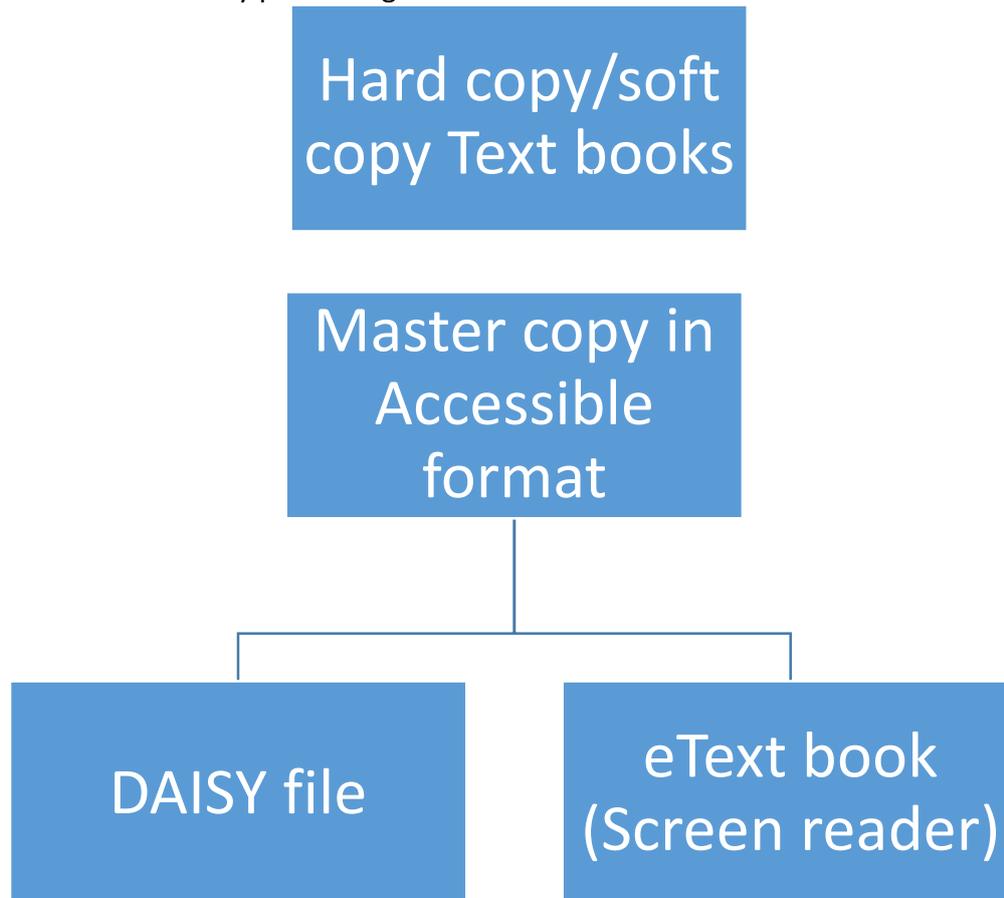


## PROPOSED PROJECT INFORMATION

**Project title:** Donate for Audio books – Help Blind Students learn

**Objectives of the project:**

Produce accessible reading material for the students with print disabilities or dyslexia across Karnataka thereby promoting education.



**Project Summary:**

This project is in line with the Vision and Mission of Mitra Jyothi. A brief summary is provided below;

Mitra Jyothi works as an enabler of education and skill enhancement of the visually impaired by providing them the necessary training, educative materials, counseling and support. Each of the programs/activities at Mitra Jyothi are designed to address a subset of the problems faced by the visually disabled, thereby working in tandem they provide a holistic solution.

*This project proposal is to get support for Audio library, hence not covering in depth about other programs of Mitra Jyothi. Refer to Annexure for details about other programs covered in Mitra Jyothi.*

**Educational Resource Centre (ERC):** Mitra Jyothi provides accessible educational and general reading material to people with visual disability. It could be in any of the need based formats such as e-Text, Human Voice, Braille Prints, Large Print or other options. The “**Talking Book Library**” (TBL) and the “**Braille Transcription Centre**” (BTC) are two Programs that cater to these requirements. With this, the need of both Braille books and Audio libraries/text to speech conversion technology for faster and more efficient reading is addressed.

