



BvLF Report | April-September 2010

NURTURING THEIR  
**MAGICAL**  
YEARS



Dear friends at BvLF,

Warm greetings from Katha!

The months April to September echo a cross-section of creative voices, the loudest of course of our children and so we come to you ferrying all those voices, bundled up—though with great difficulty—in this report.

KHEL, KATHA HOLISTIC EARLY LEARNING CENTRE [KHEL means PLAY in Hindi] was set up specifically under the BvLF funded project to focus on early learners. The work so funded continued impacting the lives of bright eyed 0-8 year olds. The major efforts have been made towards the policy level interactions and to conceive of resolutions, especially in the light of Right to Education.

As for our books we continue to explore ways of creating a richly diverse range of books - contemporary, rooted in a multilingual, plural culture and simply packets of fun!

The Katha Chitrakala Award 2009, supported by BvLF, saw a gala closing with an array of stellar artworks and the worthy claimants of the diadem. The winning books are finally out and are fun for the little ones to hold and treasure.

So here's a chronicle of the miles covered in the last six months, for the co-dreamers of change at BvLF.

Hope you enjoy!

Geeta Dharmarajan  
Executive Director, Katha



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Katha believes that clear goals and a structured approach will enable us to best deliver results. Through KHEL and the work it entails, Katha tries to track individual child performance and attendance across centres and defines focus areas for implementing initiatives.

While Katha's impact is most accurately defined by the stories scattered through and by its various programmes, here are a few key moves that we made in the last six months:

## RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

In the last lap of our research, and still in the process of finding out the answers to questions we started with, the last six months saw the end of the first phase of data collection and the beginning of the data analysis. Now we will follow the children to the next grade in school and see the impact of early childhood education.

## NETWORKING AND POLICY LEVEL INTERACTIONS

The significant engagement with policy makers through a series of discussions led to:

1. The Katha Colloquium on Child Poverty and the Mega Cities
2. A Roundtable Discussion on 'Whose Education Is It Anyway?', as the teachers and schools debated the Right to Education
3. Focus Group Discussions with the youth and the women on their communities

## COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND REVITALIZATION

Katha's SHE]2 initiative ensures access to Safe Water and Sanitation, Health and Housing,

Education and Economic Resurgence. Through various welfare societies, Katha initiated a unique process of empowerment with women as community leaders, focusing on democratic decision-making within the community.

## THE I LOVE READING CAMPAIGN

The success of first phase of the ILR programme inspired Katha to undertake the challenge again, after repeated requests from the MCD school authorities. This year Katha is focusing on overall school transformation to have a long-term impact by including MCD teachers along with students in this programme.

## PUBLISHING PROGRAMME

8 books were planned to be completed by March 2011, out of which three are brightening up the new-releases sections of the various bookstores. They are available in both English and Hindi. The others have gone off to illustrators and the translations have been done. Two new titles will be released around Christmas.



# RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

Head and Hands On

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IMPACT STUDY

In the last six months, the KHEL centre continued its work on the Early Childhood Education Impact Study. The objectives of this study were -

- To assess the impact of early childhood education (ECE) on the performance of children
- To see how early childhood education can help prevent children from dropping out of school

The sample for the study was taken from MCD schools; these are government-run schools which generally cater to children coming from the financially disadvantaged sections of the society. Some of these schools also have Katha's I Love Reading Programme implemented in them.

This study is being done in two phases. The first phase studied children in class 1 and in phase two the same children will be studied after a year's gap. These children will be looked at keeping the following parameters in mind -

[Story listening skills](#) | [Reading skills](#) | [Pre-writing skills](#) | [Numerical Skills](#) | [Readiness to stay in school](#)

The sample of the study is as follows;

	ILR School	Non-ILR School	Total
Children with formal early childhood education background	207	43	250
Children without formal early childhood education background	207	43	250
Total	414	86	500

The last six months saw the end of the first phase of the study and the beginning of the second phase.



For the phase one of the study, the following tasks were completed:

### COMPLETION OF DATA COLLECTION FOR PHASE 1

The research team visited schools to collect attendance and retention information of the children and to interview the teachers.

### CODING

The key steps during the process of coding are explained below:-

- Keeping a record of the number of worksheets
- Sorting the worksheets
- Preparing the code lists: Code lists are prepared for the pre-writing component as well as for the teachers' interview
- Checking or Auditing: The worksheets are checked to see if the instructions were followed properly
- Assigning serial numbers to worksheets: This unique ID given to each worksheet represents characteristics of the child like the school he or she goes to, his or her gender etc.

### DATA ENTRY/DATA PUNCHING

### DATA CHECKING FOR ACCURACY

### BEGINNING OF ANALYSIS

The preliminary analysis of the data indicates that the children who have had an experience in formal early childhood education generally do better in many of the tasks than the children who have not had early childhood education experience.

