

Prayaas

Endeavours of Mitra Foundation

10th Year Anniversary Edition
(July 2024)



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10 Years and Counting

- Kiran Godbole

Welcome to this special edition of Prayaas. In November 2023, Mitra Foundation completed 10 years of its existence and this special edition will provide glimpses of our journey so far as well as our aspirations for the future.

In Mar 2013, we lost our dear friend Shakti Shankar Rath to the dreadful disease of cancer. In the spirit of keeping his memory alive, we decided to launch a charitable trust "Mitra Foundation" with its first initiative being "Jeevan Shakti" – 'providing the strength to live'. The aim was to support families of patients who are terminally ill, to become self-reliant. The avenues of achieving this would be to support education of their children, any vocational training for the care-giver and counseling to provide emotional support in their difficult times.

We are happy that we have been able to connect with more than 100 such families over the past 10 years and have supported more than 100 children towards their education. Many of these children have completed their education, have started working and are now supporting their families, thus becoming self-reliant !! You can read more about this in the article "हम होंगे कामयाब" by Sarita Kotagiri and Trupti Godbole.

During our journey, we have also learnt a lot. We have continuously strived to understand the problems and needs of our beneficiaries and tried to find ways to address them. This includes, among others, guiding them with their choices and dilemmas about education, their needs for support during adverse health conditions, their social constraints. The article "Jeevan Shakti Initiative: Learnings over the years" by Premkumar Vadapalli delves into more details about this.

Our donors have been critical in ensuring that we not only sustain, but also expand our reach and base of beneficiary families over these 10 years. The dedication and commitment of all our volunteers towards this cause has kept everyone motivated to do more. We have been fortunate to have increased our volunteer base consistently every year. This has allowed us to support an increasing number of families. We have tried to provide a glimpse of what our donors, volunteers and well wishers think in the article "From the Stakeholders' eyes".

Right from the beginning, Mitra Foundation was envisioned to be a platform for ourselves and others to give back to society more effectively. We had thought of creating different funds with well defined objectives and a dedicated set of volunteers. Towards this, after the 'Jeevan Shakti' Initiative, we started 'LBS Nagar Janasahayog' Initiative in 2014. The aim of this was to provide a platform for the residents of L B Shastri Nagar, Bangalore to "collaborate" and "support" other residents, especially who are in need of such support. Progress of this initiative is elaborated in the article "Jan Sahayog" by Manish Choudhary.

Apart from Jansahayog, in 2023, we have started the 'Vidyanivesh Scholarship Fund' initiative to support higher studies (beyond class 12) for deserving children.

We are committed to do more and help as many more people and initiatives that we can under the umbrella of Mitra Foundation. We are very thankful for all the encouragement we have received so far and hopeful that it will only continue and multiply manifold in future.



Shakti Shankar Rath (1978-2013)

"It all started in March 2013, with the sudden demise of our dearest, Shakti Shankar Rath, owing to Cancer.

The impact of his demise was so profound on our lives that it is beyond words. Mitra Foundation started as an ode to him, to keep him alive in our hearts and minds always through ways and means that would touch so many lives in the years that followed. Its been 10 years and counting.

From providing education to the affected children in the families, rehabilitating the care-giver to provide an alternate source of income in the sheer absence of the primary breadwinner of the family, to covering the costs of medical treatment of the beneficiary, Mitra Foundation has been a constant source of motivation and strength in the most difficult times a family can ever fathom.

Amidst their busy lives, volunteers have ensured that the core motive and values of Mitra Foundation stands tall and its impact reaches far and wide bringing relief and smile on many faces, which is truly inspiring"

-- Suchi Rath (Wife of Shakti)

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हम होंगे कामयाब - Success stories of our beneficiaries

- Trupti Godbole & Sarita Kotagiri

At the very heart of Mitra Foundation's educational support initiative, lies a beautiful tapestry of success stories woven by hard work and grit of many of the beneficiary children. These success stories not only reflect their personal triumph, but also stand testimony to how educational support can transform the lives of the students and their families. Mentioned below are a few such stories that are a source of pride and happiness to Mitra Foundation.