The TBL works on creating digital audio libraries where printed books are converted into the “DAISY” (Digital Accessible Information System) format. DAISY is designed to be a complete audio substitute for print material and is specifically designed for use by people with visual disabilities and dyslexia. The TBL has 2600+ members across India to whom nearly 50,000 cassettes and audio CDs have been distributed over the years. These members effectively utilize about 2800 “Master” digital audio books whose copies are made and distributed to the members. Apart from automated text to speech conversion of books, most of the books are converted to the digital format with the help of volunteers who read the books.

**Audio Magazine:** ERC’s monthly Kannada audio magazine, ‘**Sanchaya**’ provides useful information on a variety of topics, including current affairs, health and IT. 250 editions of **Sanchaya** have been produced so far and more than 3000 copies have been distributed to Library Members at this time. ‘**Spardha Shrunkhala**’, is another monthly audio magazine in Kannada that guides students on competitive examinations. More than 2,500 copies of Spardha Shrunkhala have been distributed since its inception in 2014 and hundreds of students have benefitted from it.

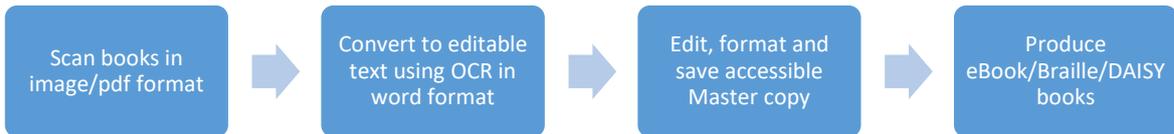
**Sugamy Pustakalaya** - Sugamy Pustakalaya is a collaborative effort of several organizations to end the book famine faced by people with print disabilities. Mitra Jyothi, is now extending its reach to people online through Sugamy Pustakalaya! Through this wonderful initiative, our Audio Books are now available online to Mitra Jyothi beneficiaries! So far Mitra Jyothi has contributed more than 1200 books in Kannada and English covering various topics including but not limited to text books, reference books, fiction, non-fiction etc for people of various age groups. Mitra Jyothi audio books will be made available on Sugamy Pustakalaya as soon as they are created in the audio /DAISY format and are added to our collection. This should be a big help to our internet savvy beneficiaries as it ensures quick and easy availability soon after production. Books will still be sent to beneficiaries as CDs for the off-line requests we receive.

Mitra Jyothi has started contributing eBooks to **Bookshare** ( <https://www.bookshare.org/cms/bookshare-me/who-qualifies> ) which is an online eBooks portal. More work in this regard will be done in this year.

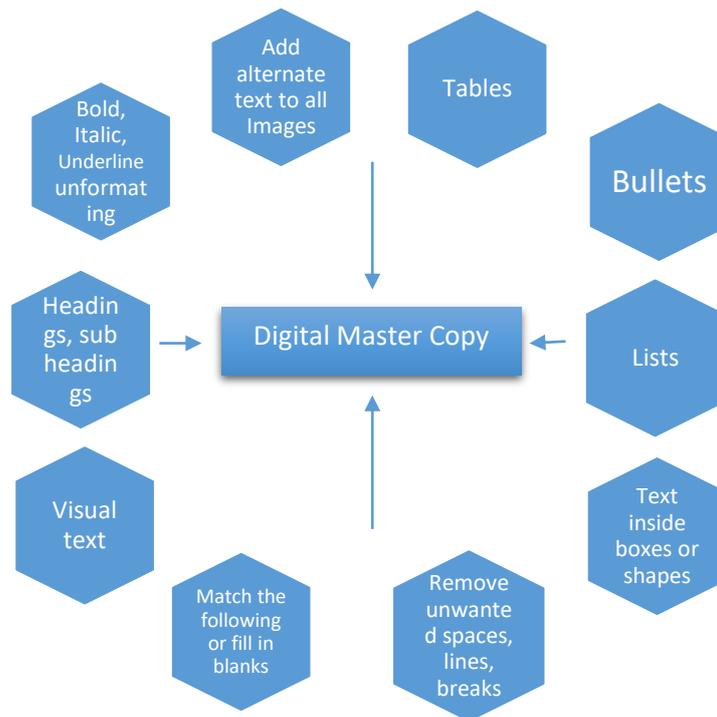
Through “**Kannada Braille Text Book Production**” Project launched in the summer of 2017, text books from grade 1 to grade 10 for Karnataka state syllabus are being printed and distributed to all special and inclusive school students in Karnataka. In the last one year, more than 5000 Text books exceeding tens of thousands of pages have been sent to 20+ schools for the Blind across Karnataka!!! Thousands more will be sent shortly and more schools covered - our team is working hard! Many thanks to all our partners and volunteers.

