

RURBAN LIVING

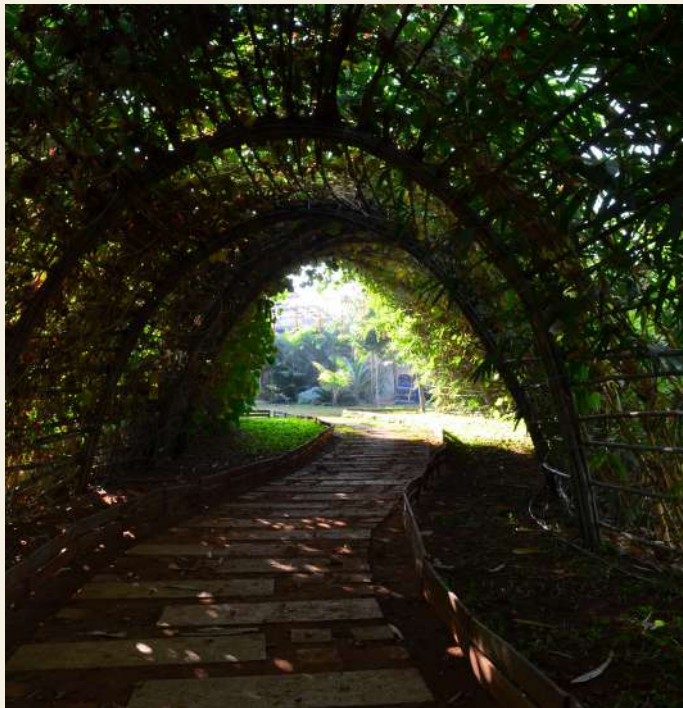
Co-creating Eco-Habitats that Celebrate The Living

August 2020

Life at Naandi

By Ramesh Reddy Legala

Our discovery of Organo Naandi was rather accidental. We were here for a massage therapy session for me, one weekend. The moment we stepped into Naandi, it was love at first sight. I liked everything here; the greenery and nature, the chirping of birds, the clean fresh air and so much more that this place has to offer. Our daughter, Rasha, loved it so much that she asked me if we could have a home here. We signed up right on our first visit to Naandi that weekend.



We were on the lookout for a house for the last three years but could not find anything in the city that we could relate to. But Naandi was different. My health has improved tremendously in the last one year, thanks to the fresh produce

and milk, the amount of walking and cycling I do here every weekend, and spending time with nature, of course.



My wife, Shalini, feels that Naandi is an idyllic family retreat. It is just what we all need for complete relaxation after a heavy work week. Not a moment goes by when we are bored here. There is so much to do each weekend that we are here.

Besides that, it is great to spend time with our neighbours. It is also heartening for us to see our daughter having an amazing time here. She has learnt so much about farming, made quite a few friends and wishes there was no school so that she could play at Naandi all the time!



Organo Et School in a new format

By Shilpi Shukla



Planet Earth not only binds us all together but is also the source of our sustenance. If we're not mindful of our actions, we're doing ourselves and our future generations great disservice.

So, why not start early? Why not inculcate the sense of responsibility towards our surroundings in our young ones? That was the driving thought for the birth of Organo @ School, a few years ago. The initiative received an overwhelming response and now we're back as Organo Et School with a renewed vigour.

Organo Et School aims for responsible and sustainable living made easy by creating an experiential learning platform for educating and helping students to make sustainable and mindful choices. We have expanded our educative initiative to both online and offline events, workshops, and experiential learning programs.

With our purpose of "Nurturing a learning environment for all stakeholders where inclusive holistic eco-living is celebrated", we are now extending our initiative to communities

and corporates as well by conducting events, workshops, and experiential learning programs for families and working professionals.

In the past, more than 25 schools & over 6000 children visited Organo Naandi for a first-hand learning experience of farm living. We have also conducted a number of workshops and talk shows by experts on Sustainable Community living. In these trying times of a Global Pandemic, as an attempt to stay safe, the world has come to a standstill. Luckily, education did not grind to a halt, but it has transformed and moved online.

Organo Et School has now started conducting e-workshops to nurture young eco-minds, to empower communities to adopt sustainable and responsible living, and to help working professionals make sustainable and mindful lifestyle choices.



Though we firmly believe in experiential learning as the most powerful form of learning, in order to continue to empower all our stakeholders in creating and adopting holistic eco-living, we've made the transition to e-learning as well.