### PHASE TWO

In the 2nd phase of the study, the children who were studied in class 1 are now followed up to class 2. The Performance, Attendance and Retention (or PAR) of the children will be looked at again, to see if the impact of early childhood education is evident even after a year of formal schooling.

For the phase two of the study, following tasks have been undertaken:

### DEVELOPMENT OF TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION:

Assessment tools are being developed to look at the PAR of children. These tools will be based on the same parameters which were looked at in phase one. However, they will be upgraded to the level of the child's current age that is, 6- 7 years.

### BEGINNING OF DATA COLLECTION:

The data collection of this phase began soon after the children rejoined the schools following their summer vacations, as the attendance-related data collection has begun.

# NETWORKING AND POLICY LEVEL INTERACTIONS

Making room for dialogue

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

8th April 2010

### YOUTH AND WOMEN SPEAK, FORUM-I

World-wide, the impact of urbanization, industrialization, population growth, poverty, environmental degradation and the constant dumping of toxic waste into the atmosphere, waterways and soil, is changing the opportunity for children to participate fully and freely in urban life. If having rich local environmental experiences are universal indicators of quality of life, then what better place to start than to evaluate these mega cities through the lives and eyes of its children? To do the very same Katha organized a discussion with the children of the Katha Lab School, situated in Govindpuri, one of the largest slum clusters in Delhi to share their thoughts, views and aspirations.

The discussion was taken up regarding what they liked and disliked about their communities, what they wish to change, who is responsible and whom to approach.

### YOUTH AND WOMEN SPEAK, FORUM-II

The other marginalized and vulnerable segment consists of the women from the disadvantaged population. They are the primary caregivers and most often the primary breadwinners of their families. Their problems and situations deeply impact the living environment of the family in which their children are growing. To hear the voices that are the most repressed and to share their perspectives on the city and the way it treats them, Katha brought together women from various communities for a half a day discussion. The women participated in this forum with a lot of enthusiasm and confidently voiced various concerns. A change for the better is what all the women said was the need of the hour and are actively striving towards its realization.





## CHILD POVERTY AND THE MEGA CITY

A Katha Colloquium

10th April 2010

India is indeed shining! Yet the dense black cloud that we all can see is the state of urban poverty in India. The nature of urban poverty poses different problems of housing and shelter, water, sanitation, health, education, social security and livelihood along with special needs of the most vulnerable group, the children.

To find and understand from the well established the answers to the unanswered questions; Katha organized a half a day colloquium on “The Child and the Mega City”, supported by BvLF.

The consultations aimed to look at all aspects that affect the growth of children, particularly their education and life-long learning.

The discussion came to a close with a formation of a co-operative alliance between the institutions to work with and towards the issues of child poverty in the mega cities.

## THE JOY OF READING WEEK

31st August – 9th September 2010

To celebrate 22 years of Katha’s engagement in the field of education, equity and poverty alleviation and the successful completion of two years into the innovative ‘I Love Reading Campaign,’ Katha rejoiced the success of all the children and their communities during the Joy of Reading Week from Aug 31 to Sept 9, 2010.

Katha hosted a roundtable discussion, wherein the city teachers and schools debated the Right to Education. A poster competition was also organized around the theme ‘Whose Education is it Anyway?’ to put forth the powerful ideas of children in paint. Students from various private and MCD schools were invited. The reading week also saw a number of book launches and workshops at various Katha and MCD schools.





A Body Workshop was launched by the Chief Minister of Delhi, Ms Sheila Dikshit, at the KATHA GENDER RESOURCE CENTRE, supported by Mission Convergence. The CM graciously visited Katha's Gender Resource Centre to speak to our women on what it means to be empowered. The Chief Minister also distributed sanitary napkins to young girls and women. This was a part of the 45 day celebration of all things feminine!

# COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

Water and sanitation needs calls for joint action by the community people. A number of water and sanitation societies have been formed by our fieldworkers and are now running as self-sustained empowered bodies in all the camps within which our schools are situated. They have periodic meetings and workshops to increase efficiency and affectivity.

These societies, with the help of our students, file regular petitions/applications to local government bodies/institutions for addressing local problems of the community. With constant motivation and intensive, Katha has been successful in making a number of groups self-reliant. They are working towards formation of larger cooperatives and empowering themselves.

## THE WORK ENTAILED:

- Health Camps – These camps are involved in bringing better health to the community.
- Nutrition camps – Nutrition camps spread awareness about balanced diet etc.
- Legal Camps – The legal camps organize regular seminars on issues like Rights, Litigation etc.
- Self Help Groups – For improving women's/men's access to credit for generation of further employment, asset creation, asset redemption and tiding over consumption/social consumption needs and move towards self-reliance.
- Spreading awareness about various government schemes.
- Vocational Training – To train women in various vocations such as tailoring, embroidery, bakery etc and help them build profitable business modules and entrepreneurship programmes.