➔ **Proposed project scope:** Produce Master copy of the Books in Accesible format for use by students with visual disabilities and dyslexia studying in various universities in Karnataka:

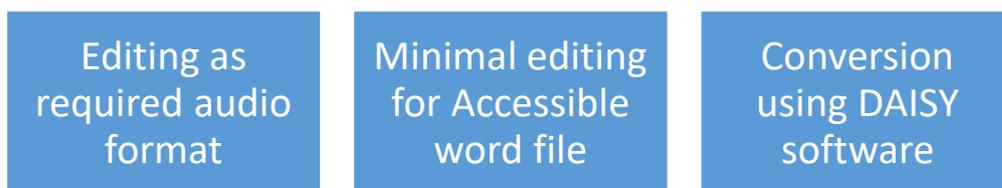
- Producing Accessible digital books is a lengthy and time intensive process which can then easily be converted to DAISY, Braille or other accessible formats. Conversion will be done in English and Kannada to cover maximum courses in universities.



- For soft copy books directly we can go ahead with step 3 but many times they are published in unicode format and conversion to be done in those cases especially for regional languages.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> step involves converting formatted texts into accessible format:



- 4<sup>th</sup> Step involves conversion to audio or DAISY format:



**Process and Project Implementation Plan:**

Programs under ERC primarily focus on the educational needs of the visually impaired. Along with this primary necessity that they address they nurture awareness, instill confidence and enhance personality development in the visually impaired thereby building confident and independent individuals.

- A robust and quality conscious process is set up for conversion, editing, proof reading and finally creation of eText
- Mitra Jyothi’s library has a well maintained on-line catalog available on Mitra Jyothi’s website, once the accessible books are ready it will get added to the list
- Members/beneficiaries can select the books online and then call Mitra Jyothi to place their book order
- Library members can walk in anytime to Mitra Jyothi library for collecting books in the format of their choice ( CDs, pen drive, DAISY, Braille etc)

**Implementation plan-**➔ As highlighted above it is a time consuming process, and one book may take approximately a week’s time of man effort for master copy production. Hence planning to involve 2 people to cover as per the below target (4 weeks \* 2 people = approx. 8 books/month).

Year 1				Means of Verification of output
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
24 books	24 books	24 books	24 books	Physical verification of audio files

**Location:** Bangalore

**Target groups:**

People with any kind of with print disabilities (from low vision and complete blindness to people at risk of losing vision with time) and dyslexia from economically backward and marginalized communities are our target beneficiaries.

- Our library membership is open to anyone with any form of visual disability. Our digital book production prioritization is driven by the need from our student members. Books and magazines in the Accessible format are provided to all our members based on their requests. Our library members are spread all across India.
- Vast majority of our beneficiaries are spread across south India in general and rural Karnataka in particular where our outreach is maximum.

**Situational analysis (socio-economic-cultural aspects) and project need assessment/rationale:**

At Mitra Jyothi the focus is on visual disability and the various ways one can overcome the same to lead independent lives and be successful contributors to society rather than being a victim of the associated stigma and social issues around it. Various socio-economic issues are associated with this

disability. Broadly classified they fall under three major categories, the visually disabled from marginalized communities, those from the middle class and those from upper strata of society. Though Mitra Jyothi serves the need of all in terms of educational resources, the outreach is more towards those from marginalized communities and the middle class to an extent.

Visually impaired from the poorer masses are left neglected with minimal to complete absence of care where providing them basic food and clothing becomes a humungous burden to the rest of the family. They are left reduced to just extra mouths to feed in an already financially deprived family.

In middle class families, a different trend is seen. Out of sheer concern and care, the basic need of the visually impaired individual is taken care of to the best of the family's financial ability. The visually impaired in such cases will be well fed and taken care of but will become highly dependent individuals who have to lean onto others for everything and not be independent members who can contribute towards the family and in-turn to the society at large. The family feels that it is their duty to take complete care of their ward while not realizing that they are killing the individuality of the person thereby making him/her a dependent person for life.

It is the visually impaired from these two sections of the society that Mitra Jyothi is more focused upon as those from wealthier families are in most cases subject to the best of care.

