

गाँव  
कनेक्शन  
PRESENTS

# Teacher CONNECTION

CELEBRATING TEACHERS EVERY DAY



## LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

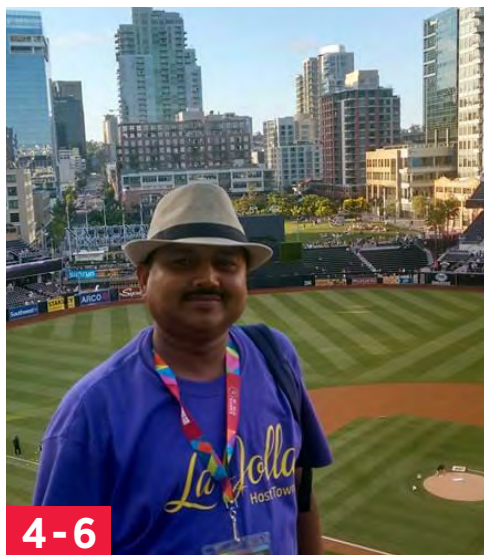
RURAL TEACHERS PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES  
AN EQUAL PLATFORM SO THAT THEY CAN HOLD THEIR OWN.





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SEPTEMBER 2023



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## GAON CONNECTION

**FOUNDED IN 2012 TO STRENGTHEN  
THE VOICE OF RURAL INDIA**

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## FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

**D**O YOU REMEMBER classmates with either learning or physical disabilities — visual or hearing impairment, autism, dyslexia, polio— when you were in school? Most likely, 'no'. Because inclusive education still remains a dream for millions of children with disabilities (CWD).

It is estimated that 7.8 million children in India under the age of 19 live with disabilities. Amongst the five year olds with disabilities, three-fourths do not go to any educational institution. Nor do one-fourth of the CWD population aged between five and 19 years.

The number of children with disabilities enrolled in school drops significantly with each successive level of schooling. There are fewer girls with disabilities in school than boys. These are facts documented in UNESCO's report titled *N for Nose: State of the education report for India 2019; Children with disabilities*.

The situation is challenging, but not entirely without hope. There are teachers who are doing wonderful work with children with special needs. Teachers in rural India, where CWD have an even more dismal chance of education, are helping children with disabilities smile and shine. In so many instances they themselves have a disability which has perhaps made them empathetic towards these children.

Loknath Chhetri, who is hearing impaired, teaches speech and hearing impaired children from remote villages at the Niswarth School for Deaf and Mute, the first English-medium school for the deaf in the Dooars region of North Bengal.


Similarly, Ramlal Jingar, who is visually challenged, encourages his students at the government school in Padru village in Barmer district, Rajasthan, to learn, and he also engages with them through music.

Over 1,200 kilometres away, a wheelchair-bound teacher is changing the lives of children with special needs in Kashmir valley. Javeed Ahmad Tak has set up the Zaiba Aapa Institute of Inclusive Education in Bijbehara in Anantnag district, for children with disabilities. He was also awarded the Padma Shri in 2020 for his work.

This issue of Gaon Connection's *Teacher Connection* magazine salutes teachers who are making a difference in the lives of children with disabilities with the gift of education.

**Nidhi Jamwal**

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# EDUCATE. ENABLE. EMPOWER.

This is the mission of many rural teachers who are giving children with disabilities an equal platform so that they can hold their own. But for them, these children would be left behind.

## GAON CONNECTION

**T**HAT DAY IN 1997 was like any other for 23-year-old Javeed Ahmad Tak, a student of Anantnag Degree College in south Kashmir. He left home that morning to visit his uncle, but something happened that changed his life forever.

He was shot at by gunmen and the bullets damaged his spine. Ever

since, Tak has been wheelchair-bound.

That life-changing experience pushed Tak to complete his Masters in Social Work in 2006, and two years later, in 2008, he set up the Zai-ba Aapa Institute of Inclusive Education in Bijbehara, in Anantnag district of Jammu & Kashmir, to educate children with disabilities.

Tak's institute, located about 50 kilometres from Srinagar in Kash-

mir, has 130 students, some of whom are in the autism spectrum, whereas others have disabilities such as hearing and visual impairment, and other physical challenges.

