

## An Annotated Bibliography of Story Books on Disability and Inclusion

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This is a partially annotated bibliography of stories on disability and disability issues written for children. These depict children [and families] who've endured a range of concerns, from not being accepted and singled out because of their disability. The stories celebrate their disability, family bonds and friendships. These stories are an excellent resource in any elementary classroom. The teacher can simply have them lying around in class or discuss issues by beginning with open ended questions, building on what children already think, know and feel.

### Abba's Day (2016)

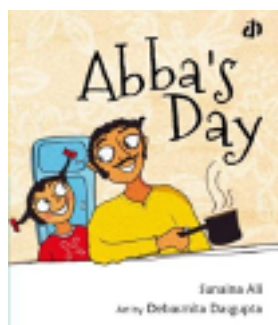
Author: Sunaina Ali

Illustrator: Debasmita Dasgupta

Publisher: Katha

Language: English, Hindi

Age: 2 to 8 years



*Abba's Day* is the story about Aaisha who loves Sundays because it is Abba's Day. In *Abba's Day*, gender roles are reversed and Aaisha is shown as wearing crutches. The best part of it, that there is no discussion around it. It is just another family.

### Against All Odds

Author: Ramendra Kumar

Publisher: Duckbill Books & Publishers

Age: 8 to 12 years



*Against All Odds* is a tale of fun, football and friendship! When the twins Kartik and Kavya have to move from Kolkata to Rourkela, neither is excited about living in a town and leaving their friends behind.

It's especially tough on Kartik since he is not allowed to play football because he is one-armed. His friend Siba can't play because he has to earn a living. His classmate Tina must not be a goalkeeper because her mentor is differently abled. The book is about

three individuals, three obstacles and one passion – Football.

### A Helping Hand (2017)

Author: Payal Dhar

Illustrator: Vartika Sharma

Publisher: Pratham Books

Languages: English, Hindi



Age: Independent reading level

*A Helping Hand* is about a new girl in class who has a prosthetic hand. Ali, Sumi, Gaurav and Rani are curious to know about her. The teacher gives one of the girls in the class the responsibility to 'mentor' her. Through letters this girl shares about herself and her prosthetic hand which satisfies curiosity of her classmates. They even play a game of doing various things with one hand from tying shoelaces to buttoning a shirt with little success.

### A Walk with Thambi (2019)

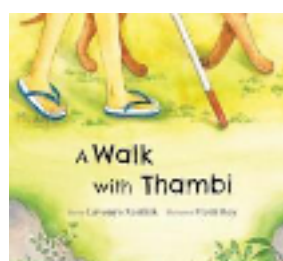
Author: Lavanya Karthik

Illustrator: Proiti Roy

Publisher: Tulika

Languages: English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali

Age: 4 + years



*A Walk with Thambi* is a picture book of a boy and his dog and their

relationship. It depicts a day in their life when they go for a walk from morning to evening. Woven into this story of everyday fun are sensory descriptions, and visual details like a walking stick in the boy's hand or pocket, the dog guiding his friend, clues that gently tell us that the boy is blind. The day is like the day of any other child. They play in the river; climb trees and run in the street, everything Amma had asked them not to do. The illustration lights up the bond between a boy and his dog.

### **Big Bully and M-Me (2013)**

Author: Arti Sonthalia

Illustrator: Sebin Simon

Publisher: Duckbill Books and Publications Pvt Ltd

Age: 9 to 11 years



*Big Bully and M-Me* is the story of a boy named Krishna, who prefers being called Krish without the Na. Krish is a short boy and he stammers. The story begins with a basketball match between the class students where Krish's team loses. Ishaan, the tall bully of the class, stands in

front of Krish and snatches the ball from him and teases him about being short. Krish is bullied by Ishaan at every opportunity the latter gets. So much so that even Krish's best friend Green is unable to help him.

