

CHETANA TRUST

2025-2026

#ACCESSFORALL



ABOUT CHETANA TRUST

Chetana Charitable Trust is a Chennai based non-profit that champions the right to literacy and leisure for children with disabilities. Our mission goes beyond providing books and games; we are building a world where every child, regardless of how they perceive the world, is met by a community that is equipped and inspired to include them. Despite a small team of three, Chetana has achieved global impact through its two-pronged "ARM" (Accessible Reading Materials) program.

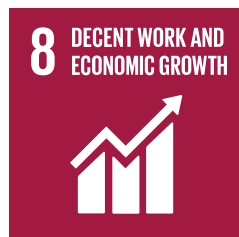
One arm is the creation of multi-sensory books designed with the idea that all books must be pleasing to see, handle, and read. By creating high-quality, tactile, and visually stunning books, Chetana ensures that these materials draw people toward the reader rather than setting them apart as "different." This effectiveness is proven in public spaces where the books spark universal joy, and online, where a multilingual digital library, born during the pandemic, now reaches a global audience with stories enriched by activities and discussion guides. This impactful approach has earned international nominations and honors for the organization and team members, including the **IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award**, the **Deafblind International Distinguished Service Award**, and the **NCPEDP-Mphasis Universal Design Award**.

Our Vision

A world where all people with disabilities have access to stimulating and engaging books and materials, empowering them to learn, work, and participate fully in society.



Chetana's second arm is its inclusive library program, which uses these books to equip readers with curious minds and the skills to question, imagine, and explore. Rather than focusing on organizational growth, Chetana invests in broadening how people think, sharing expertise with colleagues nationwide through organizations like the Free Libraries Network (FLN) of India. By actively sharing inclusive design methods and building inclusive facilitation skills, Chetana transforms individual empathy into a collective force for inclusion. This philosophy ensures that our goal of inclusion is shared and implemented by the community itself, regardless of the organization's presence.





ARM library turns 10!

Join the CELEBRATION!

Ten Years: How Far We Have Come

In 2016, accessible books were rare. ARM library put together 30 precious, handmade accessible books and carried them to ten excited children who had never before had story books they could experience and explore. The months that followed showed us how imagination and personality could blossom with the right inputs. The first years were a desperate scramble to create more books as the members steadily worked through the available books. Today, the ARM Library holds hundreds of accessible titles and has a wide and deep impact on access. This past year alone 3,800+ individuals accessed books, 3,000+ people engaged with knowledge about print disability, 50 new advocates were trained, and 25 innovative reading strategies were documented and shared with our partners who run free libraries across the country!

Behind every number is a story of change that ripples far beyond our team. We see it in children who race home to open their book bags, and in neighbors who now visit our members because they have the coolest books in the community. It lives in library members who use our accessible story cards to retell tales to younger siblings, and in the professional workshop participant who shared, '*Learning this has changed the way I create.*' It takes root when a student, inspired by an internship, goes home and independently launches an accessible book club at her school. These are the moments where access transforms into ownership, proving that when you invest in people, the movement for inclusion carries itself forward.

Looking Forward

Ten years in, we are more certain than ever: access to books is not a luxury, it is a right. As the ARM Library enters its second decade, we carry forward everything we have learnt, and will keep working until every person with a print disability has access to the stories, knowledge, and joy they deserve.

Team at Chetana

#AccessForAll

MEET THE TEAM



Aparna Sree Prakash
Co-ordinator Inclusive services



Dr. Namita Jacob
Director



Teresa Antony
Lead: Inclusive Design

We were thrilled to welcome again



Anu Alex
Consultant, Vision
supported by INLAKS Foundation

THE RESEARCH BEHIND MEANINGFUL INCLUSION

At Chetana Trust, research and practice go hand in hand. The way we create books, design reading experiences, and approach accessibility is continually shaped by learning from the field. Over the past year, our work in studying Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI), mentoring participants, organising the National Tactile Book Competition, conducting library activities, and engaging in deep reflective evaluations has guided us in refining our design approaches and creating books and materials that are more accessible and inclusive for all readers.

This creates a continuous cycle: research informs design, and design is tested and refined through real-world use in libraries, schools, and reading programs. The insights gathered, directly shape how our books are illustrated, adapted, structured, and experienced by children with diverse access needs.

By bridging the gap between library spaces and field research, we are able to create accessible books that are not only inclusive in principle, but effective in practice. This system ensures that our resources evolve with evidence, experience, and are driven by the reader's voices.

RAISE AWARENESS

We build an understanding of print disabilities through research, workshops, and public engagement.

