



Annual Report 2007–08

The Prajnya Trust PRAJNYA INITIATIVES FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND SECURITY

FROM DREAMING TO BECOMING: PRAJNYA 2007–08



Trustees signing the launch resolution

On September 9, 2007, Prajnya's Trustees met in Chennai to launch Prajnya Initiatives for Peace, Justice and Security, a new public policy research centre.

The Prajnya Trust website (<http://www.prajnya.in>) was also launched on the occasion. Apart

from describing our work and events, it lists 'Friends of Prajnya': those who have supported us in a number of ways.

The *Politics, Security and Women Initiative* (PSW) started work in September 2007. Pre-launch preparations for the Education for Peace Initiative are underway although a launch date has not been determined as yet.

PSW's cornerstone project is the setting up of The Women in Politics and Policy Resource Centre. Under its auspices, we will systematically compile statistical data relating to women's participation in politics and policy-making as also undertake the recording of life-stories and oral histories. To this end, two background research studies are underway. The first is a paper on the study of women in politics and the second is historical research on women in the colonial period.

Networking with other civil society initiatives is central to Prajnya's mandate. In October 2007, Prajnya lent modest support to the Marappachi Trust's production of V.Geetha's 'Kaalakanavu,' a play that traces the emergence of women into the public sphere largely through their own writings. Both the theme and approach of this play resonate with our PSW Initiative's work.

Prajnya's first public event took place on March 8, 2008: an intercollegiate quiz on "Women in South Asia." PSW also launched a blog on this occasion: <http://keepingcount.wordpress.com>, a platform for the PSW Team and our friends.



THE PRAJNYA 2008 INTERCOLLEGIATE QUIZ ON WOMEN IN SOUTH ASIA

On March 8, 2008, Prajnya organized a quiz where teams from five leading women's colleges in Chennai competed. The theme was 'Women in South Asia.' Women achievers in every sphere—politics, sports, science, arts, media—as well as women in literature and mythology were the subject of the quiz.

Our objective was to raise awareness about women's contributions in our region, and to create an interest among students in this subject. Participants appeared to have spent a great deal of time and effort to prepare for the quiz, encouraging us to think about this as an

annual event, next time on a larger scale. The winners were MOP Vaishnav College and the runners-up were Stella Maris College.

Friends and family pitched in with support for space, prizes and snacks. At Prajnya, we have been seeking to build a community of support and partnership for ourselves, and the response to the quiz encourages us to think that we will soon have all the community we need to make our vision a reality.



PRAJNYA RECAP

The Prajnya Vision

To build a centre of scholarly excellence and creativity, known for its engagement with policy and its commitment to collaborative endeavour.

The **objects** of The Prajnya Trust are:

- (a) To facilitate scholarship;
 - (b) To plan and carry out advocacy and educational initiatives;
 - (c) To support networking and collaborative activity with institutions and individuals, towards promoting peace, justice and security.
- Prajnya Initiatives, the research centre will undertake research, publishing, networking, educational outreach and consultancy.

Prajnya's work is conceptualized in terms of thematic initiatives that provide the basis for all its activities. Each initiative addresses a cluster of issues and is structured around a cornerstone or anchor project that will form its core agenda and sustain its other activities. The initiatives draw on each other, and some projects display a natural overlap which facilitates mutual engagement.

PRAJNYA'S PEOPLE

Trustees

- Swarna Rajagopalan, Ph.D., Managing Trustee, is a Chennai-based political analyst and consultant.
 - Shilpa Anand is a partner in Eastern Engineering Company, Mumbai.
 - Sudha Ramachandran, Ph.D., is an independent researcher/journalist based in Bangalore, India.
 - K. Jayalakshmi, or Jaya Menon as she is better known, is Political Editor, The Times of India, Chennai edition.
- Ratna Mukherjee, a Founding Trustee, has recently resigned.

Advisory Panel

- Stephen P. Cohen, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution.
- Rajmohan Gandhi, historian and biographer, presently at the University of Illinois, Urbana.
- Ingrid Srinath, former CEO, Child Rights and You (CRY).

PSW Team (2007-09)

- Swarna Rajagopalan, Initiative Director
- Uma Vangal, Senior Fellow (Honorary)
- Jayalakshmi Gopalan, Research Fellow (Honorary)
- Nandhini Shanmugham, Sweta Narayanan & Nirupama Sarathy, volunteers

Administrator

Subhashini Selvanathan

PSW 2008-09

In the coming year, we hope to move steadily towards setting up The Women in Politics and Policy Resource Centre. We are still trying to raise funds for the salaries, research expenses and technical requirements of this project. This has not deterred us from setting ourselves deadlines and planning activities in a manner that can be scaled to match available resources.