The spirit and intent of the Organo Et School program is to encourage individuals to adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle by teaching them to connect and be a part of nature, to grow their own food, to look for sustainable sources of energy and contribute to the holistic well-being of the ecosystem.

All our learning activities are categorized under Saptha Pathas, the seven strands of sustainable living that are Food, Water, Air, Earth, Energy, Shelter, and People.

Through this new expansion into Communities and Corporates, Organo Et School is expected to reach out to a larger audience to educate and help more people make sustainable choices to lead this sustainable movement. If any of you would like to be included in this initiative, please do let us know and we'll be happy to share regular updates with you.



Rurban Nest in progress

Ensuring 100% construction in the community well before the launch of the community is the pivotal aspect of ensuring green living from day one at the Rurban Nest Living community. While the community will be free from construction equipment and deviance that it brings in with it, the natural life or the resources of the community will be at peace.



Rurban Nest Community is getting ready in a 9.2-acre space in Bardipur, Nizamabad. Designed by FHD Consultants and being built by Metaphor, the project will be aimed to be completed by the first half of 2021.

While the civil work has commenced for most of the villas in the community, the major updates to look for in the next few months is with the commencement of Club House and the central farming area.



Footing work in progress at the Club House Area



East Facing Villas ready for PCC Flooring after first-floor slab completion



Soil filling up at the pedestal level has been completed for the North facing villas



West facing Model House



Front side view of the West Facing Villas



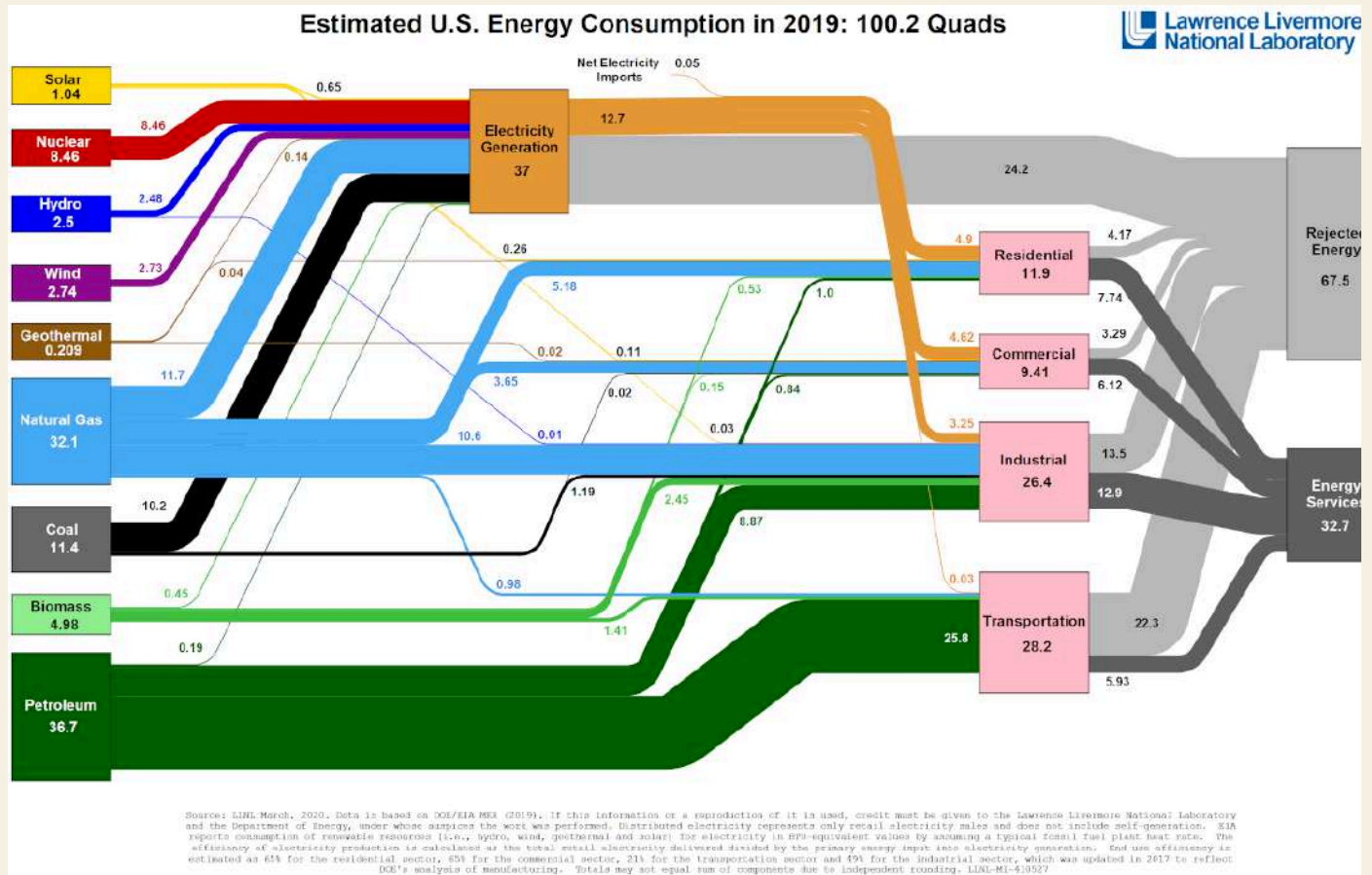
Backyard of the East facing villas reserved for farming



