

ronger manush

the missing colours of life



HERE was a time when the jingling sounds of the *Gotigaram walah's* anklet used to magnetise all the children of the neighbourhood. His flashy outfit, lively walk along the streets, and the spicy *chanachur* he sold, used to brighten up many faces. His presence coloured up the places he went to. He left his trail behind every time, the trail of joy and a splash of colour along the path he had taken. Remember him or the *lace-fita walah* and his mixed bag of *reshmi churi*, dangling earrings and hair bands?

Do you recall the circus elephant and the *Mahut* who used to visit homesteads and shops after the performing season was over, the elephant that was well trained and knew all about how to ask for money in exchange of a little performance? The elephant knew how to steal if anyone refused to tip him. The stylish circus performers and their daring stunts. The friendly street magician and his clever monkey. The *hawai mithai walah* and his yummy pink cotton candy balls. The *tala chabi walah*, the old man with his bioscope, the old lady who used to make hand fans and

sell them to our mothers, and the street astrologer with his talking parrot. Do you recall their faces and the colour they used to add to our life? Once upon a time these people used to enchant us, they used to provide us with elements of fancy. A few of these colourful people still exist. They exist in a world where the corporate culture failed to creep in. They dwell in a space that has no place for the upgraded modern life of ours, the life that failed to preserve the harmony in diversity, the boisterous part of us, these vivid and well-spirited

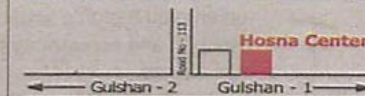
beings. Life is evolving every split second; renovation and modification is the other name of modernisation. Modernisation transforms everything it touches. Fast-paced and reckless, it always charges towards change. Like the rolling stone, it crushes anything that stands in its way, including the traditions, and the quaint little elements that once added a touch of magic in our lives. In the wake of this awesome phenomenon, the colours of life slowly bled away without us even realising it. Modernity has bleached away the red, green,

yellow, and everything in between; it faded the colour of love, youth power and joy. We are left with the grey days and not-so-dark indefinable colour of the night; different shades of mundane. It is hard to grasp where the world is actually going at such haste. But one thing for sure, the jingling sound that used to stir up the children, the sound that used to brighten up many faces in our neighbourhood and the men behind will be missing from that destination. **By Shahnaz Parveen**
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