One of our very first cases was that of **Shahid**. We supported him till his higher secondary education after which he now pursues a successful career as a manager in an event management company. He is an inspiring example for other beneficiary children to dream big and follow the dream with hard work and diligent effort.

We have been supporting **Prashant** since 2015, after his mother passed away from Lung cancer. We had supported his PUC education in 2015-17 and training at Unnati Mysore in 2018, after he turned 18. Since then he has been independent, working during the day while completing his degree through evening college. After multiple stints at Eureka Forbes, Dominos, JK Tyres, etc., in 2021, he enrolled for a 1 year Hotel management course, based on his interest. After this, he worked with KSTDC for a year and is now employed as a Junior Accounts Executive (receivable) at a multi-national Revenue-cycle management firm.

Tejas who was in the 6th grade when we started supporting his family, is now pursuing B.Com and preparing for company secretaryship alongside his college. His mother's journey was fraught with immense difficulties as she didn't have any family and social support. The support from Mitra Foundation, her own grit and Tejas's hard work all bore fruit when he cleared his higher secondary exams with flying colours!

Besides his studies, Tejas also excelled in sports and other extracurricular activities, and Roopa has always shared all the good news with Mitra foundation volunteers. Tejas is also one of the recipients of the Vidyanivesh scholarship launched by Mitra Foundation in 2023 to support undergraduate education.

Roshni, a confident young girl, with three years of support from Mitra Foundation, cleared her higher secondary education examinations, after which she took up a job in a BPO and funded her under-graduate education with her own salary. After getting her B.Com degree, she is now pursuing CA alongside her job.

Daughter of a farm labourer from a small village, **Kavita**, was in the 10th grade when we started supporting her family. We supported her till her 12th grade, after which she enrolled for nursing aid training course at Karunashraya under the guidance of one of our volunteers. She now works as a nurse there and is also doing GNM in nursing simultaneously. The transformation from a shy village girl to a confident young lady warms our hearts no end. Our volunteers have played a pivotal role in guiding and encouraging Kavita to wade through the difficulties in her journey.

After clearing higher secondary education with our support, our volunteer guided **Ramya** to vocational training at Unnati, which was sponsored by Mitra Foundation. Our volunteers were always there to guide and counsel her to clear her secondary and higher secondary exams. After a short stint with a BPO, Ramya now works as a Ticket Office Machine (TOM) operator in Namma Metro, Bangalore.

When we took up the case of **Magesh**, he was in secondary school. Being partially

visually impaired, he needed support to clear 10th grade through NIOS. By the time he reached 10th grade, his visual impairment had progressed and he had trouble in writing the record books for the practical exams. With help from volunteers of Mitra Foundation, Magesh cleared his 10th exam (NIOS) in 2020-21. After completing 10th grade, we got him enrolled in National Association for the Blind. After the training there, he secured a permanent job at HLL and is now happily settled in work and in life as well.

Keerthana, a bright student, was in the 6th grade when we started supporting her education. After 10th grade, she secured a seat with scholarship, for a Diploma in Electronics which she successfully completed. Now she is looking for a job so that she can support her family along with her mother. Along with her education, Keerthana also helps her mother with daily chores and recently when her mother was unwell, she took charge of the house and also looked after her mother.

Sakshi was in the 5th grade when we started supporting her education along with that of her 2 brothers. This year she successfully cleared her higher secondary exam and is now pursuing BSc in Medical Lab Technology. She is also a recipient of the Vidyanivesh scholarship started by Mitra Foundation to support undergraduate education.

These success stories are a source of great pride for Mitra Foundation. At the same time they also evoke a sense of accomplishment that this initiative was able to facilitate a positive change in so many lives. It reinforces our commitment to continue supporting education of the beneficiary children in the years to come. Mitra Foundation is grateful to be a thread of support in the tapestry of success stories woven by the hard work and determination of these bright young children.