In the class, their teacher, Mr Dennis Fergusson, popularly known as Dennis the Menace, announces an extempore speech event for the show planned at the end of semester. For the event, the entire class was to be divided into pairs of two each. Krish and Ishaan were made partners. Krish dreaded the semester end shows because he hated to participate due to his stammering but his mom always encouraged his participating. He didn't want her to know about the extempore speech event, because then he would have to deal with pressure from her to participate. Yet he knew he couldn't stop her from knowing about the event. Moreover, this year the prize to the winning pair was extremely tempting. The winners would get tickets to the new aquarium park and his mom promised him a new bicycle if he performs well. One day as he

is passing Ishaan's house, he invites him for a game of football. Krish agrees. As usual, Ishaan pushes him and throws him down. Ishaan's older brother also begins to play and pushes, yells and kicks Krish. Ishaan is clearly upset and is now worried that Krish would tell everyone in the class about the incident. But Krish promises not to do so. The D-day comes and Ishaan and Krish not only manage to pull the show well but also strike a lasting friendship.

### **Catch that Cat (2013)**

Author: Tharini Vishawanath

Illustrator: Nancy Raj

Publisher: Tulika Publishers

Languages: English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali

Age: 4+ years



*In Catch that Cat*, Dip Dip is a boisterous, spirited and confident girl who loves to explore public places despite being on a wheelchair. She experiences amazing adventures in trying to search

for her friend's cat Kaapi. She searches for her on the road, behind houses, under bushes and when Kaapi climbs a tree, the only thing left for Dip Dip is to actually climb the tree. In a subtle way, the story brings forth the issues faced by those with physical disabilities while accessing public spaces.

### **Clumsy (2016)**

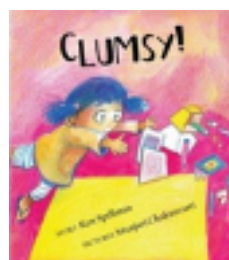
Author: Ken Spillman

Illustrator: Manjari Chakravarti

Publisher: Tulika Publishers

Languages: English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali

Age: 5+ years



*Clumsy* tells the story of a girl who spills, drops, breaks, trips on things. She has long forgotten who she really is and lives by the labels that others have given her, which include clumsy, butterfingers, slowcoach, careless. She feels battered under the pressure and expectations of others. She forgets herself,

drowned in rejection and hopelessness. But then one day her grandmother gives her a box of colours. The nameless expressions, feelings, thoughts, the hidden stories all come alive under her magic touch. She is once again herself.

### Flute in the Forest (2010)

Author: Leela Gour Broome

Illustrator: Ajanta Guhathakurta

Publisher: Penguin India

Age: Young Readers



*Flute in the Forest* is about Atiya, a 13 year old girl who lives in the forest with her father who is a forest officer. She is an only child and is afflicted with polio. She knows the ways of the jungle and explores it through her short, secret and often dangerous treks.

On one occasion she hears the haunting notes of a flute. It gives her goosebumps. She decides that she will learn to play the instrument much against her father's wishes. She starts taking music lessons from an grouchy old anthropologist, Ogre Uncle and his Kurumba tribal daughter, Mishora. Her music transforms her father's view, calms the rogue elephant, Rangappa and helps nurture a blossoming friendship between a teenage boy and girl.

### Kanna Panna (2015)

Author: Zai Whitaker

Illustrator: Niloufer Wadia

Publisher: Tulika Publishers

Languages: English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali

Age: 5+



*Kanna Panna* is about Kanna who can hardly speak, though loads of words buzz in his head. He is only being ordered by his parents to do this and that. One day, his aunt comes home and is shocked to see

how his parents talk to him. She takes him home for the vacation. He is happy to be free playing with his cousins. A trip is planned to visit the cave temples. While they are in the cave with the lights go off. Everyone is scared as to how they would find their way out through the maze of

tunnels. But Kanna is not, because light or no light, it makes no difference to Kanna as he cannot see anyway. He confidently guides everybody out of the tunnels. He is so happy that he continuously talks all the way home. This joyful story completely inverts the notion of disability, where being visually impaired is just a way of being and those with sight can be at a disadvantage.

