

# Prantik - A Story of Ascension

## No hurdle can stop Prantik painting his masterpieces

### Inclusive Education

The goal of **School Education Shagun (SE Shagun)** initiative – a scheme conceived under the cardinal Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan scheme sponsored by government of India (GOI) and the government of all states and Union Territories – is to provide opportunity for equal education and equitable learning outcome under the Right to Education Act to all the school goers of the country. The story of Prantik Das, a student of Netaji Vidyapith in Kolkata with serious hearing impairment – the boy has achieved success in his academic performance and co-curricular activities due to the micro care given by a group of special educators and his teachers — is an inspiring example of the fruition of the aforesaid initiative.

### The boy who couldn't hear

Prantik as a child could not respond when called by his name. He could only respond when anyone would stamp his or her feet on the floor. He could only feel the vibrations and then only responded.

At the age of six, Prantik was diagnosed with **auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder (ANSO)**, a hearing problem related to the rupture of the neural circuits transmitting sound from the ear's inner most part (the inner ear) to the brain. When Prantik's parents Laxmi and Pranab Das came to know that no treatment existed to cure this hearing impairment, they were at a loss. The ear receives sounds from the environment and transforms them into messages the brain can understand. But sometimes these messages are jumbled. Other times, the sounds don't reach the brain. When this happens, it's called **auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder (ANSO)**. Kids with **ANSO** may have trouble telling one sound from another. They generally cannot understand speech clearly. Of late, such children with **ANSO** can learn language and communication skills with the help of medical devices, therapy, and visual communication techniques.

Prantik with his plight was identified by the special educators of Circle-II of Samagra Shiksha Mission, Kolkata. Inclusive Education initiative for children with special need (CWSN) is one of the major interventions of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan which lays emphasis on providing scope to improve the quality of education and equitable learning outcome for all



1) Prantik with his peers in a group activity

students, including CWSN. The group of special educators got Prantik inducted to the education system and as a result Prantik was admitted to school under their supervision.

At the age of six, Prantik was admitted in class-I of Netaji Vidyapith. During his early years of schooling Prantik was a bit awkward and withdrawn. He could not concentrate on his lessons. While writing he used to omit words and fail to construct proper sentences. He could not express himself although he mingled well with his friends and cousins. His teachers felt that with proper encouragement, motivation and guidance the boy would be able to complete his tasks and other activities to the best of his abilities. The school provided the infrastructure to cater to the needs of the special children. With the help of special educators and resource teachers, Prantik started to overcome his disabilities through the development of self-help skills being aided with language training, speech therapy, speech reading and sign language. The school believes that the children with special needs are not liability but an asset of the society. Later he joined Paikpara Raja Manindra High School for boys. In that school also, he had a conducive learning environment to grow and complete his studies.

The resource teachers in this school made sure that Prantik sat in the front row in the classroom as he needed individual attention and micro care. Because of his disability he faced difficulty in group studies and failed to follow the lessons and participate with his peers when he was sitting in groups. During his first year in school he received intensive speech therapy, sign language teaching, Indian Sign Language (ISL) auditory training and special education. Gradually the boy started learning how to vocalize sounds, its phonation, intonation and modulation. The teachers supported him following all the guidelines given by the team of professionals such as Resource Teachers and IE volunteers. They provided him with hearing aids to speak or sign in phrase level and understand what others speak or sign in reciprocation. The Inclusive Education Scheme aimed at enabling all the students with disabilities completing eight years of elementary schooling – an opportunity to complete four years of secondary schooling in an inclusive and enabling environment in the general education system at the secondary level (classes IX to XII). Prantik had appeared for Higher Secondary Examination in the year 2021.

### **A budding painter**

When he was in class VI, his special educators, and teachers observed his knack in painting and insisted his parents to encourage him dabble him in drawing and painting to hone his skills. Prantik participated in a painting competition and won a prize which encouraged him and boosted his self-confidence. Prantik matured as an artist with time and he started participating in different painting and drawing competitions. His journey continued from circle level, to district level and then he went on to participate in national level art competitions and everywhere he made his mark as a budding painter. More and more feathers got added to his cap. He began taking part in painting for advertisement, cover pages for magazines and in many intra-school and inter-school cultural programs, sporting events and won prizes. At present, he is doing well in his academics. He remains friendly and calm in his social interactions. Behaviorally he can manage himself well and tidily. He has made progress in all spheres in his academic performances and is at par with his peers who have no such difficulty like his. He is very jovial by nature and well accepted in his peer group for his amicable nature.



2) Prantik's participation in The Wall – a Mural Project

### A new horizon

Samagra Shiksha Mission, Kolkata has organized a 2-day orientation session on vocational training on different handicrafts. Prantik has participated in that session and crafted a number of attractive items. Recently he had made portraits of legendary and iconic personalities for his school. His teachers proudly exhibited his paintings. In 2015 he has been nominated for the first time for a prize from Honorable President of India at National Bal Bhavan for creative painting and finally he could win the coveted prize in 2020.

Prantik has made remarkable progress overcoming his disability. His performance as a special child is excellent. He has made his school proud of him. Without the effort taken and care provided by his teachers the boy would not have been able to arrive at this stage.

**Prantik Das:** Parent – Pranab Das (Father), Laxmi Das (Mother)

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3) Prantik with his certificates, trophy for creative arts issued and presented by National Bal Bhavan