All the Programs at Mitra Jyothi are designed with the needs of the visually disabled from the two aforementioned categories. Some of the major social problems will get addressed through this project at Mitra Jyothi are;

1. Non-availability of equal opportunities to Education
  - Access to text books and all kinds of Books/magazines/newspapers/periodicals in accessible format
  - Denial of higher level Math education
2. Lack of 'Employability' skills
  - Lack of confidence to live independent lives

#### **Achievements till date through ERC:**

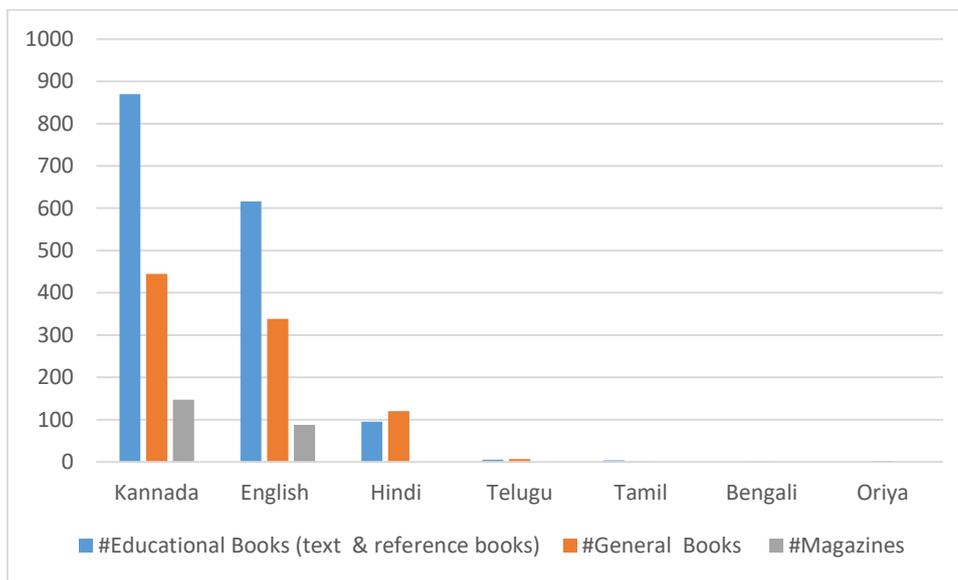
Most of the programs at Mitra Jyothi have been in operation for many years now. Some of them have been operational for more than a decade or two. However, the programs are constantly upgraded/modified so as to suit the changing needs of the modern world and the ways and means of ensuring the visually impaired can keep up with the same. High volume Braille Printing machines and Center for Empowerment of Women with Disabilities are the most recent additions at Mitra Jyothi.

#### **Educational Resource Centre – Talking Book Library**

- 2800+ audio books and magazines have been distributed to 8500 primary beneficiaries to date. These beneficiaries are spread all across India.

Sl No	Audio books	#Educational Books (text)	#General Books	#Magazines
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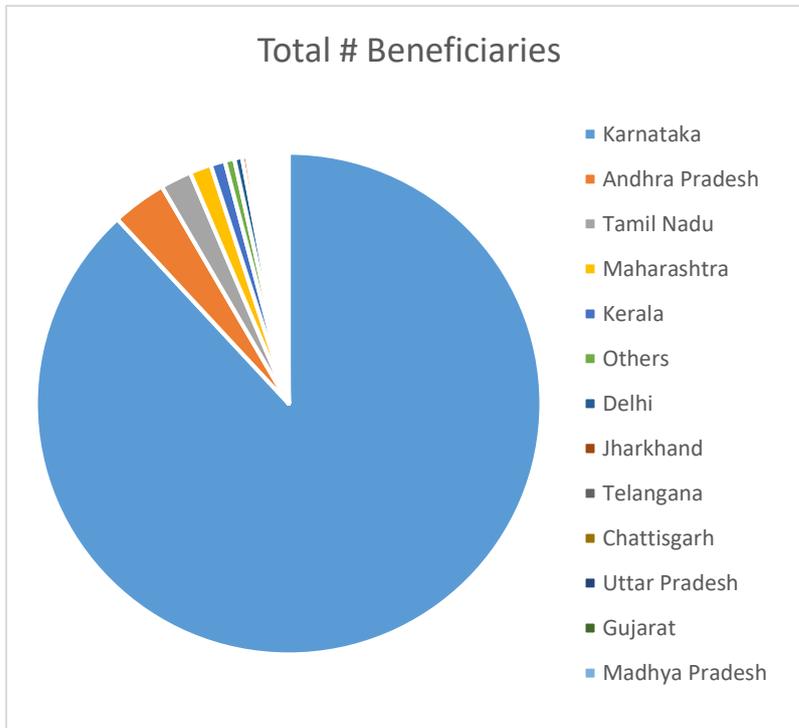
		& reference books)		
1	Kannada	817	445	300 issues
2	English	616	338	
3	Hindi	95	120	
4	Telugu	5	7	
5	Tamil	4	1	
6	Bengali		1	
7	Oriya		1	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,590</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>300</b>



- Mitra Jyothi has an outreach of 74 institutional beneficiaries and reaches out to 5800+ target first level beneficiaries who are the members of the institutional beneficiaries.

