

We aim to provide a book in every child's hand: Rohini Nilekani, Pratham Books

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New Delhi : In a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed with Pratham Books (NGO), publisher Pearson Longman has agreed to set aside part of the proceeds it receives for every school title sold in India, which will then be used for the cause of the underprivileged children across the country.

Under the MoU, Pearson will keep aside an amount from the sales proceeds of every school title sold in India. The proceeds will be used to buy storybooks from Pratham Books and distributed to those children who do not have access to quality children's books.

Pratham Books is a non-profit trust that came up six years ago. The NGO specialises in publishing quality books for children at an affordable cost in various Indian languages.

Rohini Nilekani, founder chairperson, Pratham Books, tells more about the initiative in a short talk with IndianExpress.com.

What made you go for the MoU with Pearson Longman?

Pearson has decided to support Pratham Books which is a non profit organisation for children. Our aim is to provide a book in every child's hand. We are aiming to increase literacy through this initiative. We have 200 'original' children's title books which are published in approximately 11 languages. Till date we have circulated more than 8 million books which have reached approximately 15 million children in the last 6 years.

How did the idea of setting up Pratham Books strike you?

I wish to create new readers among the poor kids. All children deserve the joy of reading. We wanted to democratise this joy of reading as it is a very essential part of childhood and growing up. We publish 'fun' books written by Indians for Indian children.

We wanted to create quality books available to children at minimum prices. Our books have gone to 18 states in the country in the last 6 years.

Are you looking forward to more partners in this initiative?

We are open to any type of partnerships which benefits the students. Many state governments also buy our books. We are working with MCD schools for more than 5 years now.

We are also working on projects with governments in several states and are also finalising arrangements with the Indian Railways and various bus shelters across India that will serve as retail outlets for our books.

What in your opinion is the USP of Pratham Books?

Our USP is 'Indian content for Indian Children.' We offer high quality books at affordable prices for children between the age group of 3-12. We work in a very low budget. This is a societal mission and not a business.

I believe when children have access to diverse creative material, it has a positive impact on them.

Do you think Pratham Books has been successful in realising its vision?

We are still working towards making our vision reach its zenith. Our vision is to see a book in every child's hand. Our goal is to create as many partnerships as possible to reach as many children with as many books as possible.