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## **From the desk of Dr R K Pachauri**

Over half the population of the world today lives in urban areas, and even though in India we still have almost two thirds of our population living in villages, in the next few decades we would also have a majority of our citizens living in towns and cities. One of the realities of urban life is its remoteness with the pristine existence of all things natural. Urban children in North America when asked where milk comes from generally respond that it comes from plastic bottles or cardboard cartons. They have no knowledge that cows provide us with milk that we drink.

A good psychologist friend of mine who is a professor at Yale University, Paul Bloom, has been researching for years now on what provides human beings joy and happiness. His research reveals that the greatest pleasure human beings experience is derived from being in the company of nature and indulging in the delights that we sense when we are in the midst of beautiful scenery or in the company of animals, birds, plants and flowers. The richness of the environment around us is a source of joy that many of us living in urban areas miss greatly, day in and day out.

Children in particular need to see and feel the benefit of life that exists in the kingdom of plants, birds, animals and insects. It is only when they touch, feel and smell the environment in open areas that they realize the richness of our natural heritage.



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