

SURVIVING DISASTERS

Indrani's Adventures in Plunder Land

The Story of Earth's Contamination

Suroopa Mukherjee



From the Desk of Dr R K Pachauri

Human society has moved along rapidly on the path of industrialization. We now have a range of mechanized transport, widespread communications infrastructure and devices powered by fossil fuel based energy for a variety of applications. However, all these developments have led to rapid environmental degradation across the globe and an increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere. The result is that the climate of this planet is changing rapidly.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recently brought out two major reports which show that the average rise in surface temperature between 1901 and 2010 has been 0.85°C. In the same period, sea level rise has been 19cm. In addition, certain extreme events have grown in frequency and intensity. The acidification of the oceans, on account of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases being absorbed, is likely to cause serious impacts on marine ecosystems and various forms of marine life.

There is a need for us to mitigate the emissions of greenhouse gases and at the same time to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We need to look at development in a larger ecological context and not merely as a measurement of growth in GDP. Mahatma Gandhi was right when he said that "Speed is irrelevant if you are going in the wrong direction".

"Surviving disasters" aims to re-examine and change the course of our actions in order to save our planet. This series of four books sensitizes young readers towards the impacts and consequences of disasters in a very expressive and thought-provoking manner. The aim is not only to entertain the readers with thrilling stories, but to also inspire them to become responsible soldiers of the Earth.



R K Pachauri

Director-General, TERI

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Dear Readers,

My name is Indrani. My brother Shubham and I are cyber game freaks. He designs games and I play to win! Like other siblings, we eat and play together, and I help him do his homework. We often fight as well. But I just have to say "sorry" and Shubham readily agrees! Basically, we are inseparable.

But our last fight seems to have turned disastrous... not only for us, but for the entire nation. A series of abductions have happened in the city, ever since Shubham's latest game entered the cyber world. New Delhi has become Toxic City. India has become Plunder Land. Earth has become so polluted by the human plundering of sky, water, land, and air that nothing can save the Earth from the deadly forces of destruction. A war seems to be on...between Shubham and me... between planet Earth and Plunder Land.

But I won't give up. I will save my brother and my homeland. I shall play the lethal game my bro has created, though I am aware of the risks involved...the winner lives, the loser dies...



In the dead of night

It was a cold winter night. Things were quiet on planet Earth, as it ought to be. But trouble was brewing in New Delhi, the capital of India.

Something really out of the ordinary was about to happen in New Delhi, while the sleeping population were oblivious.

At the stroke of midnight, the main gate of the National Museum, situated near India Gate, suddenly opened and rolled out a replica of the trading ship of The East India Company. It soon began to make rounds of the city, first entering Rajpath and then went towards the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the Parliament House. The vehicle stopped at India Gate.

A big contingent of teenaged boys and girls stepped out of the vehicle. They divided themselves into groups, with a group-leader in command. They had posters and banners of different shapes and sizes in their hands.

The youngsters moved from street to street, putting up the banners and posters on the walls and electric poles. Some of them took out paint brushes dipped in bright colours and went around drawing graffitis on the walls and pavements. The roads were empty, so there was no one to ask them who they were and what they were doing.





Next morning the residents of New Delhi were in for a shock!

As soon as they picked up the newspaper to catch the day's happenings, they saw that newspaper *Good Morning India* had changed its name to *Good Morning Plunder Land*. The daily supplement *Morning Times* had been changed to *Toxic City Times*. But why? Surely, someone was playing a dirty trick on the ordinary citizens of the country!

As readers flipped open each page of the newspaper, they realized that India was being referred to as **PLUNDER LAND**, and New Delhi was to be henceforth the **Toxic City**.

It soon became apparent that the changing of names had happened on a much larger scale. Names of all the roads, buildings, and historical monuments were now changed. The country was abuzz!

Everyone had many questions to ask, but no one could offer a convincing answer. Why was Delhi's name changed to **Toxic City**? Who had changed its name? Toxic meant poison. Did this indicate Delhi had become a poisonous city? Why was India being called Plunder Land? Plunder meant destroying nature and human resources. Does it mean that India is one of the major contributors in polluting the environment, air, water, and soil?



The same morning, the Chief Head of State was taking his early morning walk inside the lawns of his estate. His eyes fell on a brass plaque on display at the entrance gate. It read: **Estate of the Chief of Plunder Land.**

Plunder Land?? The chief got furious. Who has the courage to damage property within the jurisdiction of the country's Head of State? "This is nothing short of plundering our motherland", he murmured angrily. He immediately called the members of his cabinet to his office for an emergency meeting. Soon the news reached the media, and a press conference followed.

The Head of State and his advisors were in for more shock. As soon as they entered **The House of Democracy**, they noticed its name had been changed to **The House of Deadly Autocracy!** "What is happening?" said the Head of State, "Who could mastermind such a scam? A terrorist organization or an alien from another planet?"

An even bigger shock awaited the Chief and his Cabinet. The central high security Internet server had also been hacked. Deadly secrets, scandals, and stories of corruption were pouring out. It was a major leak that sent the government in a tizzy. The Head of State had to put aside name changing business. He had to plug the leak before it reached the media.

There was only one Super Power, which controlled all the evidences against the looters and plunderers of the world. To take on that Super Power was virtually



impossible. After all, when powerful nations and equally powerful industries of the world came together, there was very little that the hapless, ordinary citizens of the country could do.

A big crisis was looming ahead for humankind.

Unknown to the rest of the city, another set of events was happening in different locations of the **Toxic City**. A spate of abductions of children were taking place. There were no witnesses. The kidnappers did not leave behind any clues.

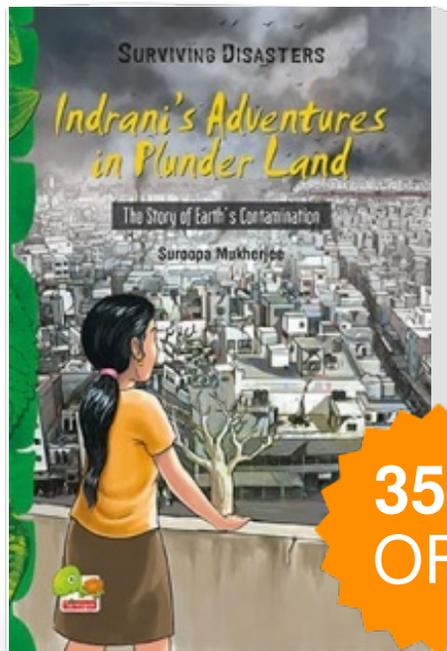
Were the abductions part of the incident of changing names? Nobody seemed to know.

Were all abductions connected?

In the days to come, none of the militant organizations came forward to assume responsibility for the acts. There were no ransom notes. The children seemed to have vanished into thin air! Mystery of the changed names of places remained unsolved, too.



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