# THE I LOVE READING CAMPAIGN

## WITH 50 MUNICIPAL CORPORATION SCHOOLS

### SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT [ILR- STEP]

Concerned about the serious dropout rate of children from the underserved communities in urban Delhi, Katha at the invitation of the Delhi government initiated the “I LOVE READING” programme to bring better reading skills to students in 50 MCD Schools. Based on the learning from this work, Katha proposed a school transformation concept to MCD that includes four important elements - Classroom, Curriculum, Continuous Assessment and Community School Link. The methodology is to work with teachers so that they do these activities on their own, thus enhancing their ability to carry this forward in successive years.

### HIGH POINTS

- The ILR StEP began in the month of April 2010 with planning for the entire programme, selection of reading mentors, followed by May to June orientation, and training.

- This year, one and a half months of training was given to the selected reading mentors.
- They were trained on Katha’s Philosophy, Pedagogy Tools, Story Pedagogy, S.P.I.C.E, R.U.C.H.I, Vidduniya, Lesson Plan, Cluster Teaching, P.A.R, League formation, Conducting Championships, Forming Community-School Link and Reporting Process.
- Hands on training was imparted on developing teaching-learning material/aids based on Katha reading kits - “Moon Kit”, “Hulgul ka Pitara” and “Easy Reader” books.
- After this training, the work was started with 50 MCD schools in the underserved areas of south Delhi from July 2010.





## THE PROCESS OF LEAGUE FORMATION

- First stage of league formation began in the third week of July.
- The first step was identifying 10 students from class 5 i.e. 10 Delhi One Youth Team (DOYTs), each of the ten students then had to select 4 students from their class.
- Each group of five students chose 5 students from class 4 in their league and then 5 students from class 3, 2 and 1 respectively.
- By this process each league finished with a total of 25 students from classes 1 to 5.

## CHAMPIONSHIP

The ILR championship has been designed to assess the children in their comprehension, speaking, listening, reading, storytelling and writing skills. It has been designed keeping in mind the R.U.C.H.I goal i.e. Reading, Understanding, Comprehension, Holistic, and Intuitive.

The first league match was designed as a part of the Reading Week (6th to 9th September 2010). This was conducted in 8 MCD schools as a pilot programme which would further be implemented in the rest of the 42 schools. The activities conducted were theatre workshop, role play, writing messages, art work done by students on the folk art forms.





# THE PUBLISHING PROGRAMME

Presenting the current and past happenings in the publishing wing - unpacked and expanded, as well as news and views on the exciting design for the upcoming ...

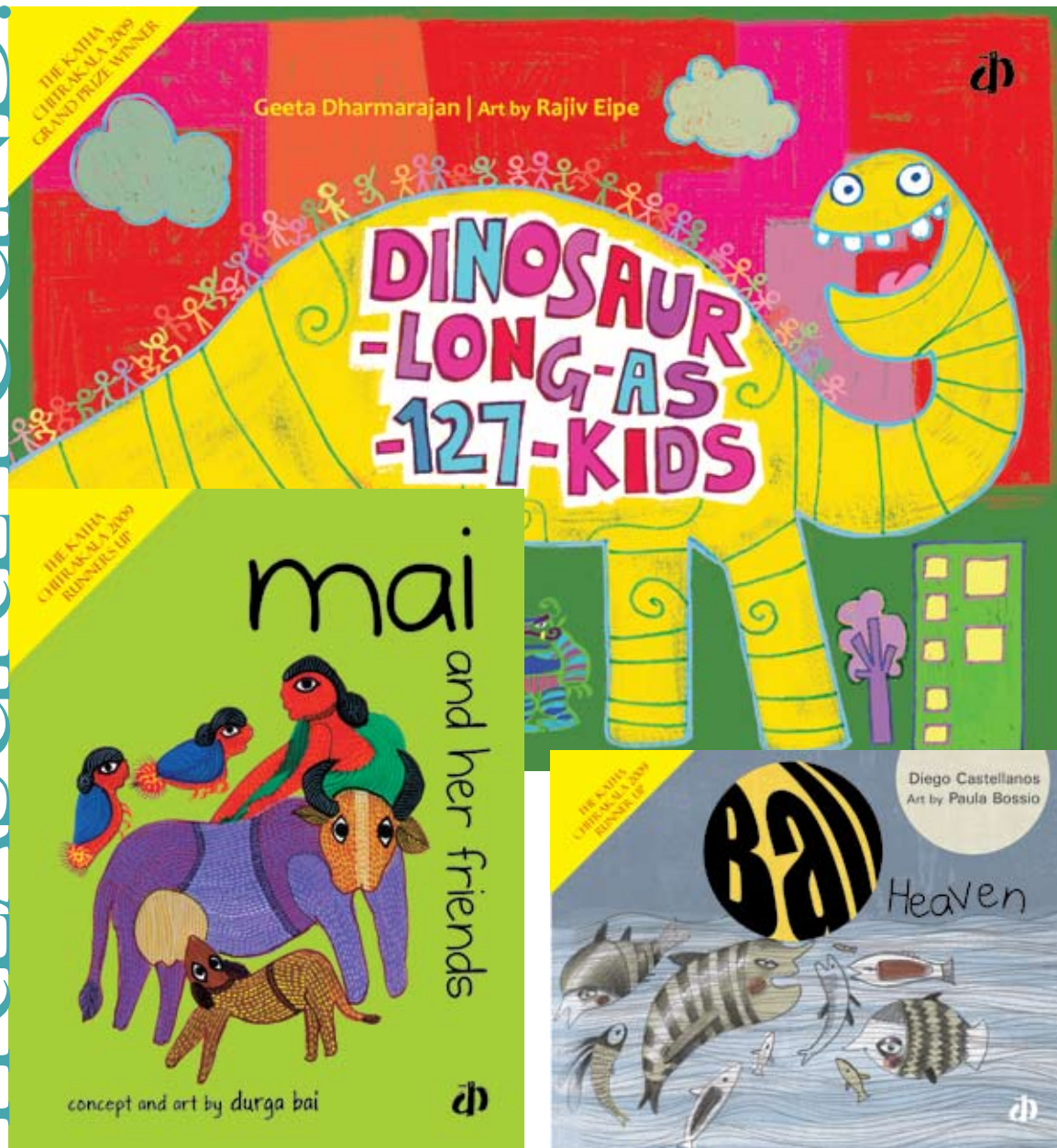
## THE KATHA CHITRAKALA WORKSHOP FOR WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS!