Backyard of West facing villas reserved for farming

What's all the fuss about renewable energy

By Rakesh Koti

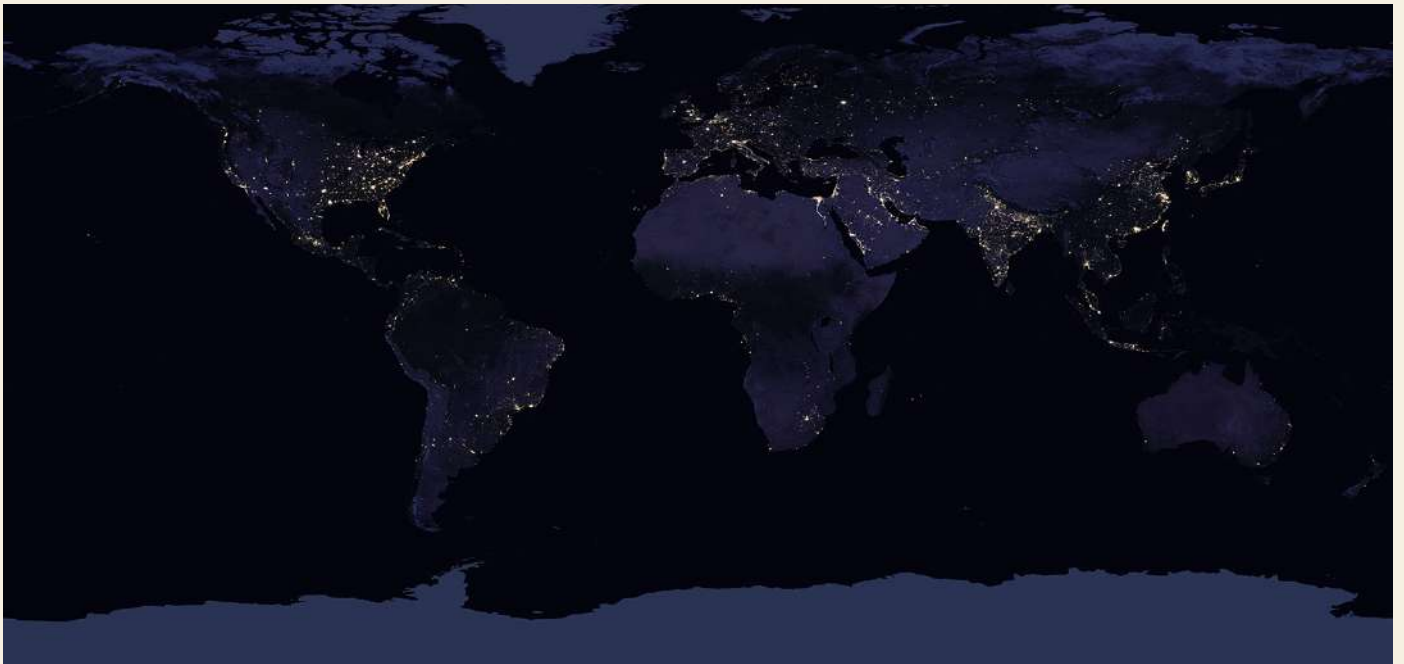


Only 33% of the energy that goes into power plants - coal, hydro, geothermal, etc. is converted to a useful form of electricity that is supplied to homes. This means 2/3rd of the entire energy is either lost in the power plants or in transmission. This is in the U.S. In India, I am guessing the statistic is at least as bad and most probably much worse.

