

PRATHAM BOOKS

ANNUAL REPORT

2007 - 2008

SO MANY CHILDREN, SO MANY DIFFERENT STORIES



**PRATHAM
BOOKS**





FOREWORD

As we write this on September 15, 2008 Bihar is in the grip of floods that have affected nearly 4 million people. In the midst of all this chaos, we found that in the district of Saharsa children were reading - story cards from Pratham Books. A friend and colleague from AID India has captured this on film and this will be available on the Pratham Books website. This is the kind of incident that makes us feel that our societal mission is on its way to success.

A little over four years ago we made a promise to ourselves to get “A Book in Every Child’s Hand” and every year we try and think of innovative means to get to that goal. Last year we innovated and created the concept of the story card - many thanks to Dr. Rukmini Bannerjee, a key player in the Pratham network for seeding this idea. The story card was simply a low cost method of getting our Shishuvachan books into the hands of children across the country. It is a full story delivered via a single A4-size sheet that is folded to create four separate “pages” and this retains the mystery of a book while reducing the production to the printing and laminating a single sheet. Over the past couple of years, we have produced and shipped over 6 million story cards in Hindi to the Hindi-speaking states of North India; in addition, we have translated these cards and made the artwork available to the states of Gujarat, Assam and Tamil Nadu and we believe that through this process another 4 million cards have been printed and distributed. 10 million cards is enough to convince us that this is the way to reach out to all the children in India and we will be doing more of this in the coming months across the country.

January 30, 2008 was the 60th death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and we brought out in record time and in ten languages a book on the Mahatma - A Man Called Bapu - written by Subhadra Sen Gupta and illustrated by Neeta Gangopadhya. Right before the Olympics event in Beijing in August, we also released a book on India’s promising young

swimming sensation, Viradhawal Khade - again this is an effort on our part to connect the youth and future of our country to a vision of success and excellence. We hope that come London 2012, we will be able to write with pride the story of Veer and many others like him as they succeed in bringing laurels to our country. These are but two very visible examples of how Pratham Books tries to bring out the highest quality content for our children across the country and we hope that books like these will inspire our children.

As we go ahead with our mission at Pratham Books, we would like to look also at the issue of sustainability. How can we achieve our goal of reaching millions of Indian children with good content to read and yet minimize our environmental impact? Is it even possible? We look forward to hearing from people who have answers, or who wish to help.

We have done all this with the support of a whole lot of committed folks - people who work at Pratham Books; authors, illustrators, translators, reviewers, DTP persons; many others who manage libraries all over the country so that children have access to these books; others who have crafted clever ways of getting our books into the hands of children. To all of them our heartfelt thanks and we look forward to continued support from all of them and many more as we chart a course to our destination.

Rohini Nilekani
Chairperson
September 15, 2008

Ashok Kamath
Managing Trustee

INDIAN CHILDREN. INDIAN STORIES. INDIAN LANGUAGES

18 languages. Many dialects. Untold joy.

It comes as a surprise that a country this rich in language and expression does not have an equally rich tradition of children's books in multiple languages. An overwhelming majority of children's titles are in English, and the small number of books that emerge in regional languages are declining with every year.

Indian families speak to each other in their mother tongues. This only underlines the need for more books for children in regional languages. When children encounter the words and phrases they hear at home in their books, it reinforces their language skills and makes reading more enjoyable.

This is why Pratham Books focuses not just on producing good books for children, but on publishing them in as many languages as possible. Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu, Oriya, Kannada, and, of course, English – these are the languages children read our stories in. In addition to these, we have created story cards in Assamese and Bodo. The idea is to reach out to every Indian child in a language of their choice.

A book for every mood.

Fat King, Thin Dog to make them laugh, Rumniya to spark off their thinking, Chuskit Goes to School, to take them to the faraway land of Ladakh. This year, the sixtieth anniversary of Gandhiji's martyrdom, saw Pratham Books' A Man Called Bapu reveal the lesser-known face of the Mahatma.

Nature's Webmasters and Dragonflies: From Submarines to Skyraiders gives them a glimpse of the wonders of nature. Even younger children are enthralled by tales like Monsoon Concert and Whispering Palms. Arousing the curiosity of parents and children alike is Why Does Gopal Get Angry? Seems like everyone hopes to understand why kids sometimes can be angered for no reason at all.

