



Guidebook for future generations

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The Earth Carer's Guide to Climate Change does a good job in delivering an easy-to-read introductory book on climate change

Pallavi Ghosh

Climate change is a reality and the young around the world including Greta Thunberg of Sweden, Ridhima Pandey of India and Isra Hirsi of the US are speaking up. Backed by a clear understanding of how climate change is changing the world, these children are leading the climate change action plan today.

"Understanding" is the key word that is helping these children find a voice. Katha Books' *Earth carer's guide to climate change* offers just this. It helps young minds understand our planet and

what is changing it. Beginning with a Gujarati folk song and ending with a page meant to be filled with colours, the book introduces the word "climate change" in the middle section of the book, while guiding its reader to look for answers in the following pages. What follows is a series of carefully-crafted small snippets addressing basic questions like what is climate change, how it is changing our planet and what can be done to combat it.

Through poems, short stories, illustrations and snippets

of roughly 100 words, the book is successful in providing a basic guide to climate change. The short and crisp writing interspersed with the rigour of poetry and short stories is tailored for easy-reading, best suited for young readers. Thanks to the strong emphasis on story-telling and simplicity of language, the book can easily be recommended for bed time narration for those too young to read.

The book is also available in Hindi, therefore ensuring a wider reach of the guidebook. ♣



Ship of the desert down under

From economy-builders to enemies, how the role of camels have changed in the vast arid land called the outback in Australia

Pallavi Ghosh

During the late 1880s and early 1990s, the British colonisers were still figuring out the vast semi-arid landscape called the outback in eastern Australia. The harsh conditions of the inland area made it difficult for them to carry on with their business-as-usual approach of taking over indigenous land, hence, paving the way for colonial exploitation. But for this, they would require efficient carriers of load/raw materials who could cover long distances without getting too thirsty or exhausted. Packhorses and bullocks were naturally not the ideal candidates for this civilisational mission.

Enter the camel brigade from the Arabian Peninsula, India and Afghanistan. Between 1870 and 1920, as many as 20,000 camels were imported from these regions to Australia together along with their handlers, or cameleers. Thanks to these newcomers, the economic development of arid Australia was made possible. From wool, water, telegraph poles to railway sleepers,

everything and everyone came riding along the hump backs of these imported camels.

By 1930s, however, the arrival of the internal combustion engine and motorised transport made camels redundant as pack-carriers. Thousands of camels were released into the wild, where they naturally thrived given their biological make-up, ideal for survival in extreme heat.

Their release into the wild soon became a problem for the indigenous people who were faced with the routine destruction of fences, water pipes and traditional grazing lands by these camels. To check such invasions of land and water resources, Australian government recently started shooting down camels. Around 1.6 lakh camels had been culled since 2009, said a 2013

report of the Australian Feral Camel Management Project, a government-funded body tasked with keeping the camel number low in the region.

Fast forward to 2020. Over 5,000 camels were shot down as part of a five-day culling exercise in January. Authorities have responded by saying that the culling exercise was aimed at protecting the rights of the indigenous population living in the outback. For a country that witnessed the hottest and driest year on record in 2019, accompanied with fears of a water crisis, it is a matter of survival and self-preservation, according to the authorities. Twenty-seven people and billions of animals have been killed by the wildfires, believed to be triggered by the extremely hot and dry conditions in the country. Millions of acres of bushland, forestland and parks have been destroyed and thousands of people have been displaced due to the wildfires. ◀

For the record



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