



Academic and Activist Perspectives
ON
**BIODIVERSITY AND
CLIMATE CHANGE**

Annual Issue, Vol. 1, 2017

Edited by

Niraj K Singh, Pratibha Rai, Puneeta Agrawal
Sangeeta Mittal, Saumaya Shukla, Swami Nand

Academic and Activist Perspectives on Biodiversity and Climate Change
Volume 1

Published by
Book Age Publications
H-87, Lalita Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092
Distributed by
Brijwasi Book Distributors & Publications
H-87, Lalita Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092
Ph: 22458302, 98111-22902, 98111-40390
E-mail: brijwasipub@yahoo.com
brijwasibooks@gmail.com

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First Edition 2017
© 2017, Authors
ISBN: 978-93-83281-43-5
Price: ₹ 350/-

Laser typeset by MS Computers, Patparganj, Delhi-110092
Printed at MS Indian Enterprises, Delhi

Message

शमोषा सिद्दिकी
SHAMMA SIDDIQUI
उप-सचिव (प्रेस) राष्ट्रपति के कार्यालय में
Deputy Press Secretary
to the President of India



राष्ट्रपति सचिवालय,
राष्ट्रपति भवन,
नई दिल्ली - 110004.
PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT
RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN,
NEW DELHI - 110004.

MESSAGE

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, is happy to know that the Maharaja Agrasen College (University of Delhi), Delhi is organising its 5th National Conference on Biodiversity and Climate Change: Conserving Heritage – Natural Resources and Cultural Wealth on February 16-17, 2017.

The President extends his warm greetings and felicitations to the organisers and participants and sends his best wishes for the success of the Conference.

Deputy Press Secretary to the President

New Delhi
February 15, 2017



Revisiting the History of Medieval Rajasthan

Essays for Professor Dilbagh Singh

EDITED BY

Suraj Bhan Bhardwaj • Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna
Mayank Kumar

PRIMUS BOOKS

An imprint of Bansa Sagar P. Ltd.
Virus Bhawan
Mukhesei Nagar Commercial Complex
Delhi 110 009

Offices at

CHENNAI LUCKNOW
AGRA AHMEDABAD BANGALORE COIMBATORE
DEHRADUN GUWAHATI HYDERABAD JAIPUR JALANDHAR
KANPUR KOCHI KOLKATA MADURAI MUMBAI
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Miyasaka Kenzo 2017*

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First published 2017

Reprinted 2018

ISBN: 978-93-86552-22-8 (hardback)

ISBN: 978-93-86552-81-5 (POD)

Published by Primus Books

Laser typeset by Guru Typograph Technology
Crossings Republic, Ghaziabad 201 009

Printed and bound in India by Replika Press, Pvt. Ltd.

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Mitigating Climatic Adversity in Seventeenth-Eighteenth- Century Rajasthan

A Study of the Socio-Political Negotiations

BHUPINDER K. CHAUDHRY

HISTORICALLY, IN A tropical landscape like the Indian peninsula, famines have occupied an important place in human life. They exert pressure on the availability of water for potable as well as irrigation purposes, thus affecting the basis of sustenance. As agrarian production is affected, it leads to shortage of food supply, and thus its impact is felt at all levels of society—both by those who suffer directly for want of basic subsistence and by those whose authority, security and profit is threatened as an indirect consequence of death and mass starvation.¹ The historical texts of antiquity bear witness to famine as being one of the oldest and most traumatic travails of human history, same is the case with the history of nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Failure of rains, the most prominent cause of most famines in India, has been mentioned from the earliest times. *Atharva Veda*² and *Jatakas*³ record damaging of crops and droughts. Kalhana in *Rajtarangini* mentions a terrible famine that occurred in Kashmir in AD 917–18, when one could scarcely see the water of the river Vitasta (Jhelum), as the river was entirely covered with corpses.⁴ Though a connected and complete account of all the famines that occurred in the pre-British period of Indian history is lacking, it has been suggested that in the earlier times the local/regional famines occurred in cycles of five years and the major famines happened once in fifty years.⁵

Though references to rain water deficiency as a primary cause of famines appear at short intervals in the historical and religious texts of ancient and