Often, it is the design of the book that catches a child's eye. At Pratham Books, therefore, we work with established designers and illustrators, as well as fresh, original talent. You will find our books filled with extremely modern illustrations, as in Fat King Thin Dog, to Warli folk art, as in The First Farmers.



DIFFERENT CHILDREN. DIFFERENT WAYS TO TELL THEM STORIES.

Story cards.

Our effort to make delightful, interesting books affordable for every child has been on for years. And while we've tried to keep the price of a book below Rs. 25, this still placed them out of reach of many, many little children – especially in rural India.

On one hand, more and more children were able to read, thanks to Pratham's Read India Campaign. On the other, there was such little simple, affordable material for them to read. The solution? Simple stories, brightly illustrated, printed on four pages, and priced at under Rs.2 a unit. We called them story cards.

We began shipping them to Pratham for them to use in the Read India campaign. Before we knew it, many State governments started to distribute them extensively in government schools.

To date, children in UP, Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, and Punjab, are reading almost 4.5 million story cards – in Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Assamese, Bodo, Tamil, Urdu, English, and

Punjabi. UNICEF, state units of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Pratham, and Akshara, too, continue to use these story cards extensively.

Bilinguals. Because two is better than one.

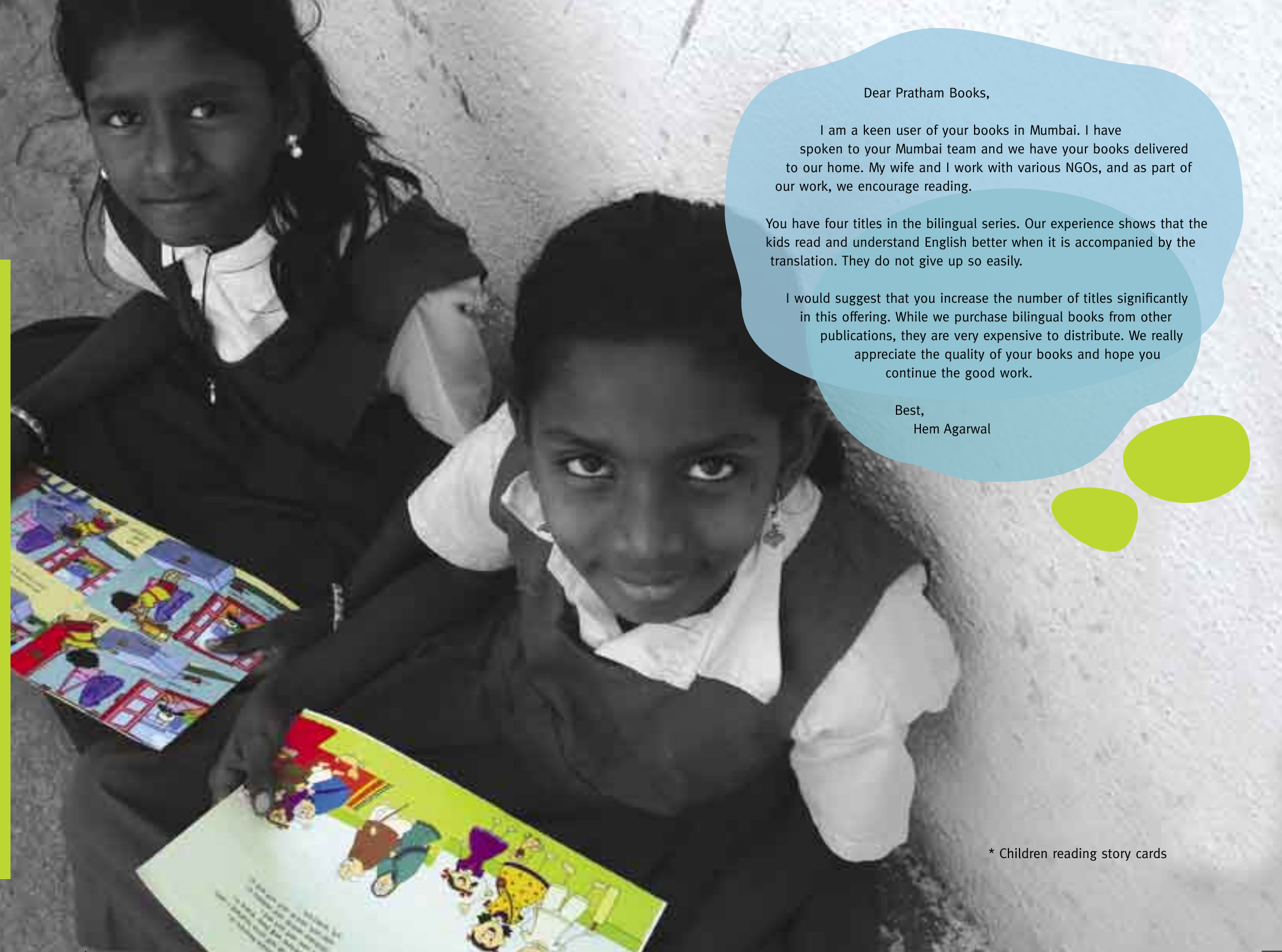
We believe that every language has its place under the sun, and all languages can coexist and flourish. Children use one language to deepen their grasp of the second. Meenu, a young reader from Dharwad, Karnataka, tells us:

ನನ್ನ ಮುಖ್ಯ ವಿಷಯ "ನನ್ನ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಸಮಯವನ್ನು ಕಳೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು" ಎಂದು ನನ್ನ ಶಿಕ್ಷಕರು ನನಗೆ ಹೇಳಿದರು. ನನ್ನ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಇದು ಒಂದು ವಿಷಯವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ನನ್ನ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಸಮಯವನ್ನು ಕಳೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಎಂದು ನನ್ನ ಶಿಕ್ಷಕರು ನನಗೆ ಹೇಳಿದರು. ನನ್ನ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಇದು ಒಂದು ವಿಷಯವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ನನ್ನ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಸಮಯವನ್ನು ಕಳೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಎಂದು ನನ್ನ ಶಿಕ್ಷಕರು ನನಗೆ ಹೇಳಿದರು.

("I can read well in Kannada, but I've just begun to learn English. So I used to read the names of all the shops on my way to school, and then try to read the same in English, which is written below the Kannada name. My teacher said my English improved in just two months!")

This is exactly the technique we use in our bilingual books. With simple text in English and a regional language, children follow the pictorial cues on each page to read both languages.

Bilingual books are equally great to teach urban, English-speaking students their native language.



Dear Pratham Books,

I am a keen user of your books in Mumbai. I have spoken to your Mumbai team and we have your books delivered to our home. My wife and I work with various NGOs, and as part of our work, we encourage reading.

You have four titles in the bilingual series. Our experience shows that the kids read and understand English better when it is accompanied by the translation. They do not give up so easily.

I would suggest that you increase the number of titles significantly in this offering. While we purchase bilingual books from other publications, they are very expensive to distribute. We really appreciate the quality of your books and hope you continue the good work.

Best,
Hem Agarwal

* Children reading story cards

Download your favourite story for free.

This year, we offered one of our most popular titles, Fat King, Thin Dog, as a free download on our website. Available in three languages: Hindi, English and Kannada, this met with an overwhelming response. In just a few days, hundreds of parents downloaded this delightful book for their little ones – often, in two languages.

We're hoping to make more and more of our books available for free downloads in the future, so even more children can benefit.

Everyone's blogging. Including Pratham Books.

On March 28, 2008, Pratham Books joined the blogging community, to create a discussion forum involving authors, illustrators, educators, and others interested in reading and children.

Since then, we have received over 4,000 unique visitors, hundreds of comments and conversations, dozens of manuscripts, and many, many requests for partnerships. Since our blog, like Pratham Books itself, is multilingual, you will come across posts in Tamil, Hindi, and Kannada, too – from places as far-flung as Poland.