### Kittu's Very Mad Day (2013)

Author: Harshikaa Udasi

Illustrator: Lavanya Naidu

Publisher: Duckbill Books and Publications Pvt Ltd (English), Eklavya (Hindi)

Languages: English, Hindi

Age: 6 to 16 years

*Kittu's Very Mad Day* is the story of Kittu, a fun-loving, strong-minded boy from a large chaotic family. A diamond trader's family of Mumbai that has three brothers, their wives, a



very vocal sister and a variety of children with different moods and mood-swings, a full-time housemaid and her daughter. This big family travels to Panna in Madhya Pradesh on a holiday and forgets Kittu at a roadside Dhaba on their way back.

Kittu with a downcast face but a mind hoping for some adventure, is perched upon a wall with his crutches hidden. Being intelligent and resourceful, Kittu manages to latch himself on to a kind hearted ice cream seller named Madhav. Madhav suggests going to the nearest police station. But after years of being threatened that policemen will lock him up for not eating his meals, Kittu has developed a deep distrust for law enforcement. To stop Madhav from taking him to the police, he pretends that his father is a notorious Mumbai don who will extract revenge for his boy being handed over to the police. Frightened at the thought, Madhav takes him home instead. The sleepy little village that Madhav lives in, is full of surprises as Kittu discovers. And Madhav's daughter Madheshwari (Mad for short), lives up to her name. There is never a dull moment with Mad for company, and Kittu has quite an



adventure whilst his family is desperately looking for him.

### **Manya Learn to Roar (2017)**

Author: Shruthi Rao

Illustrator: Priya Kuriyan

Publisher: Duckbill Books and Publications Pvt Ltd

Age: 6 to 16 years



*Manya Learn to Roar* is about Manya, a chirpy and playful 10-year old girl. She has friends and foes in school – as any child her age would naturally have. So when a teacher announces that the school was going to put Jungle

Book as a play for the inter-school competition, Manya is thrilled. She has to play the role of Shere Khan. She applies for the role, faces the audition after overcoming her stammering and gets selected. Manya is observant too. During rehearsals she notices the doubts the teachers have about her and is troubled by this exchange. To make matters worse, she is constantly teased about her stammering by her classmate Rajat, which makes her even more anxious. However her dear friend Ankita and a teacher help her to get over her doubts. The relationship between a teacher and student are beautifully portrayed.

### **Neel on Wheels (2018)**

Author: Lavanya Karthik

Illustrator: Habib Ali

Publisher: Duckbill Books and Publications Pvt Ltd

Age: 6 to 8 years



*Neel on Wheels* is narrated by a younger brother who adores his older brother and thinks he can fight dragons and monsters and chase away scary creatures of the night. After all, Neel, who is in a wheelchair –

has wheels! Neel might seem confined to a wheelchair but the imaginative powers he and his younger brother possess knows no bounds. Through their fantasies, Neel transforms into a

protective guardian in the eyes of his little brother. He never fails to wheel them away to safety. Neel is a superhero rather than a victim. He is capable and dependable. By ‘accepting’ or even celebrating that which is usually derided or pitied, strikes the right note of inclusivity.

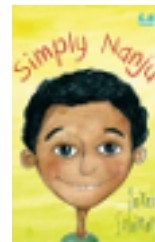
### **Simply Nanju (2019)**

Author: Zainab Sulaiman

Illustrator:

Publisher: Duckbill Books and Publications Pvt Ltd

Age: 10+



*Simply Nanju* is set in a school of differently abled children who are funny, energetic and entertaining. His friends find the best wheelchair they can for their friend Nanju. They are as normal as children can be. They play detectives as in a TV serial. When

they do badly at academics they try to hide it from their parents. They deal with their disabilities in the most astonishing ways.