"Mitra foundation has been like a family to us. I don't have anyone else to share our happiness or troubles"



- Roopa (Mother of Tejas)

"Mitra foundation has not only supported us financially, but the guidance at various stages has been invaluable for my children"



- Neetu Mishra (Mother of Sakshi)

Jeevan Shakti Initiative: Learnings over the years (2013-2023)

- Prem Vadapalli

We started the Jeevan Shakti Initiative in 2013, with 3 beneficiaries whom we identified based on our initial interactions with the counselors at Karunashraya. In those early days, we started with the key intent of supporting the education of children of terminally ill cancer patients who are breadwinners in needy families. We quickly realized the need to also support, where needed, with employability of the patient's care-giver, short term sustenance and in counselling and emotional support.

Over the past 10 years, we have evaluated over 100 opportunities and supported over 85 of them. Along the way we had to continuously adapt our approach based on what we saw as the beneficiary families' needs.

As we started working with more beneficiaries, we observed that there was wide variability in the fees charged by different schools. So we decided to define a limit on the amount we would provide in terms of school fees support, with limit definitions based on the number of children per beneficiary family (limits for 1 child, 2 or more children, etc.). This limit is revised by us every academic year based on the assessment of the management committee of the Jeevan Shakti Fund. In cases where the fee is higher than our limits, we make a formal request to the schools for a reduction in the fee, work with the beneficiary to look for an alternate school with lower fees or allow the beneficiary to cover the balance payment out of their own earnings. As many of the children reached high school, we felt the need to ensure some additional provision for private tuitions for the children preparing for 10th and 12th board exams, which are milestone events, and would impact their employability in the long run.

Since the start of the Jeevan Shakti initiative, our commitment was to support the child's education till 10+2 of schooling or 18 years of age, whichever is later, with the understanding that they would be enabled to work and earn or decide to study further, depending of their family situation. This required creating awareness amongst the children about options available for vocational education. Based on the child's interest and family situation, they could choose to enrol for diploma courses, get employment through training at partner organizations like Unnati, or work and study in evening classes.

We would invite speakers in our annual Jeevan Shakti Manch events to interact with the children and guide them. More recently, we have started specific counselling sessions with children in classes 10 and 12, and their parent to guide them for their next steps in education. We sometimes find that the child chooses to go for a undergraduate degree. While we do not support education beyond 18 years, we have started a limited Vidyavesh Scholarship for select children studying beyond PU / diploma. We had started with support for 50K for 2 children in the academic year 2023-24, and hope to support more based on continued support and encouragement from our generous donors.

It is always difficult for the care-giver (usually spouse) to take care of the family as well as earn after the breadwinner has passed away. The most important first step is to help them build the confidence to resume their normal lives. Our role in most of these situations has been to assure them of our support and be available to talk to when needed. Our support for livelihood has been through trainings (tailoring, vocational training, etc), enabling them take up a different job (e.g., one of our beneficiary became a Homeguard with our support), providing necessary work accessories (like tailoring machine, vegetable cart etc), or in limited cases some seed money to start a business (silver jewellery sale, grocery store, fruit vending etc).

In many cases we found that the extended family either disowned the beneficiary family, or not in contact, and did not provide any financial or emotional support to the care-giver and the children. The care-giver spouse specifically needs to feel the comfort that there is someone else who cares for them, and would look to help them regain the "strength to live" (Jeevan Shakti). This is at the core of our endeavour, and our volunteers are in constant touch with the beneficiary families through the period of the support. We also look at other small ways of helping the family, though our primary focus is on the education and the families' ability to start earning. We provide groceries, in the immediate aftermath of the death of the breadwinner, to help the family get through the period of mourning, and give them time to start earning. In a few cases we have provided limited support for urgent & critical medical needs.

We have also been conducting "Jeevan Shakti Manch" once a year, where we invite all the beneficiary families, to give them an opportunity to meet each other, give us a forum to share relevant information and opportunities through invited speakers, as well as give the children an opportunity to have some fun with the extended Mitra Foundation Family, including the volunteers and donors.

