



The children's play area in Hanging Gardens, a large terraced garden in Mumbai, is a favourite for Meena and Asha. The 12 year olds are best friends who met when Asha helped Meena up the challenging climbing frame. Sitting at the top of the climbing frame, the two girls would count the big bright buses that would pass by below and would make up stories about taking the bus to the many exciting places in Mumbai. But today was different. Meena seemed worried and lost in thought.

"Meena, why are you not coming up the climbing frame today?" Asked Asha.

"I am class leader for this month and am supposed to think of a fun art project for my class to do. We will then sell the project to raise money to buy notebooks for school children from our neighbourhood basti (collection of small slum communities)" said a slightly worried Meena. Asha soon distracted Meena from her thoughts by encouraging her to race up the climbing frame!

Back in her little hut, Asha thought to herself, "I must help Meena since she seemed worried and because the notebooks that she helps buy will be so useful for children in my own slum community." She then watched her mother who was busy working with her block prints. She used a block, which was like a large stamp with a print, dipped the block in the bright paints and then stamped the fabric with the block. "Aayee, (mum) what are you making today?" asked Asha.

"When I am done, this will become a block printed skirt," said her mother. "The skirt will eventually be sold at Fabric India, the big department store" explains Aayee as she looks at her creation with pride. Asha was delighted! She would show Meena how to create and use block prints. Meena's class could use block prints to make beautiful T-shirts that could be sold to raise money to buy the notebooks!