### **Susie will not Speak (2018)**

Author: Shruti Rao

Illustrator: Lavanya Naidu

Publisher: Duckbill Books and Publications Pvt Ltd

Age: 6 to 8 years



In the book *Susie will not Speak*, Susie speaks with a lisp. The kids at school laugh at her and boys in the park call her ‘Toothie’. Sick of being made fun of all the time, Susie decides not to speak at all. Her best friend Jahan and her own family support her and she is

able to begin overcoming her speech impediment. She starts communication with those around her with pen and paper. The author very sensitively portrays the power of empathy, of treating others with equal dignity and respect even if they do not look or speak the way you do.

### **My feet are the Wheel-chair (Originally 1992, In India, 2001)**

Author: Franz-Joseph Huainigg

Illustrator: Annegret Ritter (Redrawn by Avinash Deshpande)



Publisher: Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (In India)

Languages: Hindi, English (Bilingual)

Age: 8+



*My feet are the Wheel-chair* is about Margrit, a little girl who cannot walk but she is independent, thanks to her wheelchair,

which works as her legs. She is extremely happy this particular day as she has been asked by her mother to visit a supermarket on her own for the first time. But while on this trip she happens to have some sad and embarrassing encounters. She feels uncomfortable when some people stare, some ask her about her disability, some pity her, some help her preemptively without her asking for help. This all makes her very sad and very angry as she is not being treated like other children. But then she meets a special friend who is also a little different and who makes her understand - "You and I are different because you and I have something special."

Her friend manages to change Margrit's perspective and she actually starts feeling the happiness and joy of being in the outside world. Now she doesn't mind people staring at her or people asking her about her disability or anybody pitying at her. In fact, she is very comfortable telling them that she is handicapped and she cannot walk but can ride. And now she does not feel embarrassed asking for help like everyone else does sometimes. But most importantly she wants to convey how she is feeling and that is - No matter what her disability is, she is Happy! The book thus deals with the attitudes of 'abled' people towards people with special needs as well as the attitude and of the differently-abled person and his/her comfort level with the disability or uniqueness.

### Unbroken (2017)

Author: Nandhika Nambi

Illustrator: Ayush Saxena

Publisher: Duckbill Books and Publications Pvt Ltd

Age: 13+

*Unbroken* is a novel about Akhriti, a 16 year old school girl who meets with an accident 2 years back. Apart from the physical damage and having to use a wheel-chair, the accident left her broken emotionally. There is no hope for her recovering physically but also she is not ready to let go of her anger and frustration. She finds her father selfish, her mother ignorant, her brother too goody-goody and friends Karthik and Preethi most annoying. Her family isn't able to reach out or help because of her anger. She is annoying to everyone around her so that people keep away from her. She hates being sympathised and likes to do all that she can herself. . To appear "unbroken", Akriti creates a fortress around her: loud music on ipod, overeating, strong opinions, harsh words, sleep and avoidance. Her room on the first floor of her home and her seat on the last desk in her class as spatial metaphors of emotional distance and disconnect from all around her. The turn of events reveal how everything around changes once our outlook changes and we are mended. The book portrays both the themes of disability and empowerment, and denial and acceptance. Richly interwoven is the underlying message that physical disability constraints but it is attitudinal disability that cripples.

### Vibhuti Cat (2018)

Author: Shikhandin

Illustrator: Shubham Lakhera

Publisher: Duckbill Books and Publications Pvt Ltd

Age: 6 to 8 years



*Vibhuti Cat* depicts the theme of a sibling as an ally. Magesh is on the autism spectrum.

His older brother Vignesh, is extremely fond of him, even when Magesh's innocent actions unexpectedly land him in trouble at school. Vignesh does not have to be trained to look after his young brother. The role of the nurturer comes naturally to him. He is also encouraging of Magesh's artistic skills. In Magesh's case, he doesn't talk much, but likes to express himself through art. Magesh has a lively

imagination. Though he does not have a pet cat, he loves to draw pictures of cats, and leave them around everywhere. When he wants to go to Vignesh's school, he puts a picture of the cat in Vignesh's bag. Magesh's parents treat both their sons with love, and this is what helps them flourish. The book brings out the uniqueness of an autistic child, with his special characteristics, talents and personality traits, focusing on what Magesh can do, and then takes off from there.

