

Chapter 17

Nandita in Mumbai

I came to Mumbai a month ago. Since we came, mother has been admitted in the hospital. We had to come to Mumbai for her treatment.

The Big City – Mumbai!

I have slowly got used to the city. I still remember the day when mother and I got off the train at the Mumbai station. It was so crowded! I quickly caught hold of mother's hand. I was thinking



about how *Mama* would find us in the crowd. Just then, I heard someone calling loudly from behind, “Nandita, Nandita.” I turned back, and there was *Mama*.

We left the station and were soon on our way to *Mama's* house. But, again, it

For the teacher: Mother's brother is called *Mama* in Hindi. Ask children what do they call mother's brother in their family?



was so crowded everywhere. There were many huts lined all along the narrow street. We went through the street to reach *Mama's* house. *Mama*, *Mami*, their two daughters and a son – all live in one room. Now, I too live here with them. It is here that we sit, sleep, cook and wash – all in one room.

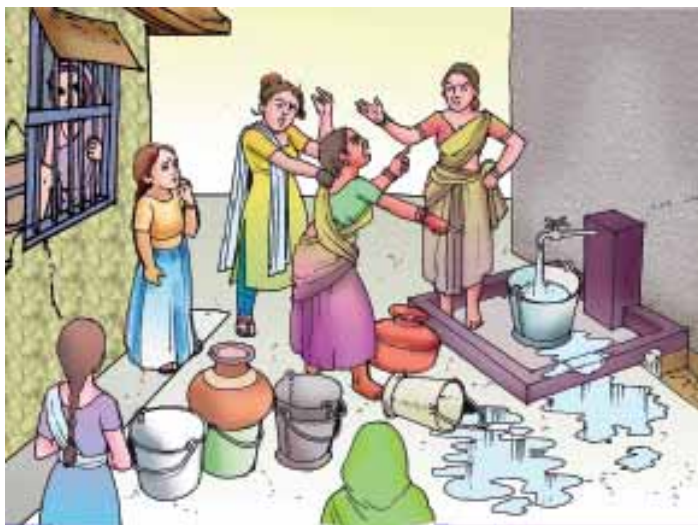
My house in the village also has only one room, but we have separate places for cooking and for bathing. We also have a courtyard outside.

Water, Water

Mami, Seema and I get up at 4 o'clock every morning and go to the public-tap to fill water. Oh no! You won't believe how many fights there are for water. If we are just a little late, then we are not able to fill water for the day. There is no tap in our house in the village too. The pond in the village has water. It takes twenty minutes to walk to it. In summer, sometimes, the water in the

pond dries up. Then we have to walk for almost one hour to the river to get water. But in the village, there were no fights for water.

In the street where *Mama* lives, there is a toilet at one end. Everyone in the street uses that toilet. It is always very dirty and smells so bad. At first, it used to make me want to vomit. At times, there is no water. We have to take water with us. Now I am getting used to all this. In the village, people go to the open places or fields for toilet. The men and women go to different places.



❧ Why did Nandita have to bring her mother from the village to Mumbai?

❧ Nandita used to feel like vomiting when at first she had to use the toilet where *Mama* lived. Why?

Ø In what ways did Nandita find her *Mama's* house to be different from her house in the village?

Ø What differences did Nandita find between getting water from the public tap and in the village?

Ø Was there electricity at the place where Nandita's *Mama* lived? Guess.

Learning New Things



Everyday I go to the hospital by bus to see my mother. At first, I was too scared to get into such crowded buses. I was not at all used to it. I was afraid. But now, it is not like that. I know how to stand in line, how much to pay for the ticket, where to get down.

Where we stay, there is a tall building nearby. My *Mami* works in seven houses there. She washes utensils and cleans the houses. One day I went there with her. When

I first saw the building, I thought that it was one big house. But I found that there were many houses, one on top of another. I was wondering how I would climb so many stairs, but there was a lift to take people up and down. It was like a big iron cage with fan and light and even a bell. So many of us got into the lift. Somebody pressed the button and lift went up quickly. To tell you the truth, I was very scared in the beginning.



- Ø Do you know anyone who was admitted to a hospital?
- ø For how many days was he or she in the hospital?
- ø Did you visit the person in the hospital?
- ø Who was looking after the patient at the hospital?
- Ø Have you ever seen a tall building? Where?
- Ø How many floors did the building have?
- Ø How many floors did you climb?

Another House

Mami took me first to Babloo's house. His house was on the twelfth floor. What a big house! So many rooms – one to sit in, one to eat in, one to sleep in, and one to cook in. Their toilet was also in the house! It took *Mami* a lot of time to clean Babloo's house, but she could work easily. There was a tap



in the kitchen and water flowed from it. Babloo put a bucket under the tap to fill water for his bath. Then he sat down to watch TV. So much water was wasted – I did not like it. I went and closed the tap.

Babloo's house had big glass windows. *Mami* told me to look down from the window. I could see *Mama's* street and the houses, but I could not make out which was his house. From up there, everything below looked like small toys. I was quite afraid to look down from such a height.



- Ø When Nandita first came to Mumbai, what were the things that she was afraid to do?

For the teacher: The lesson describes some differences between where Nandita's *Mama* lives and the houses in the high-rise buildings. Encourage children to think more about such differences and the possible reasons for these.

Nandita in Mumbai

- Ö What were the differences between the houses where *Mama* lived and the houses in the high-rise buildings?

Houses in area where *Mama* lived Houses in a high-rise building

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- Ö Discuss why there were differences.



- Ö Draw a circle around the kind of house you live in. Is it like the house of –

Nandita Mama Babloo Any other kind

- Ö Where does the water come from in your house?
- Ö Is there an electricity connection in your house? How many hours in a day do you get electricity?
- Ö Which is the nearest hospital in the area where you live?
- Ö How far are these from your house?

	<i>Minutes to walk to</i>	<i>In Kilometres</i>
Bus stop		
School		
Market		
Post Office		
Hospital		

- Ö Draw pictures in your notebook of the different kind of houses in your area.

A New Worry

Mama had said that he would take me around to see *Mumbai*. The children around here talk a lot about Chowpatti. They say that big film stars also come there. May be when I go there, I might see a film star!



These days, *Mama* is so worried – I cannot ask him to take me to Chowpatti. Last week some people had come with a notice that everyone should move out of this place. They say a big hotel will be built there. *Mama* was saying that this is the third time in the last ten years that he got such notices. People who live here have been given another place to make their houses. But it is very far away – another corner of the city. There is no drinking water, no electricity. I don't even know if any bus goes there. How will *Mama* reach his work place from so far? How much money will he have to spend, and how much time also. And *Mami*, will she get some other work there! If *Mama* moves to a new place, how will I be able to visit my mother? Mother is not even completely well as yet!



- Why does *Mama* have to change his house?
- Have you ever moved from your house? If yes, why did you have to move?
- Do people in your family have to go far for their work? Where do they go? How far do they have to go?



- Is it right that *Mama* and others have to move because a hotel is going to be built there?
- Who will benefit from this?
- Who will face difficulties?
- Do you know of any people who have faced problems similar to Nandita's *Mama*? Talk about it in class.

Draw a picture of house of your choice and colour it.