

Old mill district brought back to life on web



GIRANGAON

Kanika Sharma

kanika.sharma@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: Girangaon, Mumbai's once-bustling mill district, is gone. But its memory is preserved in poems and now on a website called GiranMumbai / MillMumbai, launched on Tuesday by the School of Media and Cultural Studies (SMCS), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).

The website (millmumbai.tiss.edu) offers today's mall-hopping Mumbaiite a look at the unique history and culture of the mill

district, through an online archive featuring short films, documentaries, photo features, songs and poetry.

Some of these films explore the contributions of the mills' women workers, others trace the aspirations of the families that lived and worked here, and there are those that recreate the lives of stalwarts of the left cultural movement such as poet-activist Narayan Surve and painter Sunil Patwardhan.

The GiranMumbai / MillMumbai project is helmed by Anjali Montelro and KP Jayasankar, professors at the School of Media and Cultural Studies.

"Its purpose is to go beyond nostalgia," said architect and urban researcher Neera Adarkar,



■ A screengrab of the website.
PHOTO: MILLMUMBAI.TISS.EDU

who has contributed an excerpt from a book, *One Hundred Years One Hundred Voices*, she co-authored. "This website is for the post-textile economy generation, who will be excited to know how differently the area thrived just a couple of decades ago."

In addition to watching

documentaries by Anand Patwardhan, Paromita Vohra and Madhushree Dutta, visitors can listen to recordings of poems by Surve and songs by Amar Sheikh, or watch interviews with the likes of veteran activist Datta Iswalkar.

There is also a gallery of photographs by Cathy Greenhalgh, principal lecturer and head of film and television at the London College of Communication, and researcher Shekhar Krishnan, tracing the transformation of the area.

"Lessons should be learnt from the struggle over the mill lands," said journalist and environmentalist Darryl D'Monte, "so that we don't repeat our mistakes with the redevelopment of the Port Trust Land."