The recent COVID pandemic was a challenge for everyone, including many of our beneficiaries. Some of them were out of employment and therefore struggling for 3 meals a day. We reviewed the situation and provided groceries to the families through direct payment to grocery stores near their home, based on invoice provided. We received some requests to arrange mobile phones for the children to attend classes online, and were able to collect and distribute a few used smartphones. One beneficiary was severely affected by COVID and hospitalized, and we did a targeted crowd-sourcing of funds for her expensive medication. Unfortunately, she didn't survive after which, we passed on the balance funds collected through crowd-sourcing, to her only child, who was luckily old enough by then start working.

All of the above work is only possible with the collaboration from Karunashraya and their counsellors, along with our volunteers, and the backing of our donors and well-wishers. Over 10 years, we had beneficiaries speaking different languages, requiring volunteers with appropriate familiarities. We also did take on a few cases from outside Bangalore, which required us to identify through our volunteer network, local contacts in proximity to the beneficiary so as to be able to visit them provide support as needed. Keeping in touch with the different stakeholders required us to use various social media communication channels including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, E-Mail, Online meetings as well as periodic face-to-face interactions like monthly visits to Karunashraya, Quarterly volunteers' meetings, the annual Shakti Smaran Divas (1st week of March), and Jeevan Shakti Manch (last Sunday of July).

Overall, it has been an incredible experience of continuous learning, needing us to adapt and look for ways to get more efficient, effective and scalable. We now look forward to a brighter and even more fulfilling decade ahead !

From the Stakeholders' point of view

- Kiran Godbole

Mitra Foundation's Jeevan Shakti Initiative was able to sustain and grow in these 10 years, only because of the unwavering support from its volunteers, donors, enablers and well wishers.

As mentioned before, the volunteers of Mitra foundation stay in close touch with their beneficiaries. This interaction is very satisfying and meaningful. Here is what some of volunteers have to say:

"Personally I could understand the challenges that the beneficiary families go through after the demise of the sole breadwinner.. It's been a very satisfying journey so far"

Ramachandra

"It has been a very fulfilling journey so far, the happiness of making a difference to the children's lives and being there to comfort the family when all their hopes were lost and they were looking for some empathy, has given me a lot of satisfaction" - **Shubha**

Ramachandra and Shubha have been associated with Mitra Foundation for several years now and have worked with multiple beneficiary families.

Mitra foundation is also blessed with volunteers like Sowmya, who has been associated with Mitra foundation for just about a year now, but, in such a short period of time, has already been engaged with 6 families.

"I have been associated with multiple NGOs for the last 18 years since I quit my MNC job but I have found Mitra Foundation to be the most unique one. During my journey with Mitra foundation, I realized how professionally this organization works. They are so well organized and the processes are very well-planned with a right blend of sensitivity and practicality. The volunteers are highly motivated, selfless and dedicated to the cause and are very sensitive to the beneficiaries and their situations. The volunteers have enough freedom to deal with their cases. The team leaders are always supportive and guiding the members in handling the cases." - **Sowmya**.

Another volunteer, Trupti, has experienced "beneficiaries call us whenever something happens in their life and they want to share with someone."

There are lessons that we all have learnt too. To groom new volunteers, Shubha had suggested to "create a buddy system to connect any volunteer with an experienced one till they are fully ready." She has also pointed out the "need to have professional counselors on-board as we are not really experts in this field"

Most of the beneficiaries of Mitra Foundation have been referred to by Karunashraya, a hospice for terminally ill cancer patients. Karunashraya provides palliative care to these patients and refers some of these families to Mitra Foundation after assessing their need.

Ms. Michelle Normen is the Psycho-Oncologist & Lead- Counselling Services, Bangalore Hospice Trust - Karunashraya.

She says: "My experience over these last few years with Mitra Foundation is of them being a beacon of hope for children who have lost a parent or guardian to cancer. Their unwavering support ensured that these young minds continued to receive quality education, even in the face of immense loss. The compassionate and dedicated team at Mitra Foundation provides not just financial assistance, but also emotional support and guidance. Their commitment to empowering these children through education is truly inspiring. Thanks to Mitra Foundation, countless children have been able to pursue their dreams and build a brighter future. This has, in turn provided their single parents or family members a chance to earn their livelihoods with re-assurance due to the support of Mitra Foundation."