9th – 11th August 2010

Picture This!

Katha organized 'The Katha Chitrakala Workshop for Writers and Illustrators' from the 9th to 11th of August, 2010. The three-day workshop aimed at providing a common platform to word and image storytellers for creative dialogue, to explore new kinds of art in Indian children's literature, ways of seeing from a child's eye, share best practices and learn from each other's experiences. With editorial and design inputs from Katha, and distinguished experts in the field, the workshop helped illustrators and writers to excite and engage a child-reader visually and otherwise, and we hope it to be the first step in the creation of storybooks that we all want our children to read.





## THE KATHA CHITRAKALA AWARD 2009 LAUREATES

After a year of hunting and an array of stellar artworks, Katha announced the winners for the Katha Chitrakala Award 2009. The grand ceremony took place on the 11th of August at Alliance Française, New Delhi.

The shortlist was released by our international jury, comprising of the renowned illustrators Ms. Sujata Singh, Mr. Christopher Corr, Mr. Gurmeet Singh and the much loved children's book writer Ms. Geeta Dharmarajan. They had a difficult time going over the entries and selecting the longlist and finally the laureates that gave us our winners and the merit list.

Rajiv Eipe won the Grand Prize for his illustrations for the story Dinosaur-Long-As-127-Kids and Paula Bossio and Durga Bai were adjudged Runners up for their stories Ball Heaven and Mai and her Friends respectively.

The event brought luminaries from the field of children's literature coming together and sharing their experiences. The suspense and celebration undoubtedly created another magical Chitrakala and a spectacular event.