April 2008 onwards	Round-tables on women and politics; intended to enhance skills and build community.
June 2008	Background papers ready.
June -July	Consultations around concept paper, either as a workshop or multiple web-based sessions.
August 2008	Oral history interviews begin.
November-December '08	Advocacy and outreach relating to women's security
March 2009	Women in South Asia Intercollegiate Quiz

In order to achieve this, we need people, funds, partners and technical and material assistance. The Prajnya Trust has decided to prioritize people and project funding over premises and paraphernalia. Everyone working with us is volunteering, and we need to be able to hire them full-time so they can give us their full attention and best efforts.

**WE HAVE VISION, IDEAS, ENERGY AND ABILITY.
WE NEED MONEY, MATERIALS AND YOU.
DONATE, SHARE RESOURCES, VOLUNTEER WITH US!**

FRIENDS OF PRAJNYA

We thank our friends who have given generously to support us, whether it is as time, books, other materials or money.

- Sarojini Rajaram
- Shyamala Rajagopalan
- Malathi Jaikumara
- Sudha Rajagopalan and Joost Kaptijn
- Meera Mani
- Jayanthi Kumaraswamy
- Rebecca and Siddharth
- Vijaya Krishnan
- Leela and NVS Mani
- S. Mallikarjunan
- Dhanalakshmi Ayyer
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Delhi
- Learning Advantage/ Manara Learning Centre
- P.K. and Mangala Ayre
- Uma Vangal
- Anand Rajaram

This incomplete list leaves out several other individuals who took the time to meet us, hear about our plans and give us feedback and advice.

WHAT WE SPENT IN 2007-08

2007-08 is Prajnya's first full fiscal year. We started out without even a bank account. We are still operating out of the Managing Trustee's home office, so our overheads are effectively subsidized.

All the gifts to Prajnya in the course of the year came from friends and family, in the form of small cash contributions, books, used office equipment, stationery and other office supplies and programme-related donations. We have still not raised significant grant money and all monetary contributions are being deposited in our bank account as contributions to a corpus.

Our expenses have truly been minimal. All of them, except those related to the March 8, quiz, have been underwritten by the Managing Trustee and her consultancy firm.

Prajnya Expenses 2007-8

Management	7636
Outreach	8801
Programming (Quiz)	9094
	25531

None of the Trustees have sought to be reimbursed for any expenses they have incurred (coming to the September 2007 meeting and courier charges for sending the signed deed), although we have requested they track these expenses as a matter of record.

We have been scrupulous about sending receipts for all gifts made.

DONATIONS RECEIVED IN 2007-08

Donations Received from Individuals:

Endowment support: Rs. 51506.00
Library donation: 14 books
Office equipment: 1 used laptop; 1 used scanner
Programme-related: Rs. 5520.00*
Miscellaneous items: Includes second-hand books for resale towards Prajnya endowment.

Self-generated Income: Nil.

International donations: Nil.

* Towards the March 8, 2008 Quiz, we received Rs. 4500 towards prizes (trophy, book vouchers and certificates); Rs. 1020 as sponsorship of snacks and the free use of space.

WHAT WE NEED

- Salary support for PSW Fellows and Interns.
- Grants towards the Women in Politics and Policy Resource Centre.
- Digital movie cameras and audio-recorders for the Oral History project.
- Library support, whether as grants or gifts made based on our Amazon.com Wishlists (search 'Prajnya' under 'Gifts and Wishlists').
- Research support from those with access to journals and electronic databases in the form of keyword and citation searches.
- Sponsorship/ support towards consultative meetings and other programmes.
- Technical support towards refurbishing used laptops donated to us.
- Operational support, whether as money, time, expertise or space.

MAKE A GIFT

What you should know

◆ The Prajnya Trust is registered under the Income Tax Act (1961) Section 12 AA (695/06-7).

◆ We do not yet have 80G status whereby donors can claim the 50 or 100% tax exemptions on their donations to us.

◆ When you donate, you should know there is no tax benefit to you as yet.

How you can give

◆ Cheques or demand drafts should be made to 'The Prajnya Trust.'

◆ Prajnya banks with HDFC Bank, T.Nagar Branch, Chennai. If you want to make an electronic transfer, we will give you account specifics.

Please send us your correct current contact information (name, postal address, email and telephone) so we can send a receipt (albeit ordinary) and newsletters.

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

As we close this financial year, some administrative notes:

■ We filed an income tax return for 2006-07 since our IT recognition arrived in early March 2007.

■ We have just applied for 80G exemption status.

■ We are seeking membership in Credibility Alliance and have submitted our application.

■ We are also seeking to connect with Chennai's NGO community through Confederation of Indian Organisations for Service and Advocacy (CIOSA), an important local network.

■ We will have our first yearly accounts audited in the months to come and will place the report on our website.

■ Prajnya is trying to adopt 'best practices' in the area of non-profit governance, accountability and transparency and to this end, we are seeking the assistance of specialized consultancy services like Governance Matters and Murray Culshaw Consulting.



September 9, 2007: Trustees (left) Prajnya Team (right)



March 8, 2008: Prajnya Quiz on Women in South Asia Participants (left), winners (middle); runners-up (right)

The Prajnya Trust
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Peace, Justice and Security**

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