Ms Poornima has been a **counselor at Karunashraya** for more than 19 years now and is someone that Mitra Foundation has worked with, right from the beginning of this 10-year journey. In her experience: "Mitra means friend in Kannada...Mitra Foundation volunteers have become friends to those distressed families. A woman has a taboo in society when she loses her husband. A widow, with no job and no means to support kids' education, has to face challenges from society that we live in. In such situations Mitra Foundation has been providing livelihood and giving them confidence to face the world by empowering them. I feel glad and satisfied working with Mitra Foundation. Their zeal and determination to work with us for this cause gives us immense motivation"

Sarita is one of the founding members of Mitra Foundation. She has worked with more than 30 beneficiary families over the past 10 years. In her experience: "In many cases, we (Mitra Foundation) are the only family for the beneficiaries. In beneficiary Vishalakshi's case, she used to take a picture with herself and her children with us and call it a family photo."

There have been several cases where, the patient, in the last stage of terminal illness, passed away the very next day after Mitra volunteers met him and assured that his/her children's education will be taken care of," says Sarita. "It is so heartening to see beneficiary children completely transformed after going through their vocational training in Unnati and starting to work."

We have had a large number of generous donors over the years and some of them have been consistent supporters of our cause. They also encourage us to take up newer initiatives, like the "Vidyanivesh" scholarships that we launched last year.

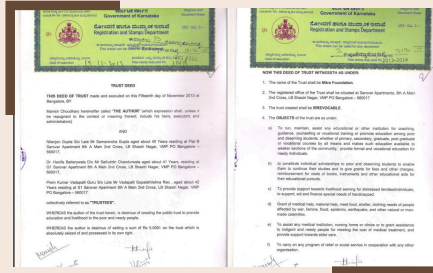
"Investing in Vidya or knowledge is the key for upliftment of self and the world around you. Knowledge gives us the wealth that enables one to follow their dharma. 'Vidyanivesh' for women adds up multi fold as she can directly contribute to family and the world. Women in my life have given me knowledge, values and courage to face challenges at different stages in my life. I believe that everyone needs to have basic education and encourage all to have higher education in the field of their talent and choice," according to **Neeraj**, who was the primary donor who funded the Vidyanivesh initiative last year.

Mitra Foundation has been blessed with immense support from its donors, volunteers, partner organizations and well wishers. They give us motivation, energy and determination to continue and expand our support to more and more families over the next many years. We want to thank them for their contribution to this cause and hope that we will find many more such supporters in the future.

From The Gallery ...



Mar 2013



Mitra Foundation Registered: Nov 2013



First Beneficiary : Dec 2013



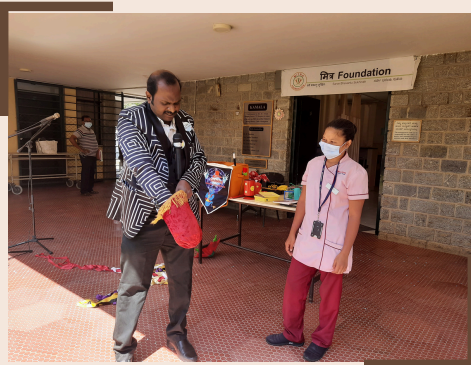
Mitra Foundation getting appreciation from Karunashraya



First Jeevan Shakti Manch : 2014



First Shakti Smaran Divas: Mar 2014



Magic Show



Juggling Show



Skit

Providing Entertainment and relief to Beneficiary Families and Karunashraya Staff



Mr Chandy, CEO Karunashraya



Dr Ali Khwaja, Banjara Institute



Mr Amarnath - Home Guards

Providing Information and Guidance through Experts



Vidyanivesh Scholarship



Eye Camp - JanSahayog



Young Members of Jeevan Shakti Family

Jeevan Shakti Fund – the 10-year journey

- Nilanjon Gupta

The Jeevan Shakti Fund, the flagship initiative under the aegis of Mitra Foundation, was setup in December 2013 with the goal to provide the “strength to live” (Jeevan Shakti) to the families who have either lost, or likely to lose their breadwinner to any terminal illness like cancer.