## THE NEWEST KATHA CHITRAKALA COLLECTION

**A Shot to Glory**

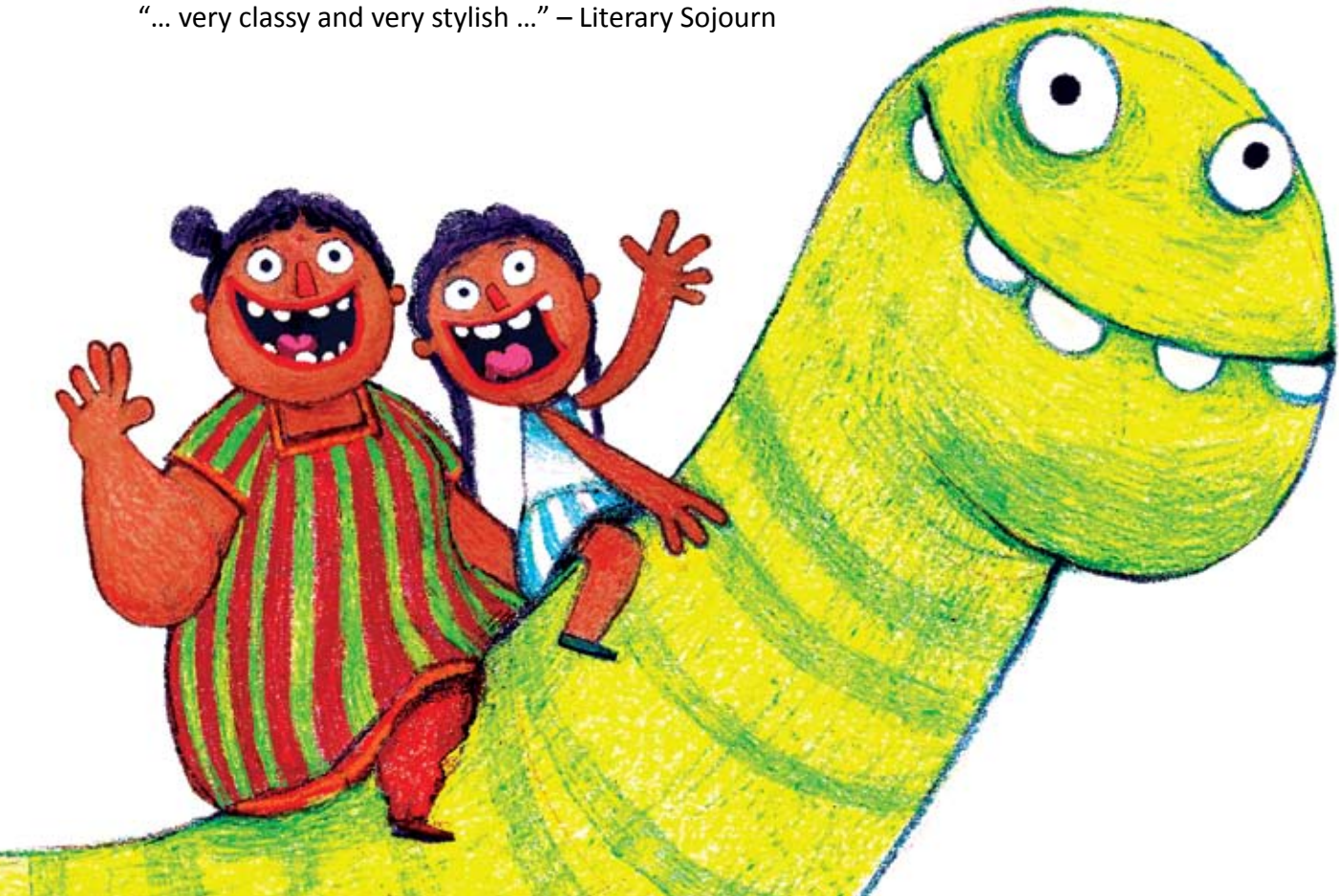
**Dinosaur-Long-As-127-Kids**

The Katha Chitrakala Award Grand Prize Winner

Geeta Dharmarajan | Art by Rajiv Eipe

A one-of-a-kind Dino loves taking children out for a ride ... until he bumps into a strange problem. What follows next is sure to leave you rollicking. With snazzy illustrations folding in the fun, this book is a must have for all you little dinofreaks.

“... very classy and very stylish ...” – Literary Sojourn



**Ball Heaven**

The Katha Chitrakala Award Runner Up

Diego Castellanos | Art by Paula Bossio

Do you know where all balls that are being tossed player to player in curves, loops and straight lines, go? Join the journey of one such ball to an intriguingly new world.