Sl No	State	# Institutions	# Beneficiaries directly through the institution
1	Karnataka	61	4,822
2	Andhra Pradesh	4	216
3	Jharkhand	2	40
4	Maharashtra	2	130
5	Tamil Nadu	2	280
6	Uttar Pradesh	2	220
7	Chhattisgarh	1	80
8	Kerala	1	50
	<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>5,838</b>

Primary individual beneficiaries – spread across India



State	Total # Beneficiaries
Karnataka	2,298
Andhra Pradesh	91
Tamil Nadu	52
Maharashtra	36
Kerala	24
Others	16
Delhi	13
Jharkhand	8
Telangana	7
Chattisgarh	7
Uttar Pradesh	7
Gujarat	6
Madhya Pradesh	5
Rajasthan	5
Mizoram	4
Bihar	4
Meghalaya	4
West Bengal	4
Nagpur	3
Manipur	3
Nepal	2
Haryana	2
Orissa	2
Jammu & Kashmir	1
Himachal Pradesh	1
Bhopal	1
Union Territory	1

- Every individual beneficiary typically shares his/her resources like Audi CDs and Braille Books with many of his/her visually impaired friends. With this, Mitra Jyothi’s outreach in reality is at least 4X the numbers stated above.

Partner with Mitra Jyothi and help us Inspire and Enable the visually impaired!

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### Annexure:

*Mitra Jyothi* is a registered trust (under Indian Trust Act) located at Bangalore in the State of Karnataka and has been working for people with disability in general and visually impaired in particular for the past 28 years (started in 1990). It is run under the able guidance of Ms. Madhu Singhal (National Awardee) who has accomplished many milestones not only in India but also abroad despite her own disability. Mitra Jyothi's Mission is to assist visually impaired individuals lead independent and dignified lives through Education,



Training, Counselling, Communication & Technology so as to integrate them into mainstream families and society at large. The organization and its founder have received many awards and accolades over the years for the exemplary service they have been providing. March 2015 heralded the latest recognition of the exemplary services rendered by Mitra Jyothi to society by awarding an Honorary Doctorate to Ms. Madhu Singhal by the State Women's University, Karnataka.

### Some highlights of our Work

**Computer Training Center (CTC):** Started in 2005 with capital investment support from IBM, the centre imparts basic and advanced computer usability skills to visually impaired and low-vision students. This training is provided through the use of Non Visual Desktop Access or NVDA which is a free screen reading software which enables blind and vision impaired people to use computers. The CTC runs a Basic Program (3 months duration) and an Advanced Program (6 months duration). These programs make people "Computer literate" and opens up the world of Computers and the Internet to people with visual disabilities. Mitra Jyothi provides accommodation and food during the course of these programs. More than 1000 individuals have so far been trained under this program since its inception.

TCS works in collaboration with Mitra Jyothi and conducts job specific training once a year for people with visual disability. They have already trained more 60 people and absorbed more than 50% of them into their workforce. The rest have been hired by IBM, Cisco and other MNCs and IT Companies.

**Educational Resource Centre (ERC):** Mitra Jyothi provides accessible educational and general reading material to people with visual disability. It could be in any of the need based formats such as e-Text, Human Voice, Braille Prints, Large Print or other options. The "Talking Book Library" (TBL) and the

“**Braille Transcription Centre**” (BTC) are two Programs that cater to these requirements. With this, the need of both a young school child who will find Braille books more useful and adults who may switch to audio libraries and text to speech conversion technology for faster and more efficient reading, is addressed.

The TBL works on creating digital audio libraries where printed books are converted into the “DAISY” (Digital Accessible Information System) format. DAISY is designed to be a complete audio substitute for print material and is specifically designed for use by people with visual disabilities and dyslexia. The TBL has 2600+ members across India to whom nearly 50,000 cassettes and audio CDs have been distributed over the years. These members effectively utilize about 2800 “Master” digital audio books whose copies are made and distributed to the members. Apart from automated text to speech conversion of books, most of the books are converted to the digital format with the help of volunteers who read the books.

