

From the Desk of Dr R K Pachauri

Human society has moved along rapidly on the path of industrialization. We now have a range of mechanized transport, widespread communications infrastructure and devices powered by fossil fuel based energy for a variety of applications. However, all these developments have led to rapid environmental degradation across the globe and an increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere. The result is that the climate of this planet is changing rapidly.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recently brought out two major reports which show that the average rise in surface temperature between 1901 and 2010 has been 0.85°C. In the same period, sea level rise has been 19cm. In addition, certain extreme events have grown in frequency and intensity. The acidification of the oceans, on account of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases being absorbed, is likely to cause serious impacts on marine ecosystems and various forms of marine life.

There is a need for us to mitigate the emissions of greenhouse gases and at the same time to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We need to look at development in a larger ecological context and not merely as a measurement of growth in GDP. Mahatma Gandhi was right when he said that "Speed is irrelevant if you are going in the wrong direction".

"Surviving disasters" aims to re-examine and change the course of our actions in order to save our planet. This series of four books sensitizes young readers towards the impacts and consequences of disasters in a very expressive and thought-provoking manner. The aim is not only to entertain the readers with thrilling stories, but to also inspire them to become responsible soldiers of the Earth.



R K Pachauri

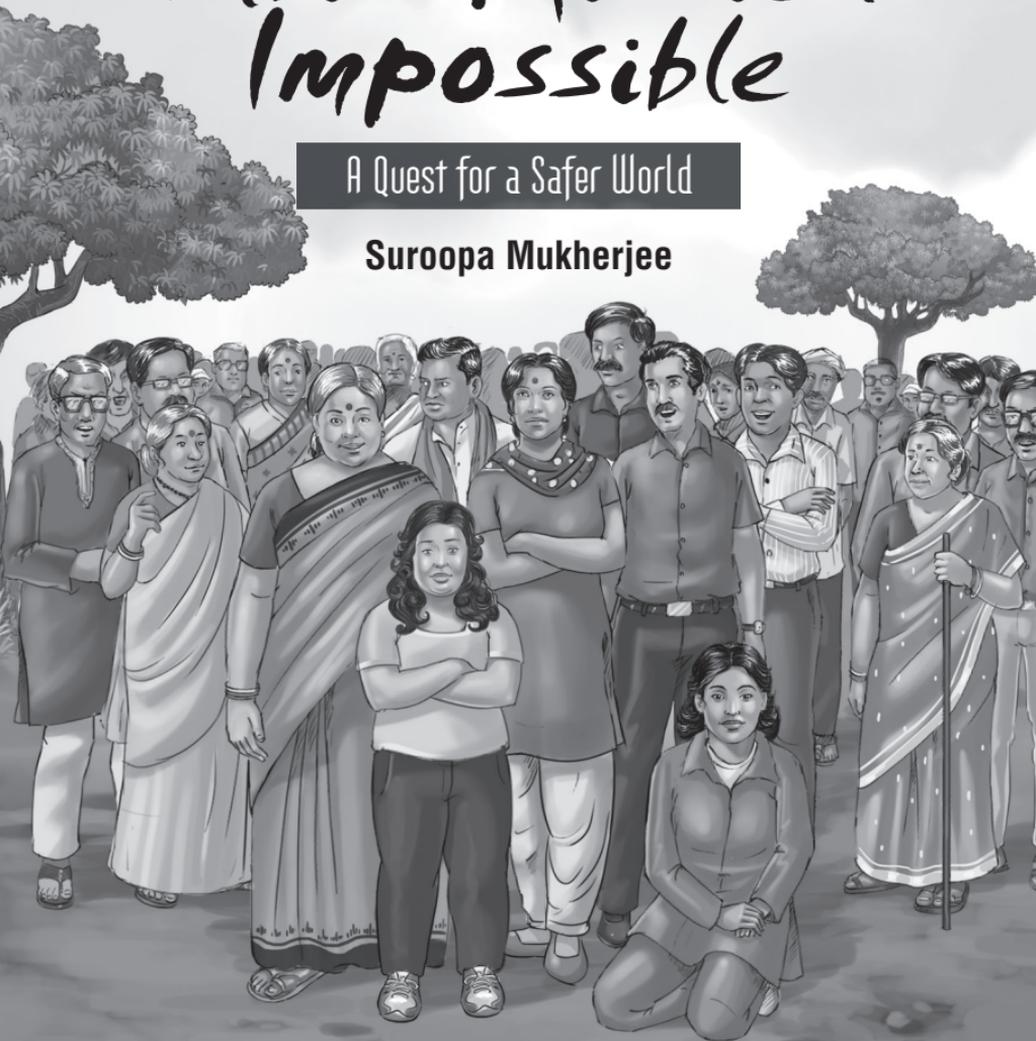
Director-General, TERI

SURVIVING DISASTERS

Pari's Mission Impossible

A Quest for a Safer World

Suroopa Mukherjee



LETTER TO THE PM



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Dear Readers,

This is the story of an ugly duckling, who firmly believed that one should have a shapely figure and a beautiful face to be popular in school. Pari, "the ugly duckling" knew that her classmates called her "Fatso" behind her back. One day, determined to get rid of the tag, she made big plans to lose weight, so that she could wear trendy clothes and funky accessories.