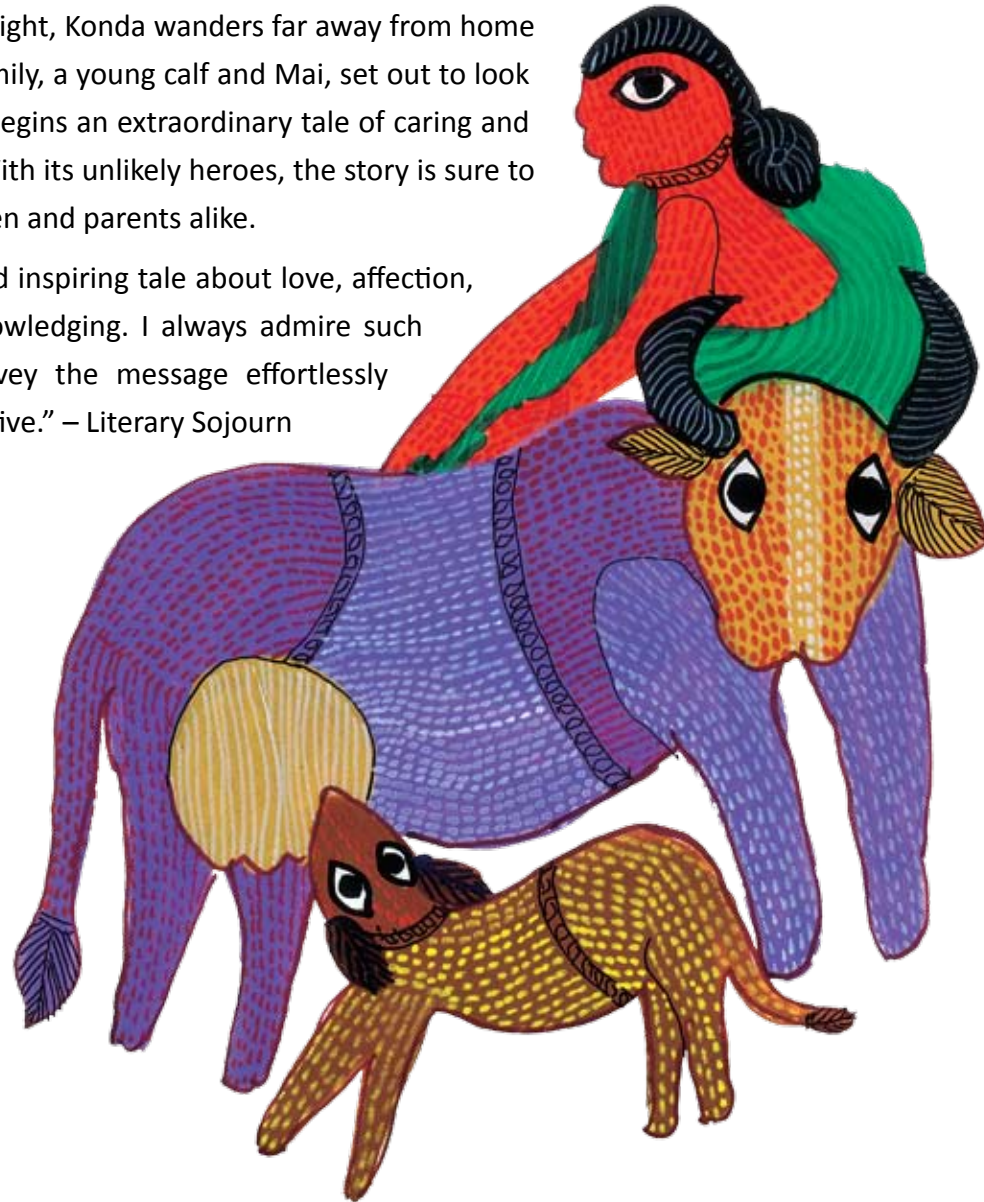
## Mai and her friends

The Katha Chitrakala Award Runner Up

Concept and Art by Durga Bai

One dark stormy night, Konda wanders far away from home and is lost. Her family, a young calf and Mai, set out to look for her, and thus begins an extraordinary tale of caring and companionship. With its unlikely heroes, the story is sure to be loved by children and parents alike.

“An interesting and inspiring tale about love, affection, helping and acknowledging. I always admire such books which convey the message effortlessly through the narrative.” – Literary Sojourn



# And the excitement doesn't end here!

The Katha  
**CHITRAKALA**  
Award 2010-11

Katha Chitrakala Award 2010-11 Registration Opens

The hunt begins again. Katha invites illustrators with that magical style and a way with colours to create the most wonderful books for Indian children.

**Grand Prize: Rs. 1, 00,001**

**Runner-Up Prize, Notable Mentions**

And a chance to be published in world-class Katha style!

Last date for registration and entries – 14th January 2011

The laureates will be announced in February 2011 which will give us our promising illustrators and the potential projects. Out of which three or more will be taken forward as children's books.





## Moon, Ramu and I

Geeta Dharmarajan | Art by Harsh

Slip into your invisible space suits for a swashbuckling adventure trip to the moon! Get set for this spellbinding story packed with action and fun.