At Tak's school, 21 special educators give the children with disabilities (CWD) vocational and rehabilitation training, teach them Braille, and provide sports coaching.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



(Left) At Javeed Ahmad Tak's Institute, 21 special educators provide vocational and rehabilitation training to children with disabilities; (right) Loknath Chhetri, a 33-year-old teacher who is speech and hearing impaired, teaches at Dooars' first English-medium school for the deaf in Bagrakote.

Educators like these offer a ray of hope to millions of children who are bereft of education due to their disabilities — physical, cognitive, or mental.

It is estimated that 7.8 million children in India under the age of 19 live with disabilities. Among five year olds with disabilities, three-fourths do not go to any educational institution. One-fourth of the CWD population aged between five and 19 years also do not go to school. These facts are documented in UNESCO's report titled *N for Nose: State of the education report for India 2019; Children with disabilities*.

The number of children with disabilities enrolled in school drops significantly with each successive level of schooling, points out the UNESCO report. There are fewer girls with disabilities in school than boys.

The proportion of children with disabilities who are out of school is much higher than the overall proportion of out-of-school children at the national level.

Inclusive education systems where each individual has equal opportunity for educational progress is a top global priority. India has adopted a rights-based approach to inclusion of children with disabilities by ratifying the UN Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-

CRPD). Although the schemes and programmes have brought children with disabilities into schools, the gaps remain.

But there are teachers, many of whom are disabled themselves, who illuminate the lives of their students, many of whom have a disability or special needs.

Karna Telenga, who died recently on August 1, was one such dedicated teacher whose life mission was

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 7.8 MILLION CHILDREN IN INDIA UNDER THE AGE OF 19 LIVE WITH DISABILITIES. AMONG FIVE YEAR OLDS WITH DISABILITIES, THREE-FOURTHS DO NOT GO TO ANY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

to educate underprivileged children of tea garden workers in north Bengal. Born into a family of tea-garden workers, and the oldest of four siblings, Telenga knew how education could transform lives.

He taught the children of tea garden workers at the Telenga Bosti LP School, which he helped set up in 1992 in Sivasagar district

of Assam. Even though he lost his eyesight in an accident, he did not stop teaching.

"School is my happiest place. Besides, ours is a remote village without proper educational facilities. I do not want the children to be deprived of education, come what may," the 49-year-old teacher told *Gaon Connection* a couple of days before he died in an accident.

Telenga's school has about 40 students studying between classes 1 and class 5. Most of them come from the tea gardens and the adjoining slums in the area, and are first generation learners.

In neighbouring West Bengal, Loknath Chhetri teaches at a special school in Bagrakote Tea Estate, in the sub-Himalayan Dooars region, some 50 km north-east of Siliguri. The 33-year-old teacher is speech and hearing impaired, and teaches at the Niswarth School for Deaf and Mute, the first English-medium school for the deaf in the Dooars. The school has 13 children in the age group of five and 18 years, who mostly come from the tea garden workers' families.

"My dream is to spread education amongst the deaf and mute children. So, I have chosen to teach children like me," Chhetri told *Gaon Connection*.

## LEAD STORY

TEACHERS SUCH AS DHANANJAY, JINGAR, CHHETRI, AND TAK HAVE MADE SURE CHILDREN, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR PHYSICAL OR COGNITIVE DISABILITIES, ARE GIVEN THE RIGHT TO LEARN, PLAY AND GROW LIKE ANYONE ELSE

Apart from being a teacher and computer instructor at Niswarth School, he is also an activist working for the rights of deaf persons as the vice president of Jalpaiguri District Association of the Deaf.

"We want to make sign language the 23rd official language of India. It is time to educate people on the Indian sign language," he said.

Over 2,100 kilometres west of north Bengal's tea gardens in the desert state of Rajasthan in northwest India, Ramlal Jingar sets out from his home, a walking stick in one hand, holding his daughter's hand in the other. The 35-year-old teaches at the government school, Balika Rajkiya Prathamik Vidyalaya in Padru gram panchayat in Barmer district, Rajasthan.

Jingar is visually challenged. An illness in childhood took away his sight. He lost his father, a daily wage labourer, at an age of five and was raised by his mother. But, he did not let his physical disability stop him.

In 2008, Jingar appeared for the Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC) exam and was selected in the category for the people with special needs. Jingar teaches Social Science from classes eight to class 10.

