

Travelling in local: A different view

Mumbai is defined by many things, be it monsoon rains or city's night life all contribute to the unique character of the city. Another important thing that has become indispensable with the city's culture is the local train travel. The experience one gets travelling in the morning rush is incomparable to any other. It is no short than a movie script that includes comedy, fighting and excitement all combined in one journey.

With such a large number of people travelling in a train, fights are bound to take place. When a train is fully packed even a small thing can start a fight. We are in Mumbai and people belonging to Maharashtra love to talk in Marathi. A fight started between three people, and one of them started speaking in Marathi trying to emphasize the point that Mumbai belongs to him more. The second person acted even more smartly, he stated speaking in his mother tongue that I believe was Tamil. The third person was able to understand nothing except the fact that a heated conversation is going on. He must have felt left out so he started speaking in his mother tongue in as excited manner as he could. There would hardly be any one in the compartment who wouldn't have laughed at it.

Mumbai residents are of helpful nature and nothing describes it more than this incident in a local train. On the harbor line while going from Vashi to Kurla the train passes through, Chembur. Anyone who has travelled in the morning hour knows how tough it is to board the train at Chembur. Even tougher is getting down from the train, if you are not standing at the gate. A gentleman in a train was standing with at least four rows of men ahead of him. As the train reached Chembur he tried his best to get in front. By the time he reached the door the train has already started and was picking pace. He was not willing to let the whole effort of coming out, go to waste. So he jumped out of the running train like his life depended on it. Once he landed on the platform he started to run to ensure he didn't fall. As he was running the train passed by and he was next to the previous compartment. The passengers in that one thought he is trying to catch the train. So as a helpful gesture they caught hold of him and brought him back into the train, then looked into his eyes expecting a thank you.

Travelling in trains can make people more daring. Generally a person will take a second class ticket from the counter for travelling to his or her destination. However, on reaching the platform, one may have second thoughts seeing the number of people trying to get in the second class. This is the time when comfort and discomfort become too big as compared to right or wrong and the mind takes the decision in favour of comfort. The mind let goes of all the fear of being caught by the authority.

In my whole life I have heard the words '*Har Har Mahadev*' only at two places, either on television in some old war movie or at local train platform. When a train, filled to its maximum capacity, enters a station with 20 -30 commuters waiting to board the train from each door such war cry comes out naturally. In any case there is no place for someone experiencing Siderodromophobia, fear of train or train travel.

There is a sea of people that travel within a train and when they come out, it is no less than a free flowing river. On a positive note one may use it to save lot of money. People pay thousands

of rupees for white water rafting while they can get that experience for free. All they need to do is to try and get out of train at stations like Kurla or Dadar. One will easily feel like a boat swaying in the sea of people.

It might not be easy travelling in the local train but the whole experience is worth travelling.