Check out this active and vibrant community for yourself, at <http://blog.prathambooks.org/>

Dear Pratham Books,

Thanks a lot for letting us download Fat King, Thin Dog. I am a special educator, and teach deaf children. I have always felt that we lacked good books based on our Indian culture, and I was delighted to discover your publications. They are excellent, and have really motivated parents to buy and read aloud these books to their kids, as they are inexpensive and very appropriate. I do hope you will let us have access to many more such books.

Thanks once again,
Geetha Prasanna



SOMETIMES TWO PEOPLE CAN TELL A STORY BETTER THAN JUST ONE PERSON.

At Pratham Books, we hope to provide every child with access to affordable books of high quality. This is not a goal we can achieve alone. This is why we partner with different, like-minded organisations and publishers.

Two publishers. One focus.

We have partnered with Book Box and Orient Longman to bring out four titles for children between 7 and 10 years. In addition, we are working with French and German publishers to bring some internationally acclaimed stories to young Indian readers, in Indian languages.

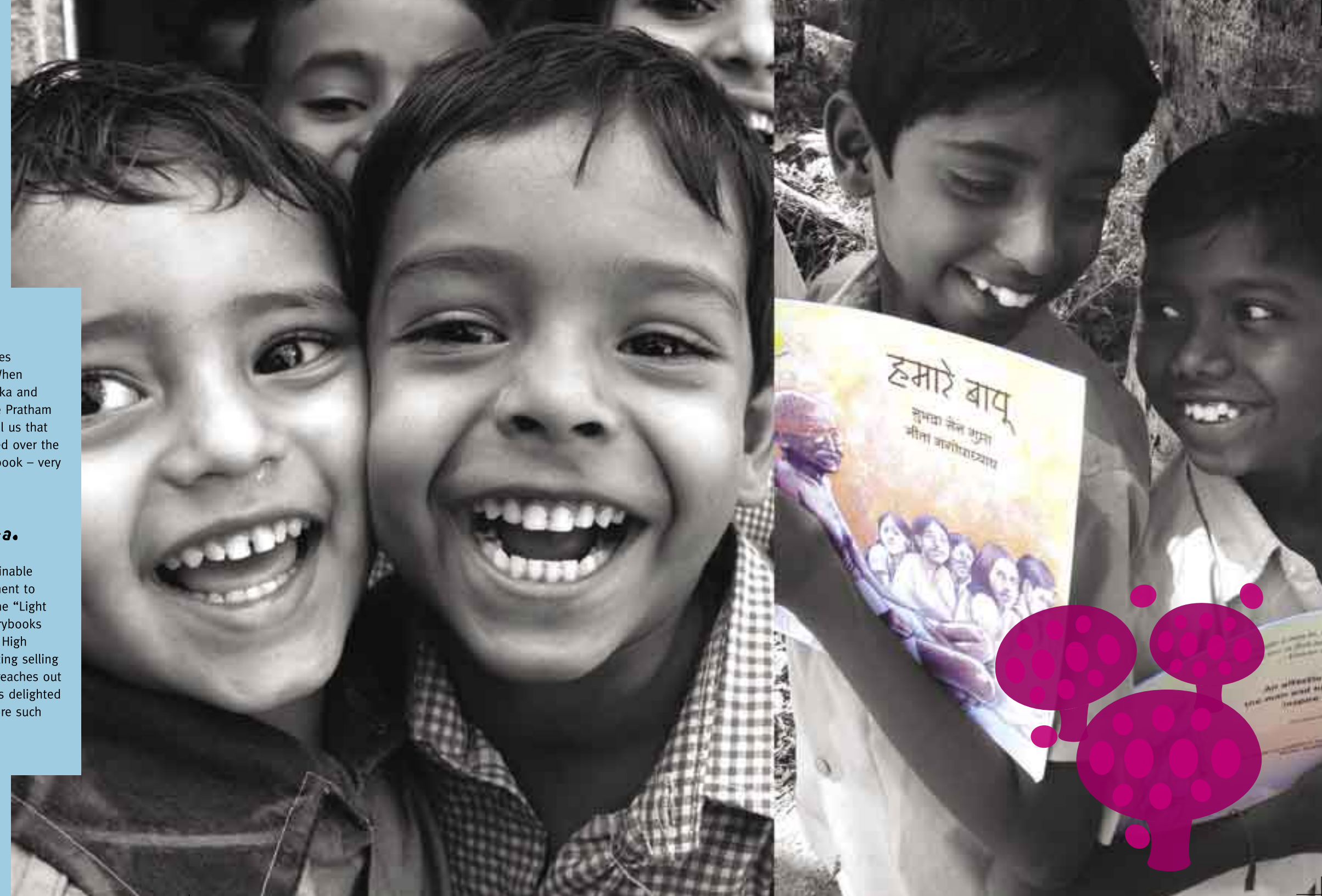
Pratham Books is also proud to be associated with other NGOs as well. The Leh-based Namgyal Institute for People with Disabilities is one such organization. Their English-language book, Chuskit Goes to School!, was a lovely story about a village girl called Chuskit. Pratham Books translated it into seven other Indian languages, and little Chuskit happily made her way into the lives of hundreds of other Indian children.