She was going to turn 15 in the month of June 2014. But the thought of celebrating her birthday did not excite her. All she could think of was the holiday homework that she had to complete! The very thought of it made Pari groan!

Then a miracle happened....

Little did Pari know that she was about to make the most important journey of her life! Even as family secrets tumbled out in the open, Pari made new friends in a new place and discovered many of her hidden talents! She went on to make a prize winning project too!

Pari is all set to spread her wings and take flight like a beautiful swan....



Holiday homework

Pari woke up early in the morning and went through her usual routine. She secretly measured her weight on the weighing machine, and groaned loudly! Crestfallen, she dived back into her bed, hid her face in the pillow, and wept as though her heart was breaking into a million pieces.

Skipping breakfast was routine for her. Later, she was so hungry, she couldn't resist binging on big scoops of ice cream and ate an entire bar of chocolate. She avoided her school friends, especially the ones who were rank holders in class.

She hated going to birthday parties. "What is the point of celebrating the day which is responsible for all our miseries?" she said. "I never asked to be born!"

Pari had no idea why she felt like a loser.



Pari's mother Janaki was really worried. She had to find out what was bothering Pari. She decided to take the matters in her own hand.

She entered Pari's room and found her sitting on the floor, with crumbled pieces of paper strewn all around. On seeing her mother, Pari stretched out her hand with



a pleading look in her eyes. It was the first time that Pari was reaching out for help.

Janaki flopped on the floor and hugged her daughter. "What is the matter, my darling? Will you not tell me? You know how much I love you. I am sure you do!"

"I hate myself, Ma¹! I am such a loser. I have so much holiday homework to do. Teacher will get angry. What can I do, Ma? I am ugly, fat, and a bad student!" said Pari with tears in her eyes.

"You are not a bad student, Pari. You have always done well in your studies. Let me see, what are the assignments that you must do before school reopens on July 1? You still have a month to finish your holiday homework."

Janaki opened the school diary, and read out the assignments.

Pari said, "Ok Ma". "I think I know which project I want to do. I would like to work on the topic HOW TO MAKE THE WORLD A SAFER PLACE. It is a simple topic. I will be able to finish it quickly."

Janaki patted Pari on her back. She said, "Fine, you begin your work. And remember, I am there to help you."

Pari waited for her mother to leave. Then she rang up her best friend Sakshi.



¹Ma: an Indian word for mother

Pari had made her plans. Her plans were foolproof, and now that she had won her mother's confidence, it would work perfectly.

She rang up her best friend Sakshi, who picked up the phone at once. "What on earth, Pari! Why...."

"Listen, listen, Sakshi! I need your help. Can you send me the online material on 'safe world'? I have to take care of what I cut and paste. I am certain most people in class are working on the same topic." Pari paused.

"Hmm...continue." Sakshi said with indifference.

"By the way, which topic have you selected?" asked Pari with great curiosity.

"I don't feel the need to tell you," said Sakshi in a composed manner.

"What? You are not going to tell me? Is that what friends are meant for?"

"Pari, don't get me wrong. I would have helped you, as I always do. But not anymore! You were my best friend. But our friendship is now past tense. I have been trying to get in touch with you. When did you last call back? Today you called, because you need to 'cut and paste' your home assignment? How selfish is that!"

"I know, man, I am selfish. But life is a mess! I can never become you! You are a frontrunner in everything

you do. Teachers love you! So do the girls and boys in class. When has anyone paid me a compliment?"

Sakshi banged down the phone. Pari sent Sakshi many emotional messages but she refused to pick up the phone. Who better than Pari knew that Sakshi had a soft heart.

Sure enough, Sakshi sent back a SMS. "Check out the links I have sent. You are my friend, in the present tense!"

Pari replied, "Present tense and future tense".



Pari began checking the links Sakshi had sent her. She felt as though she was opening a Pandora's box.

She shook her head in despair. "How I hate these projects. I have enough problems of my own, without worrying about keeping the world safe! Drat!" Pari murmured to herself.

She made up her mind. She decided to finish her project as quickly as possible. Once it is done, she would watch all the movies that Sakshi had downloaded for her, and kept in a pen drive.

Surviving Disasters : Pari's Mission Impossible (A Quest for a Safer World)



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