All this energy is converted mostly into heat dissipated into the environment and partly as sound, light, etc. It might seem that 2 units of

energy loss for every useful unit of energy that is consumed at your home seem like a ridiculously low-efficiency rate. It is. But our options are limited. Thinking about this in another way, every unit that you save in your home is equivalent to saving 3 units of energy that need not be converted to electricity and thus saved at the power plant level.

Now, look at the beautiful image below released by NASA. It is how the Earth looks like at night.



This is a picture of the night sky released by NASA



This is India at night

These images put into perspective, our enormous dependence on energy even when asleep.

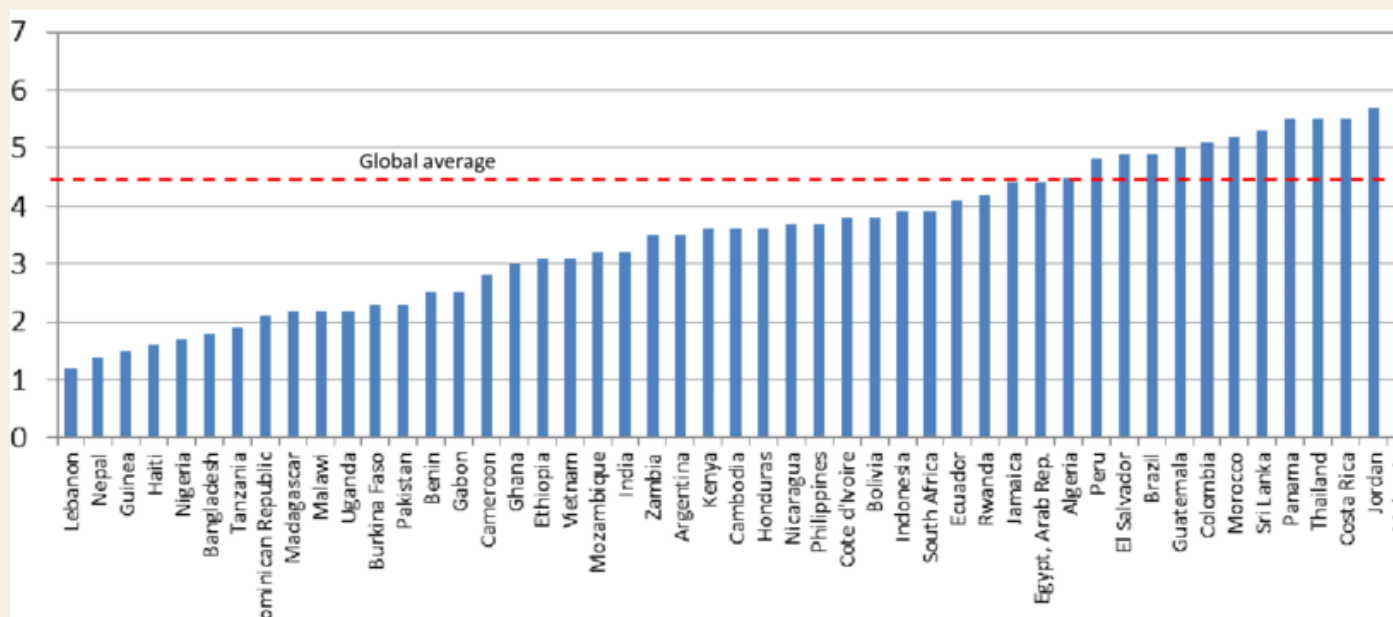
Typically, thermal power plants are 40% efficient. And transmission losses can account for as much as 30% in losses in some networks and is typically around 15%-20% on average (it is very difficult to assess exact energy statistics in India).

Therefore, on average, 50% of the energy in coal is lost in either production or transmission. Every unit that you save at home accounts for 2 to 3 units worth of coal not being consumed at the source.

In all this rush for energy demand, how can an individual put in the effort to live responsibly?

Installing energy-efficient appliances and LED lights, while necessary, may not be enough. Every little bit helps, but do we have time for little?

After all these losses the quality of power that comes into our homes is below average:



This means that power quality is sub-optimal in most cities in India. This means we are losing out on the efficiency of power plants as well as power quality.

One way around this would be to produce power within the community by renewable energy sources such as solar photovoltaic and bio-gas.

There are challenges associated with native power production such as reliability of biogas or solar energy, capital expenditure, etc.

But these problems are, I believe, easier to solve at a small scale and there are systems and policies in place to promote such practices.

My little adjustment

By Sunitha Ravuri

I moved to Organo Naandi three years ago and love everything about the place. I do not feel very comfortable when I see a snake, though. I have seen a few in the community and that makes me quite uncomfortable. However, I do accept it as part of living with nature.