BP. Fuelling our efforts.

BP Energy India Pvt. limited, a subsidiary of BP provides low-cost, safe, clean energy solutions for rural India. When they launched Oorja, a low-cost stove, in rural Karnataka and Maharashtra, we tied up with them to give away a free Pratham Books' copy with every stove they sold. BP officials tell us that the overwhelming response had mothers getting excited over the free gift, and children becoming proud owners of the book – very often, the first book they had ever owned.

SELCO Solar. An enlightening idea.

SELCO Solar is a social enterprise that promotes sustainable energy services in rural India. As part of their commitment to society, they promote reading and recently launched the "Light for Knowledge" programme where Pratham Books' storybooks were distributed to all the children at the Neeranahalli High School near Sirsi, Karnataka. They are also test marketing selling our books through their existing sales network which reaches out to approximately 85,000 households. Pratham Books is delighted to partner with them and we look forward to many more such partnerships to reach out to many more children.



BECAUSE ONE STORY IS NEVER ENOUGH.

In addition to the many stories we bring into our young readers' lives, Pratham Books has penned a few stories of its own this past year.

A different kind of story. A Man Called Bapu.

On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom, Pratham Books launched a colourful, new book called A Man Called Bapu. Rohini Nilekani, Chairperson of Pratham Books, presented the first copy to His Excellency Shri Rameshwar Thakur, Governor of Karnataka, at a prestigious function in Bangalore's Raj Bhavan.

As part of the launch, children read out selected passages from the book, both, in Kannada and English. The other highlight of the afternoon was the Governor's address, where he related his own personal experiences with Gandhiji during the Quit India Movement.

Congratulating Pratham Books on bringing out this child-centric book on Bapuji, he said: "What children like to read is what made the Mahatma do the great things he did." He also presented prizes to the winners of a writing contest conducted jointly by Deccan Herald, Akshara Foundation, and Pratham Books.

Books, books, and more books.

Pratham Books' debut at the World Book Fair met with a fabulous response from parents, teachers, distributors, and children alike.

On one hand, there were distributors and retailers from Pune, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Nagpur, and Nasik placing book orders. While on the other hand, schools and other educational organizations from Bhopal, Mussorie, Udaipur, Jaipur, and Ajmer were sending us long lists of book requests. It was a great mix of different people reacting in the same way to our publications. However, our favorite image of the World Book fair remains that of a little girl telling her mother,

मैं मुझे यह वाली किताब खरीद दो, प्लीज़।
आखिरी किताब, माँ. सच।

("Mummy please buy me this book. Last book mummy, promise!")

Ms. Rohini Nilekani,
Chairperson Pratham Books,
presenting the first copy of the
book - 'A Man Called Bapu' to
H. E. Shri Rameshwar Thakur,
Governor of Karnataka

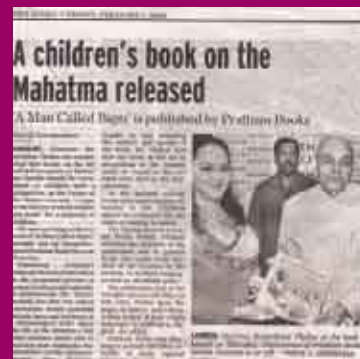


Pratham Books stall at
the World Book Fair in Delhi



WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT US.

