

## **Uncovering Urban Legacies: Tracing the Sindhi and Parsi Heritage of Bombay**

The cosmopolitanism of Bombay was more diverse than a rainbow for all its shades and colours. It would instantaneously catch your imagination, with each corner embracing a community adding a captivating layer to the social fabric of the city. Present-day Mumbai's foundation is laid on the inheritance, cultures, and lifestyles of communities that made it their home generations ago. The communal diversity can be traced back to the 17th century which saw a flock of traders and merchants landing on the shores.

A large percentage of Sindhis who fled Pakistan during Partition found refuge in Bombay. While the city presented them with opportunities to re-establish their businesses, they also contributed to it in many, some rather surprising, ways.

The Parsi community was at the epicenter of Bombay's development for more than four centuries, shaping and re-shaping the city as we know it today, playing a pivotal role in cementing Mumbai as the financial capital of the country.

Mumbai Research Centre, Asiatic Society of Mumbai, Gateway House, and **Avid Learning** present **Uncovering Urban Legacies: Tracing the Sindhi and Parsi Heritage of Bombay**, a lecture demonstration followed by panel discussion celebrating the rich cultures and contributions of the two prominent communities making up Bombay's historic DNA.

Please read below for more information on the event:

The expert speakers will explore the prosperous heritage of the communities to understand their indelible legacy on the city and its surroundings. They will traverse Bombay's historical, geographical, and sociocultural influences while illuminating the lesser-known ones. *Biographer and Oral Historian, Saaz Aggarwal* will talk about the contributions of the Sindhi community in the making of Bombay. *Assistant Professor of History, S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research Dinyar Patel* will cast light upon the momentous heritage of the Parsi community. After their illuminating presentations, the speakers will engage in an invigorating panel discussion with moderator for the evening *Writer and Bombay History Fellow, Gateway House Sifra Lentin*.

The event will be followed by a Q&A session with the audience.

This will be Avid Learning's **sixth presentation** in the **Uncovering Urban Legacies** series. We launched it during our online avatar last year starting with The Jewish Diaspora in Bombay, followed by Iranian, Portuguese, and Chinese Diasporas. Earlier this year, in September, we conducted the fifth event in the series, celebrating the legacy of the Armenian diaspora from Bombay and Calcutta at the Durbar Hall, Asiatic Society of Mumbai.

Come and be a part of this fascinating journey to discover and re-discover the stories of not one but two communities that embraced and enriched Bombay.

Event Details:

**Where:** Durbar Hall, Asiatic Society of Mumbai, Fort, Mumbai 400001

**When:** Tuesday, 17th January 2023

6:00 pm - 6:30 pm Registration | 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm - Session

**RSVP:** [www.insider.in](http://www.insider.in)

Contact: [ayeshah.avid@gmail.com](mailto:ayeshah.avid@gmail.com)

### About Speakers:

**Saaz Aggarwal** has a Master's degree in Mathematics, but over the years established herself as a writer and artist. Her body of work includes biographies, translations, critical reviews, and humour columns, as well as themed painting collections and mixed-media installations.

Her books *Sindh: Stories from a Vanished Homeland* (2012), *The Amils of Sindh* (2019), and *Sindhi Tapestry* (2021) are in the libraries of the best universities around the world, and much of her research contribution is online: *sindhstories*, *sindhworkis*, talks, and free downloads.

Her latest book, *Losing Home* (2022), uses simple language and strong visual imagery, weaving personal stories with historically-authentic illustrations and archival photographs, to tell the story of what life was like for the Sindhis until they were scattered by Partition, and the subsequent heroic rebuilding of lives. It is the culmination of ten years of research, and carries important messages for readers of all ages!

**Dinyar Patel** is an Assistant Professor of History at the S. P. Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR) in Mumbai. He is the author of *Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism* (Harvard University Press, 2020), and the recipient of the 2021 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize. Patel's research focuses on the Indian nationalist movement, the urban history of Bombay/Mumbai, the history of the Parsi community, and global dimensions of Indian history. He is the recipient of fellowships from the US National Endowment for the Humanities and the Fulbright Program. His articles have been published in *BBC News*, *The New York Times* online, *Atlantic*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Scroll.in*, *The India Forum*, *Indian Express*, and *The Hindu*.

**Sifra Lentin** is a Mumbai-based writer and the Bombay History Fellow at Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations. She was awarded the 2018-19 Herbert Katz Fellowship for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania for her ongoing project on "Karachi's Jewish Community". The books written by her are the Indian Navy's Western Fleet coffee table book '*A Salute to The Sword Arm – A Photo Essay on The Western Fleet*' (April 2007); *Our Legacy: the Dwarkadas family of Bombay* (March 2018), *Bombay's International Linkages* (February 2019), a Gateway House publication, and more recently "Mercantile Bombay: A journey of trade, finance & enterprise" (2022). She has contributed chapters on Bombay's Jewish community to three books.

### About Partners:

The **Mumbai Research Centre, Asiatic Society of Mumbai** is the brainchild of the late Dr. Aroon Tikekar. Since its inception in 2009, the MRC has organized lectures and workshops, funded research projects, and conducted heritage walks and visits, all with the aim of evoking interest and promoting interdisciplinary research about Mumbai. Since 2020, the Centre has organized online lectures, certificate courses, walks, and visits such as the "Jashn-e-Dastaan-e-Mumbai", a multidisciplinary festival, with the purpose of raising awareness of the city's heritage, conservation, and communities.

The Asiatic Society of Mumbai, founded by Sir James Mackintosh, is a learned society generating, systematizing, and disseminating knowledge of India and Asia in diverse areas like numismatics, epigraphy, anthropology, history, archaeology, linguistics, philology, natural history, geology, philosophy, literature, and theology. In 1830, it moved into the Town Hall Building. In 1841, the Society started publishing its prestigious journal which continues to date.

**Gateway House:** Indian Council on Global Relations is a foreign policy think-tank established in 2009, to engage India's leading corporations and individuals in debate and scholarship on India's foreign policy and its role in global affairs. Gateway House's studies program will be at the heart of the institute's scholarship, with original research by global and local scholars in geo-economics, geopolitics, foreign policy analysis, bilateral relations, democracy and nation-building, national security, ethnic conflict and terrorism, science, technology and innovation, and energy and environment.

**Avid Learning** is Essar's cultural philanthropy arm and India's leading public programming platform. Founded in 2009, over the past decade and counting, Avid Learning has presented over 1400 multiverse and hybrid programs on its offline and online platforms – AVID Online, launched in 2020 – and jointly reached 1.8 million interested learners, globally.

With a vision to democratize the arts, create new audiences, and deepen engagement in India's burgeoning creative sector, Avid Learning thoughtfully curates diverse events that embrace the spirit of collaboration. In all its efforts, Avid Learning stands true to its motto that #LearningNeverStops.