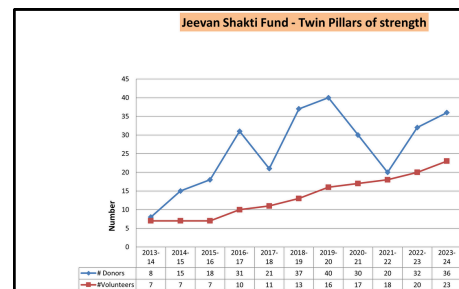
Its mission has been to help families of terminally ill / deceased cancer patients through funding of education of the children in the impacted families, as well as enable the caregiver to become the family’s new breadwinner (through counselling and guidance towards achieving employability). The Jeevan Shakti Fund has been the primary vehicle, both to (a) solicit contribution from our esteemed donors, as well as (b) disburse benefits to the targeted families whose lives the Trust has set out to touch and improve.

The financial assistance to these 80 families covered 2 main areas - education support for the children in these families and the livelihood support for the family.

Over this period of 10 years, the school education of a total of 129 school-going children (in these 80 families) could be continued successfully due to the support of Mitra Foundation. When Jeevan Shakti Fund was launched, the education of 4 school-going children belonging to 3 beneficiary families was supported. Today, after more than 10 years of operation, the education of 66 school-going children belonging to 46 beneficiary families is being supported.

95% of the caregivers are women, and it has been a fulfilling journey to guide and counsel them to find employment and then watch them gain confidence to stand on their own feet so that their children have a decent quality of life and education.

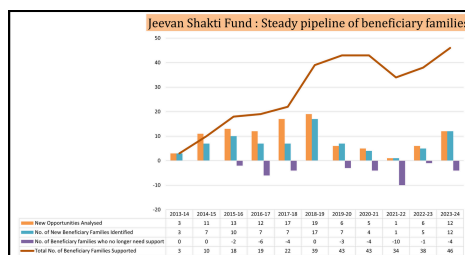
From the 8 donors who seeded Jeevan Shakti Fund in its first year of operations, it's donor base has grown over 14-fold to 108 over these 10 years, with a total collection of ~ Rs. 85 lakhs during this period. This manifold increase of the donor base has been both steady and gradual, and it is very heartening to note that every year, 8-10 new donors have come forward to support the work of this initiative through their kind donations.



No of Donors and Active Volunteers - 2 pillars of strength

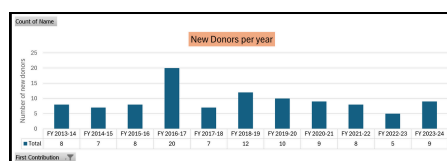
For the donors, it will be heartening to note that 89% of the fund’s total outflow has been incurred on the education and livelihood of the 80 beneficiary families with whom this initiative has engaged. The lion’s share of this – 81% has been spent on supporting the education of the children and 8% on supporting the livelihood of the families, e.g., grocery support during difficult periods and training to upskill the caregiver, so that they can find meaningful employment and stand on their feet to become the new breadwinner of the family. Besides our generous donors, the other key pillar of the work of Mitra Foundation has been our steadfast volunteers. Starting with a volunteer pool of 9 at the start, the Jeevan Shakti Fund can now boast of a volunteer base of 30 selfless individuals, contributing their time, effort and skills with the sole aim of giving our beneficiary families “the strength to live”.

The success of Jeevan Shakti Fund finally stems from the number of families that become self-sufficient and do not need financial assistance anymore. Over these 10 years, 34 families have become self-sufficient, making it the most satisfying part of this 10-year journey.