### **Welcome to the Forest (2020)**

Author: Bhavna Menon

Illustrator: Kavita Singh Kale

Publisher: Pratham Books

Languages: English, Hindi and 16 more.

Age: Independent reading level



*Welcome to the Forest* is a story about Tulsa who visits the Kanha Tiger Reserve with her school friends. Tulsa is visually impaired but experiences the forest

using all her other senses. The story is based on a true story of a camp organized for a group of visually impaired children.

### **Why are you afraid to hold my hand? (1999)**

Author: Sheila Dhir

Illustrator: Sheila Dhir

Publisher: Tulika Publishers

Languages: English, Tamil

Age: 6+



*Why are you afraid to hold my hand* is a book about attitudes. Most people are confused about how to react to those with

disabilities. Their questions, misconceptions, doubts and fears are answered here by a child with cerebral palsy through the use of verse. The illustrations on each page echo the feelings of the physically disabled child. The child is asking to be accepted with all their inabilities. A differently abled child's silent dialogue with

society offers a sensitive and sensible way of helping children understand disability, and the strengths of those who are differently abled.

### **Wings to Fly (2015)**

Author: Soumya Rajendran

Illustrator: Arun Kaushik

Publisher: Tulika Publishers

Languages: English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali

Age: 5+



In *Wings to Fly* little Malathi wants to run after hens and chicks, and catch ripe yellow mangoes as they fall — but how can she, on a wheelchair? As an infant, Malathi loses

her ability to walk and has to stay away from her family for long years for her treatment. When she goes home on holidays she is truly pampered by her family. As she grows old she gets a job in a bank and is really good at her work. Her dream is to win a race. She participates in a wheel-chair race along with men, as there are no women. The book depicts the struggles and experiences of Malathi Hollam, a disabled athlete.

### **Friend (2016)**

Author: Akram Ghasempour

Illustrator: Naseem Azadi

Publisher: Eklavya

Languages: English, Hindi

Age: 2 to 8 years



*Friend* is a story of two girls and how they become friends. A girl meets another girl at the beach and asks her whether she would play hide and seek. The second girl agrees and with eyes wide open and hand stretched out listening to sounds she finds her, hiding behind a rock. The second girl then draws a picture of the first girl, after feeling her face. From the sound of the sea, she knows a big wave is expected and asks the first girl to move away. They become friends.



## Bumboo, the donkey who would not budge (2015)

Author: Sujatha Padmanabhan

Illustrator: Madhuvanti Anantharajan

Publisher: Eklavya

Languages: English, Hindi

Age: 2 to 8 years

*Bumboo, the donkey who would not budge* is the tale of a donkey named Bumboo who lives in Ladakh with his little friend Padma and her family! Bumboo helps

Padma's family in many ways and lives with many other animals in a pen next to where Padma and her family lives. Bumboo loves Padma and she loves him. But Bumboo was different from other Donkeys, and

Padma noticed it first. Bumboo behaves oddly the minute the sun sets. He would just fall down on his knees wherever he is and wouldn't budge from there till the next morning. After an incident, Padma's father calls Bumboo useless, and decides to sell him off because he is of no use to him. At the crux of losing Bumboo forever, Padma is desperate to find a cure for this when someone unexpected comes and gives her the cure.

## Ricky (2010)

Author: Guido Van Genechten

Illustrator: Guido Van Genechten

Publisher: A&A Books Trust

Languages: English, Hindi

Age: 2 to 8 years



*Ricky* is the story of a rabbit whose ear is different from the other rabbits, it hangs down. Everybody makes fun of him.

He tries everything to make it stand up, but it doesn't. He even goes to the doctor to ask about cutting it off. But the doctor offers Ricky some sound advice. Will Ricky accept his individuality? Will he remain sad and lonely always? Will the other rabbits learn to accept him as he is?