The past year saw many stories from Pratham Books in print – here are a few of them.



Bengaluru Pages

KIDS/BOOKS

Good reading made affordable

IT'S ALWAYS been the privilege of English readers to get imaginative, fun children's books. It's a growing market and publishers know it. Fortunately, Indian language kids' books are now not difficult to find. Pratham Books, a not-for-profit trust that seeks to publish high-quality books for children at

an affordable cost, is trying to create a shift in the paradigm for publishing children's books. The low cost model proves that children's literature can be attractive and affordable and therefore more accessible.

Read India Books is an imprint of Pratham Books that plans to publish 100 children's book titles. Some of the titles are mentioned here. These books are not retained at bookstores; so you need to purchase them directly or order online through the website prathambooks.org. Call: 65684113, 25429726/7/8

Tommy and the Fly (Bilingual English-Hindi/ Kannada/ Marathi)

Simple story about the dog Tommy who gets disturbed by a pesky fly. Kids will love the alliteration and in the process learn the names of body parts in two languages.

Ages: 3-6 years
Price: Rs 20
Pages: 16



From Submarines to Skyriders (English, also available in Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati)

Everybody knows about the caterpillar and the butterfly, but rarely is it known that dragonflies live underwater for three to five years before emerging to fly around eating up mosquitoes and other pests. Read this account of their incredible lifecycle, written in an effervescent style. The book has much to offer while talking about the insect that reminds us of helicopters and bi-planes. Dragonflies have been on earth much before human beings appeared and are as multi-hand as you can imagine. They are harmless to humans and do not bite – a fact that should endear them to us.

Ages: 11-14
Price: Rs 25
Pages: 28



It's fair to share – a Warli folk tale (English, also available in Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Telugu, Gujarati, Urdu)

This is a story with a moral: when the heavens are bountiful, we must learn to be generous. Children get an understanding of the Warli style of illustration, of its origins etc. The story has a sad ending – but perhaps children need to face harsh realities too sometimes.

Ages: 7-10
Price: Rs 20
Pages: 20



Fat King Thin Dog (English, also available in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu)

A typical five-minute book for kids with short attention spans. You need to read this with expression, especially the surprise funny ending, to bring joy to the little ones.

Ages: 3-6
Price: Rs 15
Pages: 12



Monsoon Concert (English, also available in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu)

All kids love rain. They are also fascinated by wildlife. Bring the two together and the book's a surefire hit. Get the kids to set the sounds in this book to their own music and you'll soon have a rock band on your hands!

Ages: 3-6
Price: Rs 20
Pages: 12



Rumliya (English, also available in Hindi, Kannada, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu)

Rumliya and Nuri are a cheerful pair because they believe most things turn out right in the end. Read this sweet story about resourceful Rumliya!

Ages: 3-6
Price: Rs 15
Pages: 16



A Man Called Bapu

Author: Subhadra Sen Gupta
Illustrated by Neeta Gangopadhye
Publishers: Pratham Books
Price: Rs 25

IT'S A GOOD thing someone's thinking about kids, affordable books and Indian themes all at the same time. This book about Gandhi comes at the right time – just when kids' interest in the man has been kindled by Bollywood's Late Bapu Muzumdar. Most children who have seen the film do know that Gandhi's face is on our currency notes, that he holds a stick in his hand, that he's old, bald and wears a dhoti. Beyond that, if they followed the film at all, they have some understanding of his leaning towards the truth.

This slim book introduces children to some key events in Gandhi's life that led him to start the Satyagraha movement: his first encounter with apartheid in South Africa and how it changed him as a lawyer, the incidents that led to his giving up loyalty to the British Empire and donning Indian clothes, and further shedding even those for a mere dhoti and khadi shawl. The book speaks about Gandhi's secularism, his liberal world view, the ease with which he could deal with complex problems and find simple solutions, his conviction and strength, his persuasive skills and his absolute will to live in a free India.

KIDS/REVIEW: A MAN CALLED BAPU

Little boxes offer nuggets and funny incidents sure to delight children. Some of them are surprises to even adults who think they know much about Gandhi. There's one story about how it became difficult for Gandhi to run the Sabarmati Ashram after funds dried up when he allowed a Dalit couple to live in it. How Gandhi got the funds and how despite that generosity he had the moral courage to stand up against the benefactor is an eye-opener. Read the book to find out more!