**The Braille Transcription Centre (BTC)** converts educational books/magazines/specific articles/text books/selected items of interest into electronic format and prints it in Braille format. Close to 11,00,000 pages have been printed since commission in late 2015. Braille books are especially helpful to school students, who are either visually impaired or have low vision. The BTC also has a tactile embosser that can print pictures and diagrams in tactile. Tactile Pictures are images that use raised surfaces so that a visually impaired person can feel them. They are used as teaching aids to help children with visual disability learn about the form of various objects from fruits, vegetables, basic objects, animals to more complex maps and paintings.

Braille embossing on visiting cards is also supported by the BTC. Recently around 20,000 cards were printed for a Philanthropic foundation within a month’s time.

**Independent Living Skills (ILS) Program:** The ILS Program is the most fundamental hands-on program at Mitra Jyothi that enables persons with visual disability to initiate self reliance and instil in their minds the confidence needed to do so. It is a residential 4-6 month program started in 1997 and has been running successfully since its inception. More than 500 individuals have benefitted from this program over the years and many are living independent lives while working in various government and private sectors including the field of Information Technology. The following primary needs are addressed in this program;

- Basic home management skills from identification of grains and spices to cooking safely with fire.
- Personality development and personal grooming,
- Mobility Training – both indoor and outdoor mobility
- Reproductive health and Sex education
- Basic craft work like sewing, basket making, envelope making and handicraft work that help them in their day to day lives as well as enables them to take up employment with small scale industries.
- Need based training designed specifically for the requirement
- Conduct On-site “Train the Trainer” Programs

**Job Placement Cell:** In 17 years since its inception in 1999, the cell has provided job placement assistance to more than a 1000 people with visual disability. Providing the necessary grooming, soft skill training, resume preparation and logistical support are some of the holistic readiness and support provided by this cell to the visually impaired. The cell achieved major success in finding job opportunities in the IT sector as well as other government and private sectors.

**Center for Empowerment of Women with Disabilities (CEWD):** Supported by the Hans Foundation, Mitra Jyothi has set up the "Centre for Empowerment of Women with Disabilities". CEWD is a safe and secure accommodation for working women with disabilities. It is a full-fledged hostel facility available for working/studying women with physical or visual disabilities in Electronic City, Bangalore. The centre caters to the special needs of people with disability.

**Volunteering opportunities Mitra Jyothi:**

Here is a Program/activity wise listing of possible volunteering opportunities at Mitra Jyothi.

1. Talking Book Library
  - a. Book reading and recording
  - b. Audio book editing
  - c. Audio book proof reading
  - d. Data Maintenance
  - e. Packaging and Shipment
2. Braille Transcription Centre
  - a. Book scanning
  - b. E-Book Editing
  - c. Braille book proof reading
  - d. Data Maintenance
  - e. Braille Printing
  - f. Book Binding
  - g. Packaging and Shipment
3. Computer Training Program
  - a. Spoken English classes
  - b. Personality development classes
  - c. Soft skills training
4. Need Based Life Skills Program
  - a. Craft teaching
  - b. Personality development classes
5. Centre for Women with disabilities
  - a. Personality development classes
  - b. Soft skills training
6. Generic Activities
  - a. Database updates
  - b. Gardening support
  - c. Housekeeping support – Activities like book keeping, window cleaning, filing

- d. Market research and related data sourcing
- e. Preparation of Case Studies

**Sample Media Coverages:**

1. This is an article that appeared in The New Indian Express: <http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/2017/jan/08/a-ray-of-light-in-the-dark-1557403.html>
2. This article appeared in AlJazeera: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/12/madhu-singhal-champion-indians-disabilities-161229083154429.html>
3. Better India writes about MJ and the ambitious Kannada Braille Book Printing Project: <http://www.thebetterindia.com/69339/mitra-jyoti-blind-braille-reading/>

Attending/hosting *Workshops & Conferences* for people with disabilities, *Educational Excursions, Social Work Internship Programs* and *Need Specific Training Programs* are some of the other areas Mitra Jyothi is engaged in.

Mitra Jyothi is registered under The Indian Trust Act Reg No. B/IV 335/89-90, u/s 80G Income Tax Act 1961, Foreign Contribution Act u/s 6(1) and allotted Reg. No. 094420627, Give India and Credibility Alliance.