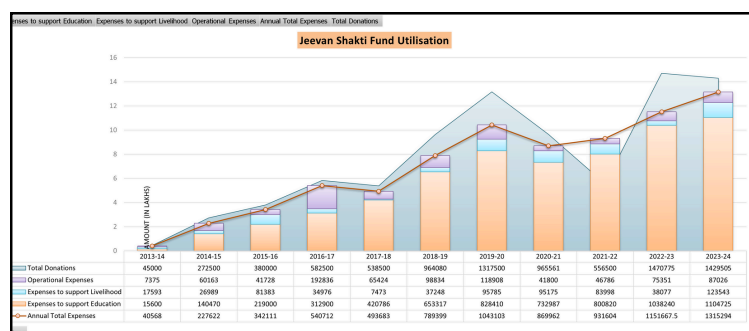


Beneficiary Families supported: (Per year and total)

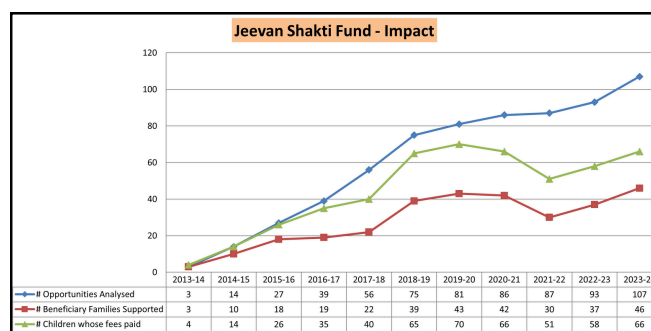
In these 10 years, the opportunity to help 107 families has been examined, out of which 80 families have been assessed as really needing financial assistance from Jeevan Shakti Fund. During these 10 years, Jeevan Shakti Fund has had an expenditure of about Rs. 77 lakhs towards support of these 80 families and running the operations of the Fund.



No of New Donors per year



Fund Disbursement Over the years



No Of children supported

Jana-Sahayog : L B Shastri Nagar

- Manish Choudhary

"JanaSahayog", as the name suggests, is to create trust and cooperation among the residents of local communities. This initiative was started in August 2014, during the first year of Mitra Foundation's existence. The main aim was to organise activities, create awareness and support local communities in tackling issues with health, nutrition and early education. It also involves initiatives towards becoming responsible citizens and giving back to society. Over the years several actions, events and activities have been held towards these goals.

We have collaborated with various medical organizations to conduct free Health Check-up camps for the local community. In all we have conducted 1 heart check-up, 1 general health camp, 1 cancer screening camp, and 2 eye check-up camps. Through the 2 eye camps, we sponsored over 100 free eye glasses and 5 cataract surgeries for the needy.



Medical Camp

As a community, we have been conducting regular blood donation camps in LB Shastri Nagar, Bangalore which we brought under the JanaSahayog initiative. A biannual blood donation camp and organ donation (pledge) camp is organized twice every year, and we have already completed more than 20 camps so far with more than 1200 units of blood donated across these camps by over 450 different donors. In all these camps, we have community residents sponsoring the



Blood Donation Camp

refreshments for the donors, lunch for the camp staff and volunteers, as well as volunteering. We keep a track of all the repeat donors, and have been providing a Mitra Foundation T-Shirt as a token of our appreciation for every 5th donation in our camps by Men and for every 3rd donation by Women.



Karate Classes

We have worked with local communities to organize youth engagement activities like sports competitions, Karate classes, walkathons etc. We have supported Karate training in a local school for the underprivileged for nearly 10 years. We had reached out to the youth of the area towards education improvement by supporting activities like counselling. We look for opportunities to guide students towards vocational training, and direct them to partner organizations to make them employable.



Karate Classes

A few of the ladies from our community had reached out to a couple of Anganwadis in our area, and started providing supplementary nutrition to the government provisions through addition of vegetables to the daily meals. Based on the need, we had raised funds of over 2.75 Lakhs from the local community to expand the infrastructure for the convenience of the 2 Anganwadi operations.

During the difficult period of the COVID pandemic, Mitra Foundation expanded its activities in response to the needs of the time. During the difficult period of the first COVID wave in 2020, we collaborated with some of the community volunteers who had taken up cooking food daily and distributing to those in need, by collecting monetary contributions and procuring provisions for the purpose. In all we supported over 4000 meals in the 3 weeks when we purchased groceries for these meals. We also sourced and distributed 350 food kits to those in need, in collaboration with the local community leaders and volunteers in adjacent localities. During the 2nd COVID wave, we got in touch with the Nodal officer for Isolation of our zone to understand the help needed.