## Chuskit goes to school

Author: Padmanabhan

Illustrator: Madhuvanti Anantharajan

Publisher: Pratham Books

Age: 2 to 8 years

*Chuskit goes to school* is about Chuskit who is eager to go to school but cannot because the road to the school is inaccessible for her. A friend Abdu realizes that Chuskit is eager to go to school, he approaches the school headmaster, who agrees to his plan to engage all the school children to contribute in fulfilling her dream. The plan and the effort of the students brings a drastic change in Chuskit's life. The story portrays how a change in infrastructure can increase the access to school for children with special needs.



## A girl, a boy and a kite (2016)

Author: Marjan Keshavarji Azad

Illustrator: Alam Kajeem

Languages: English, Hindi

Publisher: Eklavya

Age: 2 to 8 years



*A girl, a boy and a kite* is a Persian folk tale about a girl, a boy and a kite and a journey they take together. A girl with crutches dreams of flying and a boy and his kite make this dream a reality.

The girl leaves her crutches and flies with the kite. Her mother looks at her with awe as she cleans the crutches her daughter has left behind.

## Anya and Her Baby Brother (2019)

Author: Jerry Pinto

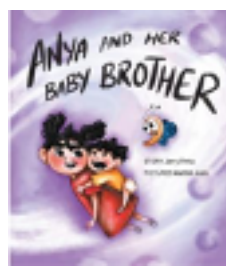
Illustrator: Maithili Joshi

Publisher: Tulika Publishers

Languages:

Age:

*Anya and Her Baby*





**Brother** is about Anya who is fed up of being told that her younger brother is “a special child” and having her parents fuss over him. She feels neglected because he gets all

the attention of the grown-ups in the house. Anya says, “I don’t know what’s special about him. He’s not like other brothers. He always has to go to this doctor and that doctor. And he can’t do this and he can’t do that.” She is taken to a mysterious place called The Stupendous Amazing Fantastic Baby-Spirit Making Unit, which is located inside the Manor of Making. Here she learns that no two babies are alike and that Anya’s family was specially chosen for her baby brother to be born in because he would need more care, and her family would be able to provide it. Anya is thrilled to discover that she was chosen to be his sister because she “had a very big heart and it was full of love.”

### **Machher Jhol (2018)**

Author: Richa Jha

Illustrator: Sumanta Dey

Publisher: Pickle Yolk Books

Age: 5 to 10 years



*Machher Jhol* is a story that tries to move away from presenting the character with a disability as someone who evokes pity. The story is set in Kolkata, and it revolves around a visually impaired boy called Gopu who loves his father dearly and is portrayed as a caregiver for his father rather than as a child who makes additional demands on his ailing father’s time. Disability is not equated with lack. Gopu’s courage is highlighted rather than pity, exclusion and tokenism. Gopu steps out of the house carefully with his walking stick to buy fish, cook it at his grandmother’s place, and return with a surprise meal for his father. This is Gopu’s way of saying, “Baba, I know you’ll be fine the moment you taste this.”

### **Kayu’s World is Round (2019)**

Author: Lavanya Kapahi

Illustrator: Aditee Deore

Publisher: Tulika Publishers

Languages: English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali

Age: 4+

*Kayu’s world is round* is about Kayu, who is a child on the autism spectrum and has a unique way of looking at the world around him. He is excellent at bowling. The other children recognise his strengths, and invite him to play as an equal and not an act of charity. It helps one reflect on how people with disabilities often have to deal with two extremes; if they are not treated in a patronizing manner, they might be put on a pedestal. This tendency to perform othering can be annoying because it reinforces the idea that disability is an aberration from what is ‘normal’. What is needed instead is a respectful acceptance of differences.

### **The Bookworm (2010)**

Author: Lavanya R.N.

Illustrator: Shilo Shiv Suleman

Publisher: Karadi Tales

Age: 7 to 9 years