CREATE ACCESSIBLE CONTENT

We engage with professionals and community members to create inclusive books, tools, and games



IMPROVE ACCESS

We develop and share inclusive practices that support full participation.

BUILD A MOVEMENT

We collaborate with communities, organisations, and institutions and advocate for long term systemic change.

Raising Knowledge & Awareness Around Print Disabilities

This year, we created opportunities to share knowledge and skills so more people will have access to books.

Highlights!

2051 individuals engaged in learning about the needs and realities of people with print disabilities.
1152 more people can now speak knowledgeably about the importance of accessible reading and the need for accessible materials and solutions



Developing more accessible books

This year with support from **Sir Dorabji Tata Trust**, we experimented with new printing and production techniques. For the first time, we were able to create 3 accessible story books set for mass production. One of these books '**A Game of Sticks**' has been nominated for an award at **IBBY 2026**.

The completion of NTBC 2025 cohort led to the development of 14 accessible books. The top 5 books will be representing India at the Typhlo and Tactus competition in Prague in July, 2026.



19 new titles and 25 copies have been made accessible

4 accessible books have been explored for mass production

134 more people have awareness, knowledge and skills around developing accessible books.



Build a Movement for Equitable Access

In the past year, we made significant progress toward our goal of increasing the number of people and organizations working to create change.

Highlights!

134 individuals actively advocating or contributing to accessible books

16 organisations were engaged with us, working towards similar goals and dreams



Expanding Access to Books & Resources

Through expanded outreach programs, new library partnerships, and the continuation of our digital library initiative, we continued to reach a broader and more diverse audience.

Highlights!

65 individuals with and without print disabilities regularly accessed our books

256 more primary stakeholders know about accessible books and how to get them

215 primary stakeholders learnt strategies to support reading for persons with print disabilities

STORIES online

With **124 books in 12 languages**, the online library hosted by SIL Bloom Reader continues to grow as a globally accessed, inclusive reading space. We have...

Readers across 134 countries!
Over 9000 readers in India alone!





OUR JOURNEY
THROUGH THE YEAR

Flip Through!

NATIONAL TACTILE BOOK COMPETITION, 2025

Our ongoing efforts to raise awareness and increase the availability of accessible books have been recognised in 2024 by the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC), led by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

The National Tactile Book Competition is our biennial effort since 2013, to raise awareness, provide knowledge and skills to design accessible books, and to draw on the talents and abilities of Indians of all ages to help build our library collection. As part of the competition, we also select up to 5 entries that represent India at the International Typhlo and Tactus (T&T) competition.

This year we had 54 Participants from diverse backgrounds including illustrators, authors, teachers, special educators, and students come together to learn, create, and compete in designing accessible storybooks.



Puchki's Day Out
by Divya Gaur



A New Family
by Gayatri A



Pockets Please
by Mamta Nainy

Piloting Accessible Printing Technology for Inclusive Children's Books

This project marked a significant step forward in our efforts to make reading truly inclusive. We explored whether tactile, braille-integrated storybooks could be both beautiful and scalable and discovered that they can. Through an intensive process of design, testing, and iteration, we developed a new book 'A Game of Sticks' experimenting with a printing approach that integrates tactile imagery and transparent braille directly onto visual pages, creating a shared reading experience for children with and without print disabilities.

The resulting books were tested with over 30 children, educators, and experts across multiple cities, receiving an overwhelmingly positive response for their accessibility, engagement, and ability to spark curiosity and conversation. The project has demonstrated a promising pathway toward more inclusive publishing in India.

This project was generously supported by Sir Dorabji Tata Trust.



THE SHARED SHELF: Reimagining Libraries as Spaces of Inclusion and Belonging

We conducted workshops and talks at this event in Bangalore. Hosted in collaboration with **Librarians of India**—a *Bachpan Manao* initiative of **Adhyayan Foundation** and **Ek Step Foundation**—the gathering explored a simple yet powerful question: *What would it mean for libraries to truly belong to everyone?*

[READ MORE](#)



The Little Lit Fest 2.0

As part of Chennai's Children's Literature Festival 2025, we conducted two interactive workshops that introduced children and families to the world of accessible storytelling. Through *Stories at Your Fingertips*, participants explored tactile art by creating their own textured story cards, while *Connecting with the Dots* invited them to engage with Braille through stories, games, and playful discovery. The workshops were met with enthusiasm and curiosity, sparking meaningful conversations around accessibility, creativity, and the many ways stories can be experienced.

