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An ode to India

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Launch 'Celebrating India' gives the reader interesting accounts of the country as seen through the eyes of different writers



Celebratory affair(from left) Anuradha Goyal, Linda. L. Ashok, Siddharta Mohapatra, Shaily Sahay and Chandrashekar

There is much to celebrate about India. As *Celebrating India* from Nivasini Publications will have you know, India's age old traditions, her constantly evolving culture, her festivals, her metropolitan cities and her villages and towns are inspirations to many.

At a time when every newspaper or magazine talks about our flawed political community, the falling value of the rupee and the rising toxicity of the air we breathe, Nivasini publishers have put together their second book, which gives us many reasons to celebrate the India we grew up in and the India we are helping to build.

Launched at the Oxford Book Store, The Park on Sunday, the book is a compilation of memoirs, short stories and travelogues depicting India as seen through the eyes of people who have lived in and loved her.

The book launch was attended by a few of these authors and brief excerpts from the book were read to give the audience a flavour of what's inside. Anuradha Goyal chose to read a poem by Deepti Pillai titled, 'My life in metros' which wittily summed up what the cities of Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai mean to her.

"I chose to read this because its primary focus is that section of the society which is nomadic," she says, explaining that 'army-kids' or those who work for the software industry shuttle from city to city, feeling a sense of belonging in everyone but having no real home to go back to.

Anuradha's own contribution to the book is a piece on Indian markets titled 'An ode to Indian Bazaars'. She was followed by Shaily Sahay, who read an excerpt from her short story 'Is your tongue still orange, sweetheart?', which aptly captures the quintessence of a childhood spent in India.

Shaily was followed by Linda. L. Ashok, Siddharta Mohapatra and Chandrashekar, the cover photographer, all of whom gave interesting accounts of their association with the book.

The book is a compilation of the works of over 50 authors including those by Deepti Naval, Shashi Tharoor and Gulzar. However, it is not the work of these celebrated writers that makes the book stand out, but the contributions of young, debutant authors brought together by the publishers Nivasini Publications.

Purely a non-commercial venture, the proceeds from the sales of the book will go to Yamini Foundation, a non-profit organisation for mentally challenged children.

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