"A student reads aloud from the textbook and I explain the lesson to the class. I give them the essence and synopsis of the lesson and we discuss it," Jingar told *Gaon Connection*. He also uses braille textbooks from which he teaches his students.

Jingar has an abiding love for music and he learnt to play the harmoni-



(Top) The visually challenged Ramlal Jingar teaches Social Science to students from classes eight to ten. He also teaches the children music and often organises the morning prayers; (above) Dhananjay Kumar, a special educator at Rajkiya Senior Secondary School, has coached nearly four dozen children who have won several medals in national sporting events.

um and dholak on his own. This love for music is what he carries with him to his students. "I teach the children music and often organise the morning prayers," he said.

In Hanumangarh district of Rajasthan, Dhananjay Kumar, a special educator at Rajkiya Senior Secondary School, has played a huge role in encouraging the children with intellectual disability, to take part in athletics, cricket, volleyball, badminton, hockey, etc. He coaches children not just from his school but also from other private schools, non-profit institutions and from government schools.

Nearly four dozen children who have been coached by him have won

several medals in national sporting events. "Most of them are from Jaipur, Jodhpur, Sri Ganganagar, Pilani, Alwar and Ajmer. Those who won medals in international events were also awarded handsome cash incentives," Kumar told *Gaon Connection*. "I have always wanted to work in the area of special education and chose that as my profession," he added.

Education is a right for all, and teachers such as Dhananjay Kumar, Jingar, Loknath Chhetri, the late Karuna Telenga, and Tak have made sure children, irrespective of their physical or cognitive disabilities, are given that right to learn, play and grow like anyone else. ■



## CONVERSATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

**PRATYAKSH SRIVASTAVA**  
GORAKHPUR, UP

**PRIYANSH KUMAR** won't stop talking. The class 1 student of Primary School Nagar Kshetra, in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, just loves to talk about his family and home, characters in his favourite story book, and his school.

"I can't quite believe this is the same boy who earlier refused to utter a word, but now has no fear of public speaking," Jagriti Mishra, 42-year-old teacher at the primary school, told

*Gaon Connection*. A simple daily exercise of reciting poems aloud in class has brought about this change in the six-year-old student of class 1, she informed.

"I make my students memorise and then recite poems aloud in class. They love it and this exercise also helps them shed their fear of public speaking," she said.

Poem recitation is one of the many methods Mishra, who is posted as a Shiksha Mitra at the school since 2008, uses to engage with the

**Conversations, recitations, and storytelling enhance children's confidence and fluency over time.**

PRATYAKSH SRIVASTAVA

46 students in her class.

Mishra makes full use of the teacher guides and lesson plans that the state education department has provided to all government schools to help educators engage better with their students. "The lesson plans urge teachers to make the students proactive, and I have realised that it is the best way to draw children out of their shells and enjoy the process of learning," she said.

The lesson plans specify how children who are newly enrolled into school are to be made comfortable. There are tips and guides and very specific tips on how to do that, through interactive activities such as poem recitations, conversations, storytelling, quizzes and group discussions.

The lesson plans which Mishra talked about are prepared as part of the Union government's NIPUN — National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy — initiative which is a flagship programme to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy skills in students from classes one to three.

## A teacher is helping women prisoners earn respect and livelihood

**AMBIKA TRIPATHI**

**WHEN MAMATA** Singh was jailed for four months, she never believed that after her release from the prison, she could find any employment. But the former inmate has been making Lakshmi-Ganesha idols using old newspapers and earning a livelihood for herself. She is also leading a respectable life.

About 205 kilometres away from Uttar Pradesh's capital Lucknow, in Basti jail, there are many prisoners like Singh who have been turned



**Alok Shukla has trained 150 women prisoners and approximately 2,000 women in villages thus far.**

into skilled individuals by a primary teacher named Alok Shukla.

Shukla is an art and craft teacher at the Kavalsia-Gaur Primary School in the Basti district. Apart from teaching jailed women inmates, he has also taught women in the district's self-help groups to make decorative pieces from waste material. It has helped them find a source of livelihood.