Apart from snakes, there are frogs that one sees often here, especially during the rainy season. I have a pond in my garden, in which I love growing lilies and other water plants. There are little snails and insects that are always seen. That is not too much of a bother. But the frogs that come into the pond create quite a ruckus at night. The noise is bothersome and often disturbs our sleep.



One other thing that can be a bother sometimes is the birds that often tend to peck at the glass doors of my bedroom balcony.

These sounds can be quite a disturbance at times, especially at nights. But over time, I have gotten used to them. We are living in their space, so it is natural for these creatures to live in ours.

I have come to accept it as a small price to pay for living a life in healthy, peaceful and nature-infused environs. When you compare the benefits of this ambience and the impact it has on our wellbeing, these are merely little adjustments to make.



Climate change and water: Wise old ways

By Biksham Gujja

Traditional water management systems, such as tanks, wells and ponds, had inbuilt sustainability and stood the test of time. Sound on knowledge, these were designed for multi-functions but could not meet the growing human needs. Their inbuilt sustainability needs to be brought back through different designs and interventions. This is a challenge.



Image credit: Down to Earth magazine

Growing water needs of humans led to rapid extraction of surface and groundwater. This put pressure on the traditional systems and they started disappearing. Where once wells, tanks and ponds stood, we now have apartments. Fragmentation of land, increase in land prices and urban expansion swallowed public and private spaces. Not that everything has been lost.

But whatever has remained has been altered and is no longer traditional or serves the purpose for which it was built. The realisation that these systems need to be revived led to many projects.

Governments allocated a lot of money to protect whatever remained. There are many support groups and lobbies to protect, revive and even expand these systems. The results, however, have been mixed and it is difficult to say how much have the programmes contributed to solving the water crisis.

Moreover, it is beyond the scope of traditional water management systems to solve the problems posed by climate change, which are of a different scale. Wherever they still exist, however, the systems can help communities adapt to the impact of climate change at local levels.



Thanks to the efforts of civil society organisations in the past two-three decades, there is awareness for protecting, restoring and revitalising traditional water bodies across the country. In rural India, while the net area and role of traditional systems in meeting water needs has declined, there are many projects to restore them. Urban spaces too are increasingly creating provisions for water storage systems including treatment plants.



There is an interest to protect the water structures that have survived in the neighbourhood. Households now want to build structures to store rainwater with or without government support. There are several products in the markets to help households save, treat and reuse water.

These initiatives will contribute to reducing water demand and governments are incorporating them in the standard guidelines for high-end building projects. To what extent these will address the problems of climate change is difficult to say, but they surely reflect

people's awareness about the need for local water storage in addressing the global problem.

The underlying concept of re-using and storing water built in the traditional systems can be a great help in designing interventions to deal with the much bigger challenge of climate change and its impact on our water resources.

*Article credit: This article was published in the March 2020 edition of the **Down To Earth** magazine*



The Farmer And His Sons



A rich old farmer, who felt that he had not many more days to live, called his sons to his bedside.

“My sons,” he said, “listen to what I have to say to you. Do not on any account part with the estate that has belonged to our family for so many generations. Somewhere on it is hidden a rich treasure. I do not know the exact spot, but it is there, and you will surely find it. Spare no energy and leave no spot unturned in your search.”

The father died, and no sooner was he in his grave than the sons set to work digging with all their might, turning up every foot of ground with

their spades, and going over the whole farm two or three times.

No hidden gold did they find; but at harvest time when they had settled their accounts and had pocketed a rich profit far greater than that of any of their neighbours, they understood that the treasure their father had told them about was the wealth of a bountiful crop and that in their industry had they found the treasure.

Farming by itself is a treasure.



A Rural Life Experience at Ulavapadu

By Rakesh Koti

My wife's native village is a small place called Ulavapadu in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh. Although her side of the family has moved to Hyderabad a long time ago, her grandmother from her father's side still lives there. During the last Sankranthi, I had the opportunity to visit the village and spend a few days there. This is the house that I was staying in. It is over a hundred years old and no one knows exactly when the first brick was laid.



Being from a company that co-creates eco-habitats, I have naturally wondered what my water footprint was during my stay here compared to the city. In the city, I (and most of us) typically use about 200 litres of water a day. These can be broken down very roughly as follows:

	City Living (litres per person per day)	My guess on how much water I might have used based on 20 litres bucket measurement
Drinking	05	05
Cooking	10	10
Bathing	75	20
Washing Clothes	25	15
Washing Utensils	15	15
Housekeeping	20	05
Flushing	50	20
Total	200	90

This is less than 50% of my water usage in the city.



