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Christian Science Monitor Profiles Rohini Nilekani of Pratham Books

October 26, 2012

In case you missed it, the *Christian Science Monitor* recently published a wonderfully inspiring story about Rohini Nilekani, the Bangalore-based philanthropist who founded Pratham Books, a nonprofit publishing company that provides low-cost books to millions of poor children across India. [See [Rohini Nilekani Pours Her Wealth into Getting Books to India's Poorest Children](#), by Kavitha Rao, *Christian Science Monitor*, 12.Oct.2012.]

As Ms. Nilekani told the *Christian Science Monitor*, there are more than 300 million children in India and, for most of them, books are an unthinkable luxury that lies well out of reach of the meager resources of their families. In a country still plagued by illiteracy, especially in poor rural areas, access to books is an urgent need. With this in mind, Nilekani founded Pratham Books in 2004, to get high-quality, low-cost books into the hands of as many Indian children as possible.

According to the article, "Eight years later, Pratham has published more than 10 million books with 225 titles in 11 languages. Most of the books are priced at less than 25 rupees (about 45 cents)." Even at that low price, many children still cannot afford to buy a book, so Pratham Books now sells story cards, printed on laminated paper, and retailing for 2.5 rupees - about 4 cents, the *Christian Science Monitor* reports.

Inspiring as her work has been, Ms. Nilekani's personal story is compelling in its own right. At the age of 20, the *Monitor* article says, Nilekani invested her life savings of 10,000 rupees (ca. \$180) in a fledgling IT company founded by her husband, Nandan Nilekani, and several of his friends. The rest is history: the company became a powerhouse of India's new high-tech economy - Infosys, Ltd. - and Ms. Nilekani became a very wealthy woman. She was determined to use her newfound wealth for the betterment of others, as she told the *Monitor*:

"I felt very uncomfortable when I became wealthy. One of my ways of dealing with it was to give it forward right away. I believe that any society that allows the creation of legitimate wealth expects that the wealth be used for its benefit."

That same humanitarian impulse guides the work of the Murthy Law Firm, where philanthropy and good corporate citizenship are integral parts of our business plan. Through our charitable arm, the MurthyNAYAK Foundation, our law firm contributes to the work of Pratham, the innovative educational foundation that is Pratham Books' parent organization. We do this because we understand that education is the surest route to a better future for children living in poverty today. The Murthy Law Firm is proud to be the lead sponsor for the 2012 Pratham DC gala and fundraiser in November,

and we hope many others will join us in supporting this vital work.

More information on Pratham is available at www.pratham.org, and on [Pratham Books](#).

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