



Urban Villager: Life in an Indian Satellite Town

Vandana Vasudevan

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Urban Villager is a superbly etched and finely detailed representation of the life of an ‘urban villager’ in a modern satellite town of India. It describes how Delhi, as a city, is growing radially, stretching its way into the rural fringes of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh that border the city to form the National Capital Region.

Through the microcosm of Greater Noida, a suburb of New Delhi, the author draws a portrait of life in a semi-urban town, where billion dollar homes and villages with no sewage system share the same pin code. Some farmers sell their land and try to cope with a new found prosperity; others refuse and break into agitations that make newspaper headlines. A builder destroys a wetland to make a township while the middle class in high rises frets about power and security. A few kilometres away, the Formula One event hosts international celebrities amidst bewildered villagers. Living here is being witness to the contradictions and ironies that occur when India is forced to co-exist with Bharat.

The author frequently draws parallels with similar kinds of urbanisation on the outskirts of other Indian metros. Across the country, the city gobbles up more and more of what was once the countryside—whether it is Sriperumbudur in Chennai, Belapur in Mumbai, Yelahanka on the outskirts of Bengaluru or Rajarhat New Town in Kolkata. No matter where you live in India, the story of this book could be the story you see in your city.

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