

Antarctica

Where the silence speaks

Dr. Pramod Kumar Purohit



ANTARCTICA

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DEDICATED TO
THE SCIENTISTS
WHO
SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES
IN
ANTARCTICA

PREFACE

*A*ntarctica always mesmerized me because of the many superlatives and mysteries attached to it. Its wonderful names like continent of extreme, the icy continent, land of penguins, midnight sun, the residence of blizzard and the continent located at the bottom of the world always stimulate my eagerness to know more and more about it. Being a challenge to science this place has always inspired me.

I was always keen to have glimpse of that continent and to holiday at once in life. Being a science student, my desire of having glimpse of such an open scientific laboratory further strengthened me. With a remarkable stroke of good fortune, I got an opportunity to involve myself as a scientist of the Indian Antarctic Scientific Expedition. To visit this white continent is a memorable fact for any individual.

Antarctica is a continent where the temperature always remains below zero degree and goes down to as low as -89°C , where there is 24 hour day or night endlessly for six months, where blizzards scream like a siren at a speed of over 320km/h with thick dense snow which could choke a person to death, where the sea get frozen for miles and miles on which a man can drive heavy vehicles.

Antarctica is a land of extremes: it is the highest, driest, coldest, windiest continent. It is the last continent to be explored and exploited. The continent about which still least is known has many unusual, interesting and beautiful features.

Antarctica is not only a place of curiosity for scientist but

is a place of interest to layman also. Everyone has questions about Antarctica. In many ways Antarctica is a “Scientists Paradise”. Science is the Principle human activity in Antarctica. The fundamental knowledge gained here is currently being used for practical applications and has potential promise for future applications as well.

All creations in their primitive form are borne in the mind of creator. They acquire their actual shape after passing through a wending path of awakening. A faint wish of writing a book lay hidden in some corner, which seemed acquired shape with my visit to Antarctica.

Being a witness to the Indian Antarctic Scientific Expedition this is an attempt to put words to live processes that had surpassed creating a permanent imprint in the memory. In spite of the fact that it is almost impossible to capture the vastness of Antarctica in words. An attempt to wend the memories associated with self-struggle laid the foundation of actualizing the book.

The expansion of scientific purview in future is an inevitable fact. This book on one hand ponders over elaborating the historical significance of Antarctica and on other hand makes an attempt to put into ink the experiences during the Antarctic expedition.

This book seeks to bring out the importance of Antarctica as well as an introduction to youngsters who may think of pursuing research in this continent. To make the facts and findings at Antarctica known to layman is not only my liability but is also my national responsibility.

This book has been written from a scientific view and all curiosities are unbound layer wise. If the beauty of this captivating continent can be conveyed to the mankind then the purpose of the book would be proved. I am hopeful that this book would aid as a source of motivation about Antarctica and would prove its worth.

Dr. P.K.Purohit

Acknowledgement

My first Hindi book “अंटार्कटिक: विज्ञान एवं चुनौतियाँ” was published in August 2004 and second book “अंटार्कटिक आकर्षण क्यों?” was published in July 2005. I am grateful to hundreds of readers who praised my humble attempt. It has been a wonderful and happy experience.

For any writer the moments of joy are those when the thoughts enfolded in the folds of his brain acquire the form of words inscribed on pages of a book. Antarctica is the land that symbolizes unity, fraternity, solidarity, friendship and scientific research. I am fortunate to be a part of Indian Antarctic Scientific Expedition. It was the most amazing experience of my life!

I am heartily thankful to Mrs. Roli Pradhan for her support in bringing out this book. This book would not have taken this shape without the sincere, untiring and dedicated efforts put forth by her.

I am highly obliged for the endless efforts and support rendered by the family of NCAOR, Goa and NITTTR, Bhopal.

I am especially thankful to Mr. Arun Chaturvedi who always inspired me for this work and extending all possible help in accomplishing this task.

In the execution of this book my special gratitude's are due to Mr. Manish Gupta, Dr. A. K. Gwal, Mr. S.S. Asthana and Mr. S. Pradhan for providing guidance and support. I am ever grateful to my wife Medha Purohit for her cooperation.

Last but not the least I want to express high gratitude towards all people whose blessings and good wishes have shelded me from all odds in Antarctica.

I have tried to make the book as lively and interesting as possible for children. I firmly believe that there is always scope for improvement and accordingly I shall look forward to received suggestions, for further enriching the quality of the book.

With this I present the book before my esteemed readers whatever you like and appreciate is yours, whatever not is mine.

Dr. Pramod Kumar Purohit

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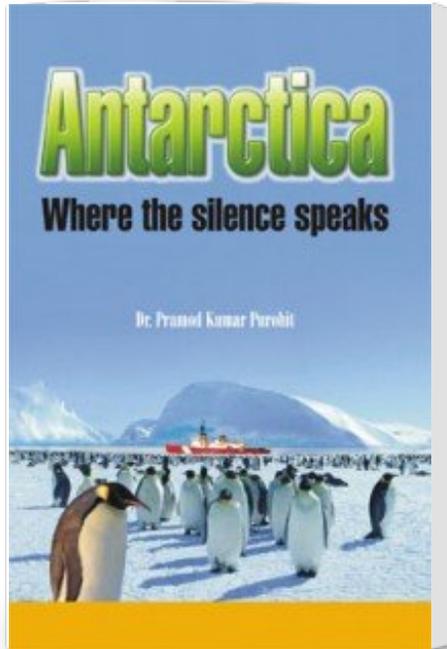
The universe has seven continents namely Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe and Australia. Among all continents on the basis of shape and size Antarctica occupies the fifth place. Antarctica is the remotest, isolated and frozen continent of the Earth, with a very inhospitable terrain and a very harsh climate. Antarctica is arguably the most untouched region on the planet that makes it one of the world's most important places to do scientific research. Prolonged stay and research on this continent is fraught with dangers. Antarctica being called as the heaven for scientist has several unsolved mysteries concealed within it. It is a universally accepted fact that this is the largest pollution free research lab available to the mankind.

☞ *White upto where the eyes capture, sky widespread beyond horizon, standing alone all by itself, Speaking of its own glory, appealing, attractive yet undiscovered, universal yet not personal, depicting life yet beyond life, temperature unsupportive for living yet enhancing campaigns to discovery, months of days and still longer nights.*

People who consider Antarctica a small island would perhaps be stunned to know that it is larger than the combined area of India and China, double of that of Australia and 57 times that of England. Proximity of Antarctic from South

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