No Curtains for Lionhearted

No curtains for the lionhearted

Call it entertainment, activism or kid stuff, it is always hard to make endsmeet. But theh theatre people refuse to call it curtains, finds ANJANA RAJAN. From 2002 to 2003 is just another stage cue…

Actors as activists

To some, theatre is relevant only if it is `activist theatre' – street plays and proscenium productions dealing with social issues. Sanjay Kumar, who heads Pandies theatre group, whose production "Cleansing" based on the communal riots in Gujarat was shown at the Spirit of Friendship Festival in Manchester this year, is upbeat about his workshops with a spectrum of the population from slums to the highest social rung. On growing social intolerance, he says, "Adults have gone crazy, so we are targeting children in classes six to ten," and plan to stage the productions in a big way in the coming year.

Manohar Khushalani – recently in the limelight for directing "Kurukshetra… and after", a play by Kanthi Tripathi on war and suffering and the strength to transcend it – has for a number of years worked with issues such as bride burning in the past.

Most social development workers realise that theatre is a potent medium to get across ideas. Graduates of the National

School of Drama have helped NGOs like Literacy India, Mobile Creches and others in designing and conducting workshops for slum communities and presenting street plays with themes ranging from AIDS to the rights of the girl child.