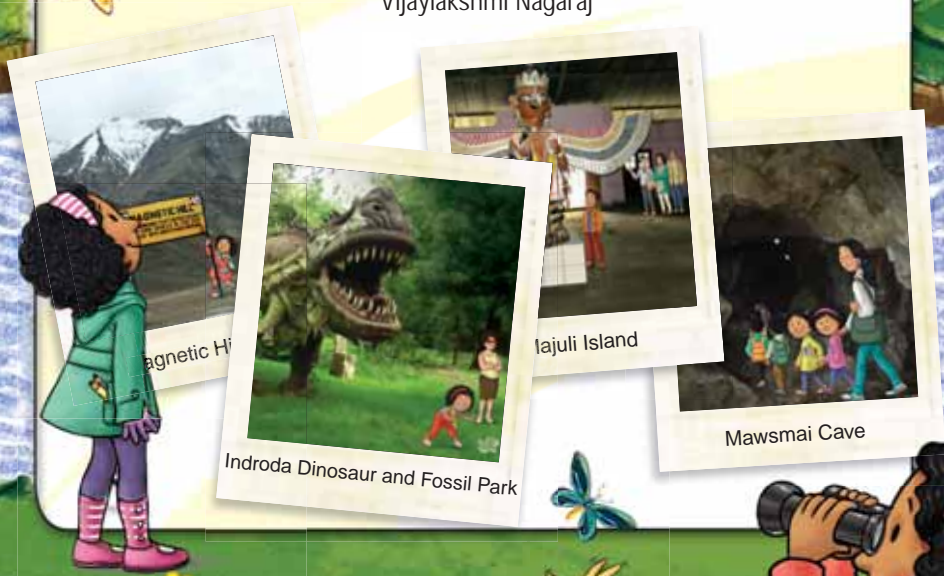


# The Natural Wonders of India

Vijaylakshmi Nagaraj



## From the desk of Dr R K Pachauri

The vast terrain of India unfolds a diverse environment, which is unique, extraordinary, and beautiful. From the snow-clad Himalayas and the stark and rugged beauty of Ladakh to the Cardamom Hills in the Western Ghats, from the raw splendour of Kaziranga to the bare vastness of the Kutch wilderness in the West, nature has created some very unique and extraordinary regions that attract people to learn in amazement about them.

Our cities are growing rapidly into huge concentrations of human activity. Needless to say, this is happening at the cost of forests and other natural spaces. The use of toxic substances has posed dangers to several species of animals and birds, besides ruining many places that were endowed with nature's breathtaking beauty. To cite an example, a leopard recently sought shelter inside a shop in the Indian state of Odisha. This was a plain example of the confusion and mess that we have created by shrinking the territory which belonged to wildlife as against the ever-expanding human population in this country and the inevitable urbanization which has taken place at an accelerating pace.

Recent research by psychologists reveals that human beings experience the greatest happiness while in the midst of places replete with scenic beauty or in the company of nature. Urban areas, unfortunately, lack the beauty and richness of the natural environment. In order to make up for these, people often find retreat in places endowed with nature's bounty, eventually polluting them and leaving them bereaved of their beautiful legacy.

*The Natural Wonders of India* is a journey through 10 not-so-famous, but wonderful, places in India, travelled through the eyes of the twin sisters Reva and Sarayu. While having fun exploring the beauty of these mysterious locations and spreading awareness to the readers about their own country, these girls make sure that they don't disturb the magnificence of these places. I hope that the readers of this book receive the message contained in these pages and help Reva and Sarayu in conserving the rich heritage of the Natural Wonders of India.



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