- completed 3 weeks of support work, providing 4152 meals and 350 Food kits for those in need
- across Anasandrapalya, LBS Nagar, Thippasandra, Sudhama Nagar and Ananda Puram
- through local volunteers, Civil Defence volunteers, extended community, partner organizations
- as we look to the life and needs post lockdown, we are exploring opportunities where we can contribute.

Support During COVID

Consequently, we procured over Rs 1 Lakh worth of medicines and provided it to the local PHC for distribution as home isolation medical kits. In all we had over 60 donations from local community members worth over Rs 5 Lakhs towards these activities.



So far, this journey has been fulfilling but there is a lot more we can do and achieve. We are committed and looking forward to being more effective by organising more activities and more frequently. under this umbrella. We would like to seek the support and involvement of many more volunteers from our locality, L B Shastri Nagar, to reach this goal. We also hope for others to follow and replicate similar initiatives in their neighbourhoods.

Mitra Foundation - The Road Ahead

-- Kiran Godbole

Mitra Foundation has grown over the last 10 years and as of today, we have dealt with more than 100 families of terminally ill cancer patients. While the journey so far has been very fulfilling, there is a lot more that both can be, and needs to be done over the next several years.

To start with, our current support to the beneficiary families is restricted to education upto PU and/or diploma. We have not supported children for higher education. In 2023, we have started limited support to few bright students through our Vidyanivesh scholarship initiative, but a lot more can be done for widespread support of the higher education needs of our beneficiary children.

Many of current beneficiaries have liabilities of small and large loan. These are usually loans from private money-lenders, taken to cover medical expenses for treatment of cancer. With high interest rates of these private money-lenders, they struggle to re-pay the loan, usually ending up paying only interest and being unable to get out of debt. Addressing this issue could go a long way in making these families financially more independent.

There are many other struggles that our beneficiary families have from time to time. They sometimes encounter a medical issues requiring high treatment expenditure, face issues from the society around them or an emotional / psychological issue. Currently, we can provide very limited support. We need partners to build an eco-system for such support, as our colunteers may not have the expertise to deal with many of these issues.

We will be looking at extending support to terminally ill patients beyond cancer. Recently, we got to know that the percentage of terminally ill cancer patients is much lower than that through other illnesses like HIV. We have been lucky to have Karunashraya as our partner who provide us a steady pipeline of cancer-affected families that need help. We will need to work towards finding more partners to extend our support to families impacted by terminal illness caused by diseases other than cancer.

This will require a consistent flow of funds. We plan to further supplement individual donations from our generous donors with institutional funding through CSR, etc.

Apart from increasing our donor support base, we are also looking at moving to a corpus based financial model for longer term sustenance.

Last, but not the least, we acknowledge the need to find more volunteers who are motivated and willing to give their time for this work. Our activities are very volunteer intensive because we spend significant amount of time to meet beneficiaries, either in person or by calling them very frequently. We also organize and participate in several events through the year to benefit our beneficiaries.

The last 10 years have given us a good foundation, very high confidence and a firm resolve to further expand and improve in all the venues mentioned above. With support from all of you, we will be able travel smoothly along the road ahead of us.

Want to be a volunteer @ Mitra Foundation?

You can contribute to increasing the impact further

- Interact and visit beneficiary families, understand their background, challenges, and assess their needs
- Stay connected with beneficiaries to guide and counsel them as needed.
- Seek out donors, communicate with donors and help us support more families.
- Help in conducting various events during the year.
- Seek out and interact with organizations that can donate through CSR funds
- Work with our various parter organizations
- Prepare periodic reports for our activities

Want to be a donor?

If you wish to donate for our activities, please use the below details. Please do inform us when you donate!

- Bank : State Bank Of India
- Account Number: 33542327232
- Account Name: Mitra Foundation
- IFSC Code: SBIN0016336

UPI ID: 9739004251@sbi



Want to reach us?



mitrafoundation.trust@gmail.com



<https://www.facebook.com/mitrafoundationtrust>



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