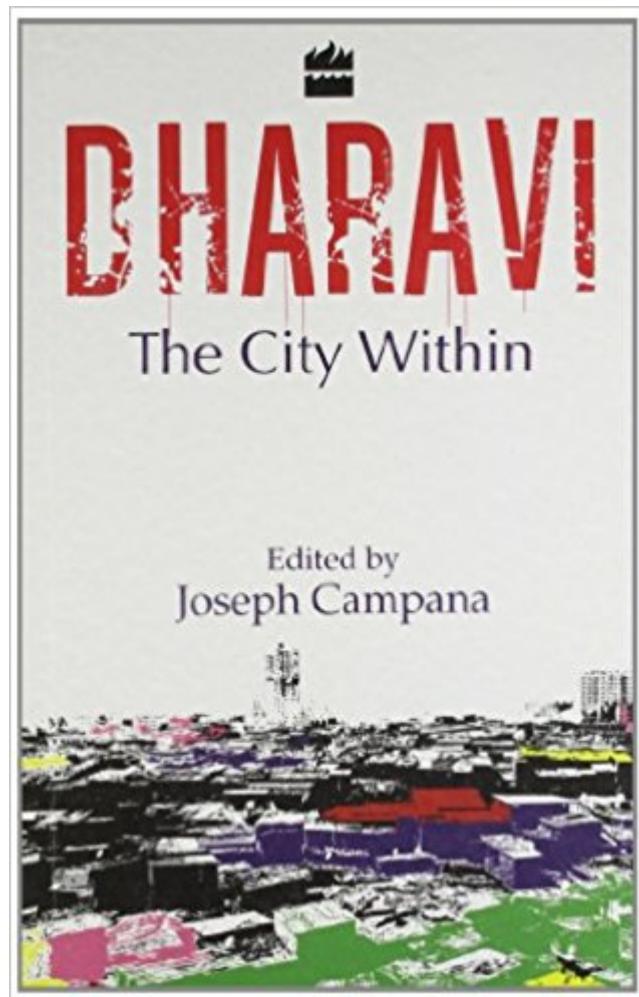


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Dharavi : The City Within



Synopsis

Today Dharavi houses half-a-million people and has the most expensive real estate in Bombay. Behind its success are the efforts of hundreds of extraordinary people. In Dharavi, the dreams, aspirations and anxieties of this thriving community come alive in the hands of some of Indias best writers, like Sonia Faleiro, Annie Zaidi, Jerry Pinto, S. Hussain Zaidi and Dilip DSouza. Meet Prema Salgaonkar, who knocks on 500 doors a day taking deposits for the Mahila Milan Bank to make sure her neighbours have money set aside for when trouble hits. Meet Vadivel Thambi, who delivers milk and texts his poetry to hundreds of adoring fans. Meet Sayeed Khan Bucklewala, a brass foundry owner who makes millions selling belt buckles. Find out how the people who live here pay their bills, cope with shiftless and abusive spouses, educate their children, and protect their homes and livelihoods from those who would turn them out. Alongside is a larger overview of what living in such a city system is like. Dharavi, in the course of its evolution, has raised a number of issues pertaining to decent living standards, development and maintaining amity. These hold important lessons for India as a whole as it urbanizes at a rapid pace.

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Customer Reviews

Dharavi is an area within the Indian city of Mumbai (formerly Bombay). Some people call it a slum and others a place filled with opportunity. Editor Joseph Campana has assembled a group of Indian and foreign writers who work to describe this place. Campana opens with an introduction that pulled me into his book. His descriptions and capsule summaries of Dharavi prepared me for what

followed. He divided the book into four parts: Arrival, Work and Money, The Daily Grind and Timepass, and Fixing Dharavi. Each part begins with a short description by Campana â “ these helped to give the work cohesion and flow. While the boundaries of the four parts are not firm, they gave me a feel for Dharavi that I otherwise would have missed. The first section, Arrival, both brings the reader into Dharavi and begins to paint a picture of some of the half million plus who have come to live and work in this two square kilometers of former marshland. The second part, Work and Money, tells us about some of the economy of the area â “ both a bit of the dark side and of the entrepreneurial spirit that thrives despite a shortage of such basics as water and electricity. We are reminded that we could well be wearing something such as a belt buckle cast and polished in Dharavi. The third part, The Daily Grind and Timepass, added a new word to my vocabulary: â œtimepassâ •. It shows the reader another facet of this rough diamond and leads us to the fourth part. The fourth section, Fixing Dharavi, is a final gem. What makes it so interesting is how Campana and his stable of writers tell us about the possible futures of the land. The property where Dharavi stands has gone from being worthless to some of the most valuable real estate in Mumbai.

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