. In politics, corruption undermines democracy and good governance by flouting and subverting formal processes.

There is a lack of homogeneity in the Indian population which is the cause of differentiation amongst people which is based on religion, region, language, caste and race. This has led to the rise of political parties with agendas catering to one or a mix of the group. If one religion is appeased by a party, the rival party will support other religion. In all circumstances, it is the masses who suffer.

Politics-Underworld nexus and Bollywood-Underworld relations have virtually become a reality where each one of them is dependent on the other for the fulfilment of its needs. Politicians hold their dominance on account of the gangsters while gangsters procure money out of leaders. Bollywood movies are funded by dons while the artists are secured from any kind of threats. Their interdependence is quite apparent.

People living in slums become an easy prey for they serve as the baits to be used by the influential. They are sitting on the two edged sword where they are the attackers and they are the victims.

Bar dancing was a profession for many girls with help of which they supported their families. With the ban on the bars, it is a great task for the government to rehabilitate these girls. Meanwhile, the girls have found other sources for earning and leading their lives as it comes.

The problems of living in a metro city are varied and manifold. Water problem, sewerage system, power supply, gas connection, slums, the poor construction material of flats, temporary roads-to name a few have reached alarming levels. One has to stand in long queues and wait to fulfil these necessities or bribe somebody to get the work done. The rich are getting richer while poor are still staggering. The gap is huge and pervading. Elite have their own ways. They can squander away their wealth whenever they like and also have the resources to get it back. Like the Ladhanis offer renunciation to attain equanimity with God. They already have insurances on the name of family members. It doesn't matter whether they would be successful in their efforts or not but they have nothing to lose if they return lack.

The novelist has used the Bumbaiyaa or local dialect to relate with the city life and it adds to the sense of identity with local people.

The writer misses his world and realises the true culture of Bombay but he also understands the fact that home is where the family is. It is not necessary that

the roots where one is born, be an idealized environment. The dream world of Bombay is not as vivacious as it used to be. The western culture has fractured its roots whereby new tendencies and ideologies are trying to fill in those gaps. The golden dreams are not so golden, it can become nightmarish also. The study of the dream world of Mumbai and issues related with it lead us to the concluding chapter of the study.

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