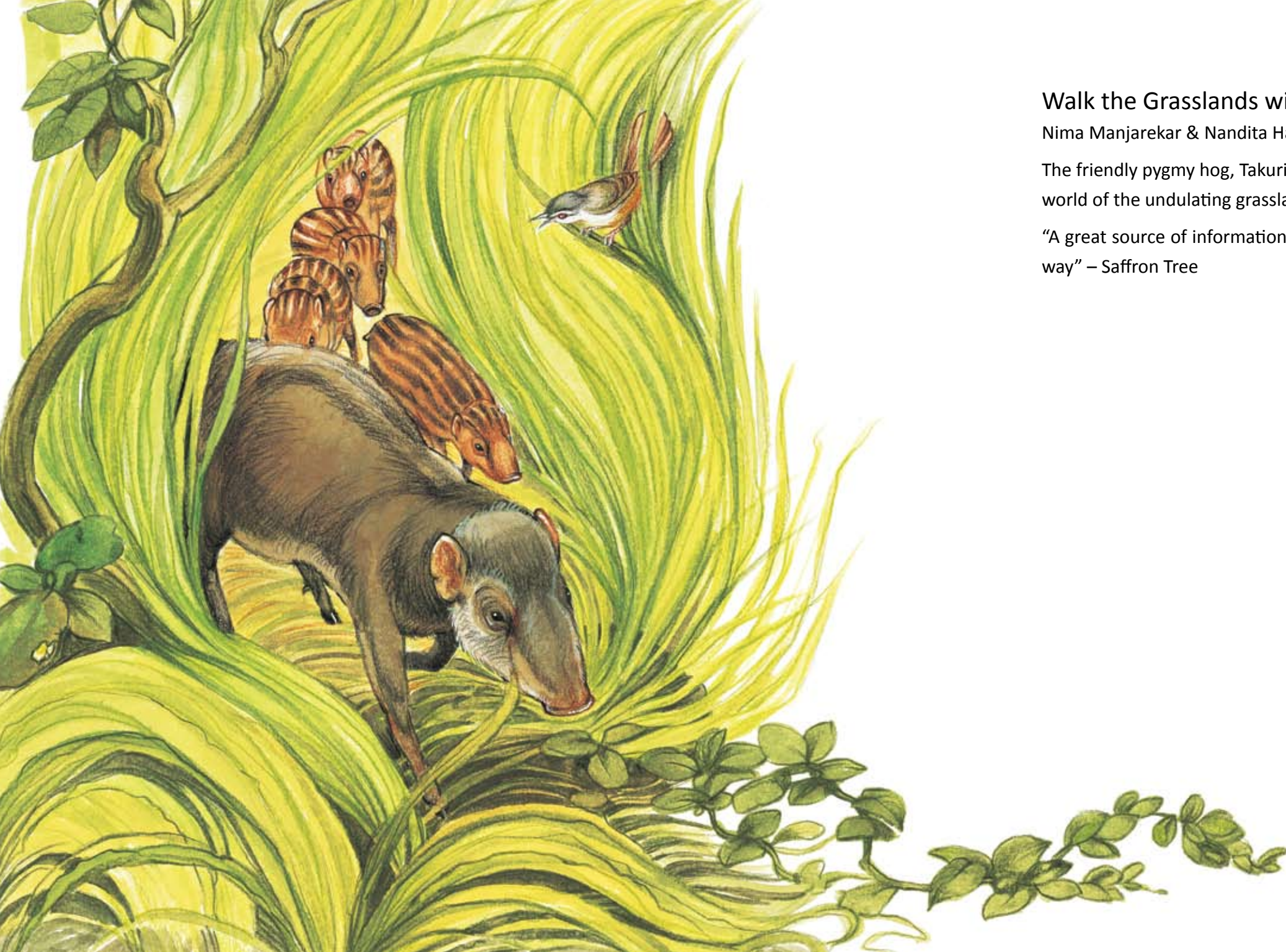
## For the Love of a Cat

Rosalind Wilson | Art by Wen Hsu

A painter loves his cat as much as he loves painting. But when the starving artist is commissioned to paint a picture of the Buddha, he must choose between his art and the love for his pet ...





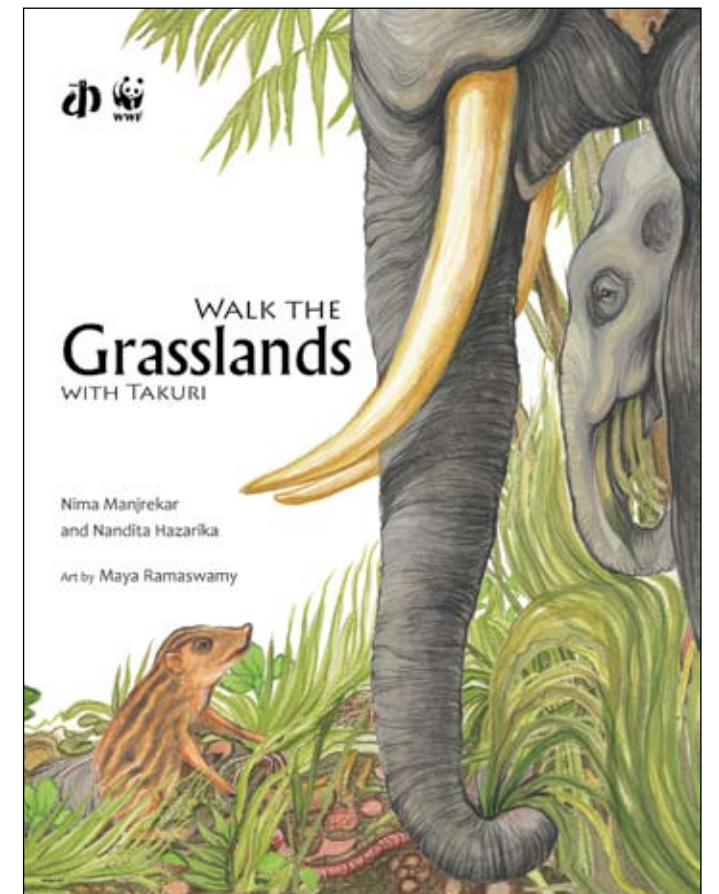


## Walk the Grasslands with Takuri

Nima Manjarekar & Nandita Hazarika | Art by Maya Ramaswamy

The friendly pigmy hog, Takuri, takes us to a trip to the lush greens and opens up the mysterious world of the undulating grasslands throbbing with wildlife that never ceases to amaze!