"For the past several years, I have been teaching women in the jail to make rakhi, Holi colours, and idols of gods and goddesses. In 2021, Mamata Singh was also in jail and she learned to make idols along with other women. After coming out from here, she made idols for Diwali and continues to do some work. It helps her earn a respectable income," Shukla told *Gaon Connection*.

## A Visually Impaired Teacher Illuminated The Lives Of Kids Of Tea-Garden Workers



Most of the students in the school come from the tea gardens and the adjoining slums in the area. SAYANTANI DEB

**SAYANTANI DEB**  
GUWAHATI, ASSAM

**THE VOICES** of children loudly saying their multiplication tables, or reciting a poem or spelling out words bounced off the walls of the Telenga Bosti LP School. The school, located in Sivasagar district of Assam, has about 40 students studying between classes 1 and class 5. Most of them come from the tea gardens and the

adjoining slums in the area.

Karna Telenga is their teacher. He spends hours telling them stories and educating them. Being visually impaired hasn't hampered the teacher's love for teaching and making learning a joyous experience for his students who come from underprivileged families of tea garden workers. Many of Telenga's students are first generation learners.

"My life revolves around the students. I find the utmost peace being with these innocent souls," 49-year-old Telenga told *Gaon Connection*. "I always wanted to be a teacher," he smiled.

Born into a family of tea-garden workers, and the oldest of four siblings, Telenga knows what struggle means, and the importance of education. He has dedicated his life to teaching the children of tea garden workers at the Telenga Bosti LP School, which was set up in 1992.

Even though he lost his eyesight in an accident, he did not stop teaching. "The school is my happiest place. Besides, ours is a remote village without proper educational facilities. I do not want the children to be deprived of education come what may," the teacher said.

Telenga is a favourite among the students. "The children love Telenga Sir dearly, and they never miss his class. His passion for teaching and students' thirst for learning has turned this small school into a temple of knowledge," Principal Lila Ram Kalita told *Gaon Connection*.

**PRATYAKSH SRIVASTAVA**  
GORAKHPUR, UP

**EIGHT-YEAR-OLD** Suraj Gaur can barely contain his excitement. His teacher, Nidhi Singh, has just handed him a 'Smiley', lovingly handcrafted, to be given to the best performing student of the month. Singh does this in order to engage her little wards better.

The 30-year-old assistant teacher in Bagahibhari village, Gorakhpur, has 59 students in her class. Her challenge lies in the fact that not all of them are at the same level of learning and there are those who need a little more attention and handholding.

"The students in class one have no prior experience of formal learning other than whatever they are taught at the anganwadi centres before coming to school. So, firstly I divide the students into three groups — A, B, and C," Singh explained. "Group C is the most challenging. It is made up of those students who have a slower

## Spreading smiles in the classroom



Nidhi Singh helps young students write, teaches memorable poems for numbers and alphabets.

grasp of things, and have a shorter attention span," she added.

From holding the hands of her young students in order to make them write to teaching them poems that will help them remember numbers and alphabets, Singh does them all. And her remediation techniques are working wonders!

Other than the Smiley badges, Singh also relies on worksheets provided by the education department in Uttar Pradesh, to bring all her students up to par. The children work on the worksheets, and Singh assesses them once a week, on Saturdays, after which she is able to categorise them into fast learners, those who need to work harder, and those who need remedial attention.

Singh often breaks into Bhojpuri, the more commonly spoken language of her students' families. "Just using the word *bhaat* instead of *chawal*, or *kiwaad* instead of *darwaza*, goes a long way in being accepted," she said.

**ARE YOU AN EDUCATOR, A TEACHER, OR A MENTOR SPECIALISING IN CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS? DO YOU AIM TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND EMPOWER YOUR STUDENTS? HERE ARE SOME ONLINE RESOURCES THAT CAN SUPPORT YOU.**

