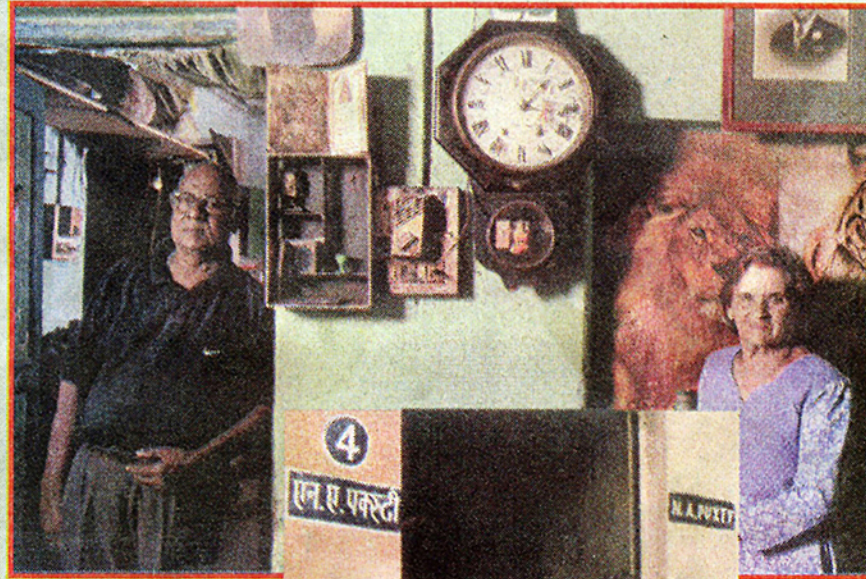


At first glance it appears "thin" as since there is no obvious storyline to Dileep Prakash's just-released collection of photographs on Anglo-Indians: it does not project the community's history, traditional occupations, etc., as do most publications on minority entities. Yet one is inevitably (magnetically?) compelled to take a second, third and even further and "deeper" look at the artistic, top-quality camera work: and that's when the collection begins to grow on you. For in a subtle, sensitive way, through the faces in the pictures, it tells more than a mere story. It portrays a unique way of life without creating the impression that such was the basic objective.

Prakash spent two years visiting 41 towns and photographed over 1000 A-Is who he gratefully acknowledges opened their homes to him, cooperated in his photographic mission, and actually confirmed several times over the gut-feeling that had triggered his interest in the community and fuelled his already reputed passion for camera work - the unheralded dignity with which the community has conducted itself through times good and bad. Yes dignity on the face of several handsome women, a baker, an undertaker, a jockey-

SUBTLE, SENSITIVE



turned-trainer, a former air chief and those smiling even as they saw the sun setting on their lives in a home for the aged.

Some community traits are projected through photographs of the homes: sacred pictures, family photographs with a wedding pic being almost a "must", heirlooms showcased for their essentially priceless

sentimental value. Not all those homes boasting top-of-the-range creature comforts but projecting the "well worn" comfort that comes from the family spirit, not the paycheck. Dileep's basic training as a news-cameraman also manifests itself in a simple picture that speaks volumes for the community's capacity to adapt - a doorway with name-boards in both Hindi and English.

For those unfamiliar with Anglo-Indians, of immense

enlightenment is an essay by the noted Irwin Allan Sealy, but rightly it is placed at the end of the coffee-table publication - the touching photographs create the perfect ambience for savouring the literary offering. Published by Photoink, the collection of some 40 photographs is priced at Rs 1,200. An exhibition of a selection of them is open till 5 April (Sundays excluded) at the Photoink gallery, Faiz Road (Jhandewalan), from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