THE ARM LIBRARY GOALS OUR FOUR CORE COMMITMENTS

The Dimensions of Reading:

In our library, reading is not a linear milestone, but a continuous space where we consciously work to deepen four core dimensions of growth within each member:

TO BOND

Connecting children with books:

We cultivate a deep, joyful familiarity with stories and books through shared reading and immersive, interactive sessions.



TO ENGAGE

Transforming listeners into active thinkers:

We create environments where children are encouraged to think critically, question, manipulate tactile elements, and actively shape the narrative, turning reading into a participatory experience.

TO BELONG

Discovering identity and empathy:

We use stories to help children understand and appreciate their own immense value, creating the emotional foundation to then appreciate and embrace others.



TO EXPLORE

Stepping out into the wider world:

We guide children to use books to expand their horizons, sparking curiosity about new ideas, spaces, and aspirations beyond their immediate surroundings.



Home visits

As schools closed for vacation, we initiated home visits to better understand our members' lives beyond the classroom. Over six days, we visited 13 members across 11 homes in North Chennai covering areas such as Oragadam, Pudur, Ambattur, and Avadi, travelling 26-40 km one way. Spending 2-3 hours in each home with children and their families, we read, played, and had meaningful conversations that offered deeper insight into the impact of the library as well as the challenges families face.

A key concern that emerged was the lack of inclusive play opportunities during vacations, due to stigma on disability, limited access to play spaces and materials and low awareness around engaging children with visual impairments. Families also expressed the need for language support in reading and support in overall development of child

So this year we created

- Audio support for 20 titles (Tamil, some Telugu)
- Video guides for reading aids and home activities
- More play integrated into library sessions
- Exploring a community-based learning and play space



STRENGTHENING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SHARED READING

This year, we focused on increasing shared reading at home by supporting not only parents, but the wider family - including siblings and caregivers - in engaging with our books together.

To build caregiver confidence, we developed Tamil-language audio and video guides demonstrating how to use and read tactile books with children. A pilot set of 20 books was selected for this initiative.





The impact was immediate.

One parent, after receiving support for a specific book through a Tamil audio narration and guidance, shared a follow-up video showing her child interacting with the book in new and more engaged ways during shared reading.

Families also reported increased enthusiasm and communication from children during reading time:

“His communication has increased... New things draw his attention... At home he is prompt in choosing the books you send.”

This initiative highlighted how listening to families and equipping them with accessible, language-appropriate guidance can deepen engagement, build reading confidence at home, and strengthen children’s connection to books.



20

book borrowing
members

20

books read by each
child this year.

36

library sessions

20-35

library members for
library sessions

Research on the Prevalence of CVI in Mainstream School Children

Through the Inlaks-supported Fellowship for Social Engagement, Chetana Trust undertook a focused body of work to strengthen understanding, identification, and support of visual impairments particularly Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI) in children.

Research on the Prevalence of CVI in Mainstream School Children

A research study was conducted to explore the presence and indicators of CVI among children in mainstream schools. The findings highlighted that CVI may be significantly under-identified, reinforcing the need for greater awareness and early screening within general education systems.

Total number of children screened : 370





CVI Strategy Handbook for Teachers and Parents

Drawing from field insights and research findings, a practical handbook was developed for mainstream school teachers and parents. The resource provides accessible strategies to recognize visual processing difficulties and implement simple, effective classroom and home-based adaptations to support children with CVI.

Functional Vision Assessment for Children with Multiple Disabilities

Through the year, children were assessed, and individualized strategies were shared with families. Insights from these assessments are informing the development of a practical resource to support rehabilitation professionals in understanding the availability and use of vision and enabling greater participation in learning, communication, mobility, and play.

Join the movement for Inclusive stories

We believe that the right to stories, rich in thoughts and ideas, belongs to every child.

1.

SCALE THE INNOVATION

Help us move our award-nominated tactile printing pilots into mass production to reach thousands more children.



2.

GROW THE LIBRARY WORLD

Support our partnership with the Free Libraries Network to ensure that every local library has the skills to welcome a child with a print disability.



3.

SUPPORT RESEARCH & INSIGHT

Contribute to our ongoing work in identifying and supporting overlooked conditions like Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI) and Deaf-Blindness



4.

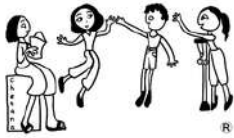
COLLABORATE ON CONTENT

Are you a creator, educator, or technologist? Work with us to design the next generation of beautiful, accessible storybooks.



Our work continues because
people like **you** take it forward.

Let's connect.



Chetana Trust

Identifying solutions for an **inclusive** society.

To volunteer, partner, or contribute to our cause,
visit, www.chetana.org.in



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Team Chetana



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