# EDUCATING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

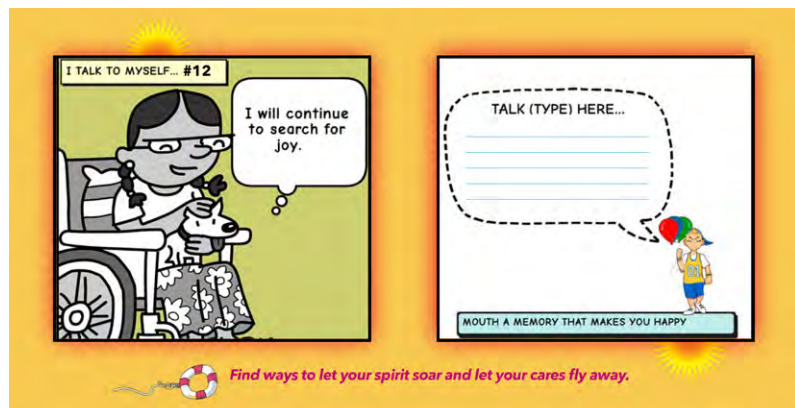
**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION** system wherein each individual has equal opportunity for educational progress is a top global priority. In the past twenty years in India, there has been significant legal and political commitments towards universalisation of education and right to education. Considerable effort has been undertaken in the country to protect the right to education of children with disabilities (CWD).

India has adopted a rights-based approach to inclusion of children with disabilities by ratifying the UN Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and, the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Education systems that are designed to be inclusive, equitable and empowering can help build inclusive societies.

However, one-fourth of the CWD population aged between 5 and 19 years do not attend any educational institution. Among five year olds with disabilities, three-fourths do not go to any educational institution, as noted in a UNESCO report titled '*N for Nose: State of the Education Report for India 2019: Children with disabilities*'.

India has 20.42 lakh disabled children aged between 0 and 6 years. Around 71 per cent of them are in rural areas. There are 5.9 lakh disabled children in cities. These children also have a right to education and a right to a respectable life.

Here are some websites which offer tools and learning materials to educate children with disabilities. These resources can be useful for teachers who work with children with disabilities and children with special needs.



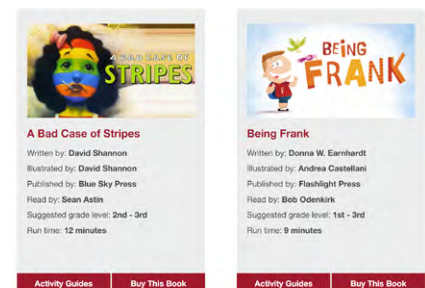
## COMICS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**TEACHERS ARE** using MakeBeliefs-Comix to help students with a variety of disabilities — from autism to stuttering — learn and thrive. Children with disabilities enjoy the empowering experience of using the computer to build a comic strip right in front

of their eyes and take pride in having successfully created short comic stories. By encouraging students to create their own comic strips or books, teachers also help students find a "safe haven" in the world of their imaginations.

## STORYLINE ONLINE

**PUBLISHED BY** the SAG-AFTRA Foundation, Storyline Online is an excellent resource for children with learning disabilities. It streams videos featuring celebrated actors reading children's books alongside creatively produced illustrations. Readers include Oprah Winfrey, Chris Pine, Rosario Dawson, Viola Davis and dozens more. Reading aloud to children has been shown to improve reading, writing and com-



munication skills, logical thinking and concentration, and general academic aptitude, as well as inspire a lifelong love of reading.



### EXPLORING THE WORLD OF SCIENCE

**CHILDREN WITH** learning disabilities and a knack for science will enjoy The Exploratorium, a website that brings the San Francisco museum to your desktop. Educators can scroll through 55 pages of educational videos to illustrate key topics like climate change, electricity, and

human anatomy.

Furthermore, The Exploratorium offers interactive simulations that cater to various learning styles and abilities. These simulations allow children to engage with complex scientific concepts through hands-on experiences, promoting better

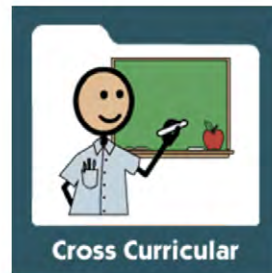
understanding and retention. With its user-friendly interface and diverse resources, The Exploratorium serves as an invaluable tool for educators seeking to make science education inclusive and engaging for all students, including those with special needs.



### PATHS TO LITERACY

**PATHS TO** Literacy is designed for teachers, families, and others interested in literacy for children and youth with visual impairments, including those who are deafblind and/or have multiple disabilities. The website has short videos focusing on answering common questions about how to educate students with visual impairment in general ed settings.

The website also offers a variety of resources such as lesson plans, strategies, and success stories to support the development of literacy skills in visually impaired students, promoting inclusive and effective learning environments.



## SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS & ICT

**ONE AMAZING** website for special education teachers is SENict. This website is for students who use switch, touch screen, mouse and eye gaze activities. The website provides training and professional development as well as a huge range of resources and activities you can

use in your classroom. The website is run by Ian Bean, a consultant and trainer specialising in the use of ICT and assistive technology to support the learning and communication needs of people of all ages with severe, profound and complex additional support needs.

## INTERACTIVE GAMES & VISUAL AIDS

**DO2LEARN IS** a nonprofit website providing free resources, tools, and activities to support educators in teaching children and young adults with special needs. The site includes interactive games, visual aids, and printable materials to engage learners of all ages and abilities. Educators can access a variety of lesson plans and curriculum ideas to create more inclusive and supportive learning environments. Furthermore, Do2Learn's user-friendly interface makes it easy for educators to navigate and find relevant materials.



# A Rural Teacher Crowdfunded Rs 15 lakh and transformed a village school

**KOMAL JADHAV**  
BEED, MAHARASHTRA

**SITUATED AT** a distance of almost 500 kilometres from the state capital Mumbai, a government school in Maharashtra's Beed district is a shining example of what motivation and community participation can accomplish.

The Zilla Parishad Kendriya Prathamik Shala, in Pargaon Jogeshwari village, is equipped with smart classes, a robotics training set up, an astronomy club, and a science lab where students learn to make gadgets from sensors. Many of the rural students of this school from class 1 to class 7 are already experts at making car sensors and rain sensors.

These modern advancements in the school's infrastructure have been possible because of the sustained efforts of Somnath Walke, who has been teaching at the school since 2014, and has managed to raise Rs 1,500,000 through community contribution towards the transformation school.

"In 2014, I started motivating the



Zilla Parishad Kendriya Prathamik Shala in Pargaon Jogeshwari has smart classes, a robotics setup, an astronomy club, and a science lab. KOMAL JADHAV

villagers to contribute money to provide better education facilities. The parents usually sent their children to the government school in the nearby Ashti town. I reasoned that if the local school got better, they wouldn't have to send their children 13 kilometres away to Ashti," Walke narrated to *Gaon Connection*.

Till 2022, in eight years, Walke

managed to raise funds worth Rs 1,500,000. The funds have been utilised to install solar panels, buy microscopes, musical instruments, setting up a technology lab, an astronomy lab, in beautification of schools by painting graffiti on the walls, and ensuring smart classes in the school.

## Where kids from tribal communities study without prejudice

**LARAIB FATIMA WARSI**

**JEEVAN SHIKSHA** Pahal has made learning a happy experience to children who come from tribal communities in Madhya Pradesh. It started in 2005 with the aim to provide education to the children of the Gond and the Pardhi tribal communities that are classified as Denotified Tribes.

Studying in mainstream schools can be a sorrowful and traumatic ex-



Jeevan Shiksha Pahal brings joyful learning to Gond and Pardhi tribal children in Madhya Pradesh.

perience for the children from tribal communities, said the school's principal, Brajesh Verma. "The family members of our students are mostly rag pickers, beggars and people who do menial jobs for a living. Their children have to face discrimination at the hands of their classmates in the government schools," Verma told *Gaon Connection*.

Kuldeesh Pawar, a student of Jeevan Shiksha Pahal school can vouch for that too. In 2011, when Pawar, then 12 years old, and from a forest dwelling community, was enrolled at the local government-run elementary school, he had not anticipated the hatred he faced.

"My classmates there bullied me and looked down on me because I was from a tribal community. It was hurtful," Pawar told *Gaon Connection*. But in 2018, Pawar found that safe space and learning environment that he craved for in Jeevan Shiksha Pahal School. "This new school changed my life. Nobody taunted me here about my tribal background. I felt I could do something good in life," said Pawar, whose mother is a rag picker while his father drives a trash truck.

# A village community library is a temple of learning

AISHWARYA TRIPATHI

A **COMMUNITY** library in Bansa village has 1,700 registered members, both adults and children from the neighbouring villages in Hardoi district of Uttar Pradesh. The library, which runs from a temple complex, has become an agent of change.

Inaugurated in the village in December 2020, Bansa Community Library is open to all — with no bar on age, gender, caste and class. The library is located within the village complex and has members, both adults and children, who issue 200 to 300 books every month.

Jatin Lalit Singh, a young local resident of Bansa village, envisioned a space for leisure reading. This led to the establishment of a community library that is raising awareness about laws, rights, and rural schemes among villagers.

"Library is a level-playing field for



Inaugurated in the village in December 2020, Bansa Community Library is open to all — with no bar on age, gender, caste and class.

me," the founder of Bansa Community Library told *Gaon Connection*.

"While I was growing up, reading always meant course books like that of Maths and Science but we were never taught to read for pleasure. I wanted to give that to my village," said Singh. "There is an unequal distribution of resources in our country,

this library was a small attempt to fill a small bit of that gap," he added.

The library was established with social media and offline crowdfunding. It has two librarians. It is open seven days a week, with extended hours on Sundays from 9 am to 7 pm.



Camp School empowers dropout tribal girls, rekindling their dreams for a brighter future. MANOJ CHOUDHARY.

rekindled her hopes and dreams of making it big in life.

The school, located in Noamundi village and run by a non-profit ASPIRE, provides coaching to students such as Richa so that they can make up for the learning loss they suffered academically when they had to drop out of school. It has a nine-month residential course, and Richa has already completed seven months. After the course she should be able to get admission at a government school.

"I had lost hope of completing school education after the lockdown but now I want to become a doctor," Richa, told *Gaon Connection*.

The Camp School is silently changing the lives of girls from tribal communities by giving them a second shot at education.

## From dropouts to achievers

MANOJ CHOUDHARY  
WEST SINGHBHUM, JHARKHAND

**RICHA HEMBROM** enters the blue gates of her school every day with a spring in her step. The 13-year-old girl from Ho tribal community aspires to become a medical doctor.

During the nationwide lockdown due to COVID pandemic, Richa

dropped out of school when she was in class four of her primary school at Tatiba village in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. As she came from a family that could not afford to get her a smartphone for her online classes, she could not continue her studies.

But, the Camp School, a unique educational institution for drop-out girls from tribal communities, has

### Pushpendra Singh



**I AM** a teacher in Samamai village in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district and I have launched an initiative to safeguard the environment. I am posted as a science scout at the Composite School Samamai. My duties include not only teaching science to students but also ensuring that they are aware about the need to protect the environment. I have about

350 students in my school and I have divided the boys and girls into two teams — the boys' team is named '*paryavaran yodhha*' [environment warriors] while the girls' team is named '*paryavaran prehari*' [environment guardians]. These two teams compete against each other to come up with best practices to conserve and protect the environment.

### Praveen Kumar Mishra



**AFTER SPENDING** 10 years of my career working with multinational companies, I switched to teaching in a government school. When I was posted in Belkur Upper Primary School in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur in the year 2015, people welcomed me but I was unfamiliar with rural schools. The affection and respect I got from the children in the school gave me confidence

to impart quality education to my students and help them fulfil their dreams. I developed 100 educational videos based on modules of basic education by the Office of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan. Furthermore, I created electronic content for differently-abled students. I received the State Teacher Award on September 5, 2022.



### Ravikant Dwivedi

**WHEN I** joined Bhagesar Primary School in the Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh in 2016, only 46 children were enrolled. I began by introducing changes to the academic environment and actively coordinating with parents to discuss their wards' progress. Gradually, enrollment soared to 208. To ensure regular student attendance, I developed the concept of forming student groups with a leader and assistant leader. The group leader is tasked with ensuring the presence of all children in the class. If a student is absent, the leaders contact them to inquire about the reason for their absence.



### Manisha Garg

**ONE DAY**, when I entered the classroom of Upper Primary School Narangpur in Meerut where I was appointed in 2015, I saw some students in the class pointing at a girl and making fun of her. I realised the girl's uniform was stained as she had got her periods. I addressed the boys, explaining the menstrual cycle using their Science book. A couple of weeks later, during the winter season, I saw two boys roaming around in the school without wearing any sweaters. They said that a girl in their class had gotten her period and stained her uniform, and they had lended their sweater to her to wrap around her waist.

**NOTE: IF YOU HAVE AN INTERESTING STORY/ INCIDENT TO SHARE,  
WHATSAPP US AT 95656-11118**