“A great source of information for young children introducing them to many concepts along the way” – Saffron Tree





## ON WHAT COMES NEXT....

Here's a sneak peek into what we have in store for the next quarter.

### Gijjigudde and the Fireflies

Gopini Karunakar | Art by Atanu Roy

The golden sparrows complain to the gods that their homes have no light. Men light lamps, owls have eyes that shine. But sparrows have no way to get through the night. The gods feel sorry for them and let them collect moondust when the moon rubs against the sky. With nests of moondust, the sparrows catch fireflies who happily light up their homes.

### The Old Man Who Wouldn't Listen

Nonda Chatterjee | Art by Siddharth Tripathi

He was laughed at, scolded for his obstinacy, called names. But the old man would not change his ways, nor part with his companions. With pockets of suspense, this beautiful story - our first graphic novel! - exemplifies that life is impossible without a little help from friends.

### I am Aan

Meenakshi Bharadwaj | Art by Christopher Corr

Deep in the jungles of the Western Ghats lives a baby elephant called Aan. His mother and brother and sister all dote on him. Growing from a pampered baby of the herd to an adult, Aan learns many invaluable lessons. His journey from the magical world of childhood to the tough adult one is an exciting voyage of self-discovery.

### Hic!copotamus

Geeta Dharmarajan | Art by Rajiv Eipe

A quirky tale of a hiccupping Hippo plopping into a pond because of its unstoppable hiccups. The book comes with the perils of being highly entertaining, giving you uncontrollable giggles, and a very rumbling, grumbling tummy!



## Oh No, Not Again!

Geeta Dharmarajan | Art by Rajiv Eipe

What happens when the famous cricketer of Dhamdhoom Nagar, Her Most Royal Highness of Dhamdhoom and owner of the Best Cricket Pitch in the World, Banu, loses her temper? Find out for yourself in this mad mad story ... Laughs guaranteed!

## Razia and the Pink Elephant

Mukul Dube

Offering the best of fun fiddled narration, the story of Razia and her elephant Saraswati and her carrot taster Uncle Sher Singh and his best friend Natasha - the world's fastest courier pigeon. The story, with its subtle sense of humour and word play, is sure to send kids into fits of giggles.

## KATHA WORLD LIBRARY

As Helen Rochman, a famous librarian and editor of a children's journal once said, "Reading makes immigrants of us all – it takes us away from home, but, most important it finds homes for us everywhere." And with this World Library imprint, Katha wants children to find homes everywhere, to be empathetic to people from other cultures, to be active, responsible citizens.

### How to weigh an elephant?

Art by Wen Hsu

Not very long ago, there was a king. The king wanted to find out the weight of his favourite elephant. His ministers tried ... his pundits tried ...the vegetable sellers tried ...the jewelers tried ... But to no avail. How would the king find out the weigh of his elephant?

Stress your grey cells till you lay your hands on this one. A clever, clever story definitely worth spending the buck.

COME HOME TO GOOD FICTION, COME HOME TO KATHA

Katha announces

# BALKATHA PRIZE STORIES

A Search for Excellence in Writing and Translating for Children

## TRANSLATING DIVERSITIES – FORGING IDENTITIES

Katha in its attempt to create a space for a culturally distinctive children's literature, announced the Katha Balkatha Prize Stories and invites all the word storytellers to be a part of this search for excellence in writing and translating for children.

The idea is to encourage, foster and applaud quintessential Indian writings in translation or otherwise, wrapped in a certain magic that communicates a culture, a way of speaking that belongs to a special little place. And giving them to the children to grapple with the uniqueness of these cultures, to make it easy for them to experience these stories.

Grand Prize: Rs 15000

A citation and publication by Katha

Runner up Prize: Rs 6000 and lots more...

# THE DELHI FREEDOM MARCH

Several hundred children, from various schools will march for freedom, freedom to choose a better life. Katha has planned 'The Freedom March' for December 2010, to make visible the right for basic amenities and decent urban spaces, to all children. We know that the present is difficult, but the changing world and issues like global warming will hit the poor the hardest. So before that happens, we need to bring children together to build their own sustainable futures. Our students have taken a pledge to live sustainable lives. This is their CHALLENGE 2014.





Warm greetings! Katha is a unique model that seamlessly connects grassroots work in education, urban resurgence and story for social justice and poverty alleviation through education.

Since 1990, we have driven our education model on a powerful idea: Children can bring change that is sustainable and real. We run 96 schools in slum, street and tribal communities. Inter alia, we train teachers, help them prepare low-cost teaching/ learning materials, and are into action research.

We work with communities and the government as well as national and international donor agencies, to bring the joy of reading to more than 200,000 children. We see translation as a non-divisive tool in nation building. We are a “profit for all” social organization.

## ☪ KATHA

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