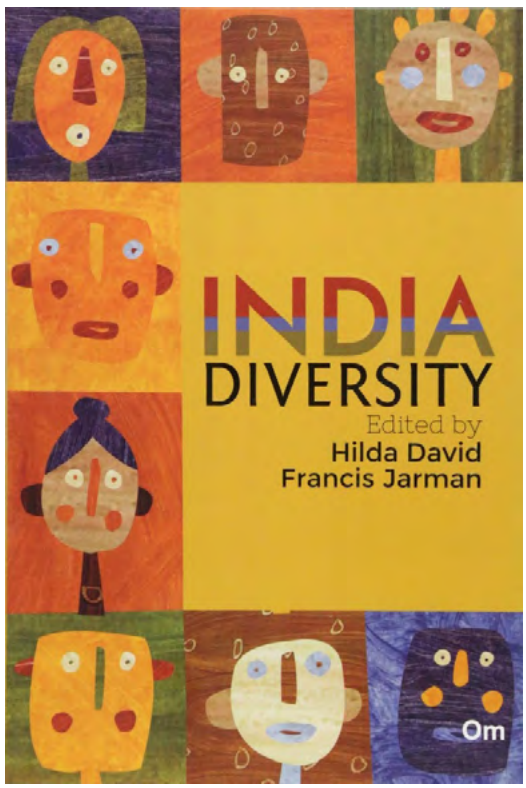
Book Review

India Diversity

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Some books are made to just see through, some are meant to devour. However, some are made to be read over and over again because they challenge your psyche, and find room in the remotest corner of your brain to make you contemplate the norms that are buried deep in the marrow of this supposedly intellectual society. "India Diversity" is one book that fits in the last category.

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The book contains a total number of 21 chapters. The book is a curation of different articles by several authors, journalists, social workers, and educators including Armene Modi, Arshia Sattar, Arundhati Subramaniam, C. Joel Timothy, Dibyajoyti Sarma, Githa Hariharan, Jerry Pinto, Gayatri Pagdi, Manju Ramanan, Meena Kandasamy, MH Zafar, Peer Khan, Prasad Shetty, Premila Paul, Rakesh Sharma, Ramu Ramanathan, R. Raj Rao, Rupali Gupte, Sanjutka Dasgupta, and T.W Geraghty.

It was quite an effort to sail through the book but was an amazing journey after all. The book can make you traverse through those shades of India lurking behind the veneer of politics that has surfaced and evolved since the inception of Independent India, which might not be perceptible to naive eyes. The paragraph that can compel anyone to take up this book, despite the fact that it will be difficult for people to comprehend the complexity of our country. Yet, those quiescent questions that an individual might not ask in this restrictive dynamic otherwise, with fear that it might vitiate some tactic issues this country is festering upon. The paragraph reads, "The more you look around the world, at the chaos, conflict, horror, and repression in the name of religious ideology, not least in the lands very close to India, the more you realize how Nehru, for all his imperfections, got one question right. Now that India is finally positioning itself for a spectacular economic take-off, it is not the right time to endanger that by opening a can of worms that is communalism," nevertheless one will be surely glad to pick on this one to read.

What could flabbergast an individual are the problems highlighted in the book through various articles curated by different writers that have encircled them and that they were complacent about the issues because no one ever directed their stream of thoughts in the said manner. Enumerating on every article in the book is quite a tedious task. But to give a gist of it – the first chapter 'After the Election' deals with one of the most contentious topics in public discourse, the 2014 elections, the BJP government coming in, and the whole politics revolving around Hindutva. The second chapter 'Making the City Hers' deals with the sardonic lives of women in India.

The third chapter 'Voices for the Voiceless – Transforming Women's Lives in Rural India' expands on Armene Modi's project 'Ashta No Kai' and how it transformed the lives of several women. Another chapter talks about 'Gay in India' and the chapter delves into the homophobia wafting through the country and the narratives around section 377. The book does not ignore the discourse on tribal politics in the country as one of the chapters titled 'You, Me, and Hum' deals with this issue. This book also motivates the readers to view the country from different lenses. India's diversity cannot be discussed without mentioning Northeast

India. Therefore, a specific chapter details social fabric of Northeast with some instrumental issues of quarrelling diversity of North-eastern states and discusses the imperative questions regarding the same. From illegal Bangladeshi migrants to Bengal Renaissance to the lingual franca of the state to insurgencies to Operation Bajrang/Operation Rhino to the politics of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland, has been mentioned the chapter. The book is not just about chapters on various aspects of diversity, but also has poems to celebrate India's prolific character. For instance, one of the poems is on 'Refugees.' The writers also set the discourse on topics like 'Diversity within Valmiki Ramayana'-this is a contemporary take on Ramayana and its interpretation from various facets, 'Religious Fundamentalism and Secularism' and 'Church in the Liminal Space- Limitation and Possibilities,' respectively deal with the paradoxical religious dogma in a tart manner. Further, chapters 14 and 15 named 'Voices of Dissent in Maharashtra' and 'The Spatial Dimensions of Property: Notes from Lamington Road in Mumbai', respectively delve deeper into the city of dreams, its suppression of most artistic medium that is theatre while the latter explores through the chawls of Mumbai.

Moreover, a chapter titled, 'The Shared Space of Bollywood' left no stone unturned in reflecting Bollywood as a means of propaganda. The last four chapters are named in the series 'The Way to Go,' 'Caught in Contradictions: India Today,' 'India from the Outside – A Personal View,' and 'Scenes from a Life in Diversity' deal with India as a contemporary landmass. This book is very critical in nature and has the capacity to initiate a critical thinking process. All the contributors have used the language carefully, and vocabulary-wise, it enriches one's diction for sure. This book is a must for all those who wish to study India to understand the myriad layers engulfing socio-cultural diversity. A lot of literature is available to understand the county, however, this piece of non-fiction dive readers into a different world composed of different perspectives.