The biggest difference is actually coming from the amount of water I have used for taking a bath. With each bathroom in my city house having a separate geyser with a showerhead, I would easily consume around 75 litres of water per day for bathing. But in Ulavapadu, the water had to be heated in a water pot over burning wood and coals. It would take at least 30 min for each pot of hot water to heat up. I had to make my small adjustment to use one bucket of water for each bath. At first, I did feel devoid of the pleasure of not having more hot water, but in just a couple of days, I was comfortable with it.

Another lifestyle shock was the non-existence of air conditioning. This naturally meant that I was sweating profusely for a few days but then my body got accustomed to it. The last 3 days, I had hardly felt uncomfortable during the night. A fan and a tumbler of water were more than sufficient for a peaceful night's sleep.

There was no TV in the house. So early morning breakfast was sitting on the Arugu (dias) outside the main door and eating while



talking to the family looking at this while my grandmother was making fresh chemical-free kumkum in the hall as my wife has an allergy to store-bought Kumkum.

Evenings were just strolling around the village and meeting neighbours and well-wishers. This is one of the places in the village that I like the most. It is a small parcel of land with a lot of banyan trees and swings for children in the village to play.





Have you ever seen a Banyan tree as majestic and as old as this in the city? I have tried to clutch on to one of the hanging roots to swing myself but was unsuccessful. Maybe the next time I go there, I will latch on to it for more than 10 seconds.



After coming back home, I have realized why we are so deeply connected to our rural roots. I have felt that it is a more guilt-free lifestyle where life is simpler and life is slow. It just keeps calling me back.

The Inevitable Bond of Nature and Children



Why should children be in nature?

Being in an unstructured environment or nature presents children with an opportunity to explore and learn through observation, experimentation, and reflection. The natural world is an enormous, open-ended knowledge laboratory. Children are natural scientists and love to experience the sights, smells, sounds, and forms of the outdoors. In nature, children tend to think, question, and make hypotheses with their curious minds. Whether they're judging the distance between two rocks before jumping or considering where insects go in the winter, children are constantly thinking when they're in nature.

These adventures offer real, authentic learning as nothing else can. As children take chances, try and fail, and try repeatedly, they gain resilience and confidence.

Whether you grew up in a village, a suburb, or in a big city, you probably spent a lot of time playing outside, getting dirty, and coming home happy. Maybe you watched ants making anthills in your backyard, climbed trees in the park, or simply lay on the grass observing the drifting clouds. Sadly, young children of this digital world do not have as many direct experiences with nature as we had and it's definitely taking a toll, direct or indirect.

This disconnect from the natural world is creating adverse effects in both mind and body. Most of the kids these days have scheduled play dates, join an organized sport on a manicured field, or disappear into their room alone to enjoy a computer game or TV.



Being outside feels good. Children are free to explore, move around, and make noise - all refreshing forms of self-expression that are often restrained indoors. Moreover, nature enhances the feeling of peace and often brings out nurturing characteristics in children.

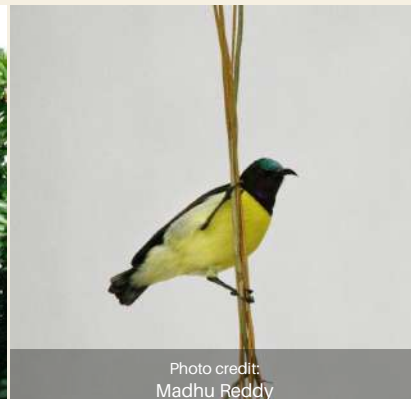
Many hyperactive children slow down to dig a hole in the sand, watch a ladybug crawl, or spend focused time playing with a stick in a mud puddle. The fresh air of the natural world is refreshing and offers boundless possibilities for physical activity, which, in turn, develops strong bodies. Exposure to sunlight helps in receiving



vitamin D which has several positive advantages, including a strong immune system. Outdoor play also enables a child to be more physically active than indoor play, potentially burning more calories and contributing positively to a child's overall health.

The surroundings in which children are growing plays a significant part in re-establishing the lost connection with nature. As we all understand, our children are future stewards of the earth. In order to raise adults who are enthusiastic about preserving the environment and protecting our planet, they must first develop a profound love for it. The only way to facilitate children to grow content in nature is to open the door and let them out to explore the wonder and awe of the natural world.

Visitors of Naandi



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