The illustrations highlight the stories well and the generous space allotted to them is justified. More such books will do us all good.

Kalpna Shah



Q&A: Rohini Nilekani



'A Man Called Bapu' was published by Bangalore-based Pratham Books, to commemorate the 60th death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Rohini Nilekani, Chairperson of Pratham Books, talks about her vision for the publishing house.

What is your vision for Pratham Books?
Pratham Books is a not-for profit organisation set up in

2004. It was set up to create high quality books in all Indian languages which are affordable and through this, promote reading. Our mission is to see a book in every child's hand.

What was the rationale behind setting up this organisation?
The background for this is that approximately 40 per cent of primary school children in India cannot read. There are a lot of organisations that are working with millions of children to enable them to read. All these new readers need books to sustain their reading habit – good quality, low cost books in their own languages and with characters and situations that they can identify with. Pratham Books was set up to fill this gap in the market. Too many children in this country have never experienced the joy of reading a good book just for the fun of it. We wish to democratise the joy of reading.

Since 2004, Pratham has published 127 original titles. The books, priced at Rs 25, are available in nine Indian languages.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Ms. Rohini Nilekani, Chairperson
- Mr. Ashok Kamath, Managing Trustee
- Ms. Rekha Menon
- Ms. Kanchan Banerjee
- Ms. Suzanne Singh



FINANCIALS

PRATHAM BOOKS		
Balance sheet as on March 31, 2008		
	(Figures in Rupees)	
Particulars	As at March 31, 2008	As at March 31, 2007
Liabilities		
Corpus Fund	8,891,213	7,354,302
Current Liabilities	4,859,521	6,230,449
Advances Received from buyers	177,510	350,542
Total	13,928,244	13,935,293
Assets		
Fixed Assets	442,250	333,459
Deposits	82,500	1,500
Rajiv Gandhi Foundation - Receivable A/c	455,159	304,708
Debtors	4,270,675	5,263,633
TDS Recoverable		13,206
Stock of Books	6,580,391	4,683,478
Cash in Hand	5,460	14,990
Cash at Bank	604,096	2,142,393
Deferred Development Expenses	1,487,713	1,177,926
Total	13,928,244	13,935,293

FINANCIALS

PRATHAM BOOKS		
Income & Expenditure for the Year Ended March 31, 2008		
	(Figures in Rupees)	
Particulars	Year ended March 31, 2008	Year ended March 31, 2007
Income		
Sale of Books	8,416,213	15,462,600
Donation received	5,000,000	102,600
Increase/(Decrease) in value of Stock of Books	1,896,913	2,123,047
Other Income	259,091	344,194
Excess of Expenditure over Income	0	1,543,669
Total	15,572,217	19,576,110
Expenditure		
Book Development Expenses	9,303,469	15,120,439
Selling & Administrative Expenses	4,371,472	4,123,228
Promotional Expenses	91,585	76,197
Depreciation	164,838	256,246
Damaged Stock	103,942	0
Excess of Income over Expenditure	1,536,911	0
Total	15,572,217	19,576,110

FINANCIALS

Pratham Books		
Receipts and Payments account for the Year Ended March 31, 2008		
	(Figures in Rupees)	
Particulars	Year ended March 31, 2008	Year ended March 31, 2007
Receipts		
Balance brought forward		
- Cash on hand	14,990	10,998
- Cash at bank	2,142,393	4,882,590
Donations	5,000,000	102,600
Sale of books	9,236,140	11,328,018
Other Income	34,832	181,980
Rent Deposit	0	20,000
Total	16,428,355	16,526,186
Payments		
Book Development Expenses	10,988,662	12,085,206
Selling & Administrative Expenses	4,383,923	1,810,314
Promotional Expenses	91,585	56,290
Deposits	81,000	0
Fixed Assets Purchased	273,629	416,993
Balance carried forward		
- Cash on hand	5,460	14,990
- Cash at bank	604,096	2,142,393
Total	16,428,355	16,526,186





**PRATHAM
BOOKS**

Pratham Books

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