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Class :7

29/08/2020

Subject : English.

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BASED ON NCERT

Chapter 5

Back from the Brink

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**To read the story**

With the nesting trees found almost exclusively on private property, the situation was dire. No one seemed to care that the birds were highly endangered.

Conservation groups dont care about an ungainly bird, Barman claims. For them, well- known, charismatic animals like rhinos and tigers are the main focus. Barman firmly felt that the Purnima Barman leading the Hargila Campaign storks needed an ally. So, she set out on a one-woman campaign to instil a sense of community pride and ownership in the Greater Adjutant. This was the beginning of a grassroots conservation movement which would gain recognition across the world.

She presented her argument to local villagers: 'I have two daughters. If they make my house messy, should I dislike them? What do I do? I clean it. Why? Because they are my daughters! I'm their guardian. You are the guardian of this stork, and these birds are making you proud. Your name is going to be famous, because if you protect the bird, all will salute you.'

## **Villagers learn to love the ugly stork**

To make the villagers aware of the importance of the bird and its ecosystem, Barman began a series of efforts. She took the help of teachers at a local school where most of the tree owners send their children. On World Wetlands Day, the children went home chanting their praises for the hargi, a urging protection of nesting trees and also handing out free coffee Tug featuring photos of the bird. Barman started attending weekly women's rituals at a local temple, and she eventually got permission to present her hargila slideshow presentation there. She organised cooking contests for the women showed her slideshow. The women were proud to learn that this ve bird had chosen to breed only in their local

villages.

Barman knew attitudes had changed when she began getting calls from villagers whenever Greater Adjutants fell from their nests, something which the birds do with alarming regularity, especially in the monsoon