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# Teachers become saviours for children with neurodevelopmental disorders

Many teachers in Uttarakhand are setting precedent in going out of their way to help children with hidden disabilities

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*3 Min Read*



*Mamta Badoni with two of her students suffering from neurodevelopmental disorders*

Mamta Badoni, a primary school teacher in Chamasari area of Dehradun district, is a keen observer and has been working especially hard to help two of her students improve their results.

She may be just another regular teacher, but the outstanding thing is that these students—Priyanshu and Sachin—suffer from neurodevelopmental disorders and yet she is able to give them the extra attention and care in the school.

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*If not identified and treated well, these problems can have a deep rooted impact on the overall development of children*

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### **Identifying when there is a disability**

“Regular students can do well but what concerns me more are the children with hidden disabilities who are often mistaken as being naughty and careless and go unnoticed,” Badoni said.

She said that if not identified and treated well, these problems can have a deep rooted impact on the overall development of children.

Badoni said that she became aware about the duo’s condition after she attended a Project Inclusion training in 2017.

Due to the shortage of special teachers who have the expertise to handle such students, the training focuses on educating and empowering regular teachers to identify and handle students with hidden disabilities by using simple checklists.

Project Inclusion experts then assess the identified children and also counsel their parents and siblings to support the child’s learning inside and outside the school.

Badoni said that she did not want these two students to grow up feeling unworthy and not achieve anything in life and that is why I went to their houses to convince their parents for the boys’ assessment by Project Inclusion team.

### **Convincing the parents**

The teacher said that the parents were not very interested in being present for the assessment. She counselled them and even paid for their visit from their home to the assessment centre and back.

“We have to do this much. This is our responsibility if we really care and want these children to come to mainstream as confident human beings,” she said.

She said that students in the government schools are mostly from poor families where parents do not have enough time to tend to their needs, leave alone the ones with NDD who are branded as reckless, abusive and slow learners.

“Things have started improving gradually. These boys have started to write and paying attention in the class. They come up to me and share their problems. I am happy with the improvement they are showing,” she said.

## Going beyond the job role



*Alka Tyagi with her student*

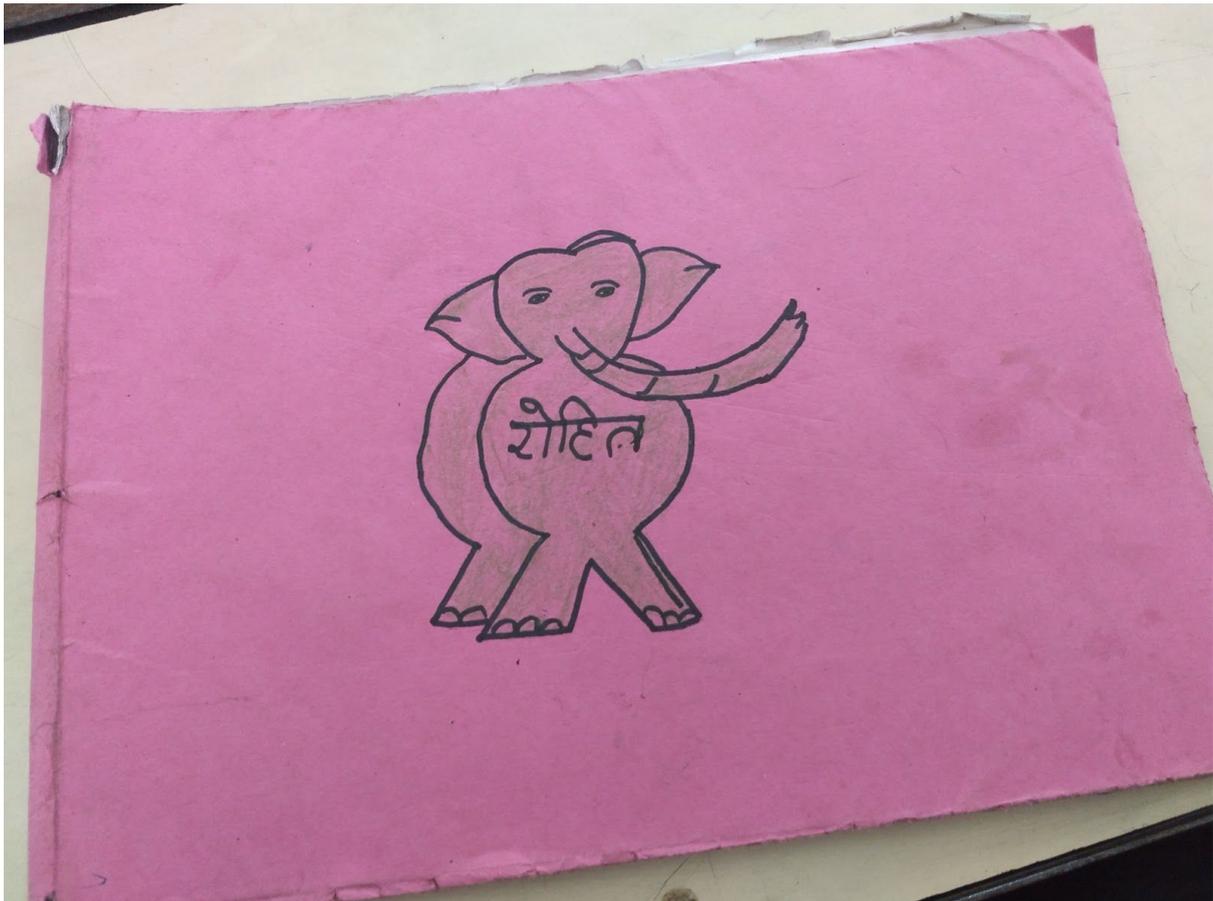
Similar example is that of Alka Tyagi, primary school teacher at Dilaram Bazaar in Dehradun, who is not only helping such students in her school but also reaching out to children in the community.

“Whenever I see a very hyperactive and aggressive child in my neighbourhood or family, I reach out to the parents without any hesitation, ask about the child’s behaviour in detail and counsel them accordingly,” she said.

Tyagi, who also attended the Project Inclusion training in 2017, explains that my knowledge regarding NDD should come into use in helping these children so that they are not left behind.

Savita Gussai, a primary school teacher in Inderesh Nagar, put her job at stake to facilitate the assessment of her student Vivek at a time when government teachers were advised not to leave the school due to staff crunch.

Since his parents could not turn up and there was no one to put forward his case at the assessment centre, Gussai was quick to decide to go herself, so the child could be assessed.



*A drawing made by a student suffering from learning disability*

The list of such teachers is endless who, with their strong commitment and dedication toward their students, have been mending lives of these children silently.

Sunandini Bhardwaj, Project Inclusion trainer in Uttarakhand, said “a teacher’s role is not merely restricted to the four walls of a classroom and giving bookish knowledge to students but it has a wider impact that leaves a strong footprint on the lives of children.”

Teachers in Uttarakhand have proved this. Just by a little healing touch, they are able to connect to the broken chords of children’s minds and make the young ones understand their worth, she added.

### **About Project Inclusion:**

Project Inclusion is Rupantar’s program for mental health awareness among teachers to help students suffering from hidden disabilities. It is currently operational in 8 states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Puducherry, Bihar, Sikkim, Chandigarh and

Jharkhand. Project Inclusion has a deep rooted approach and addresses the core issues for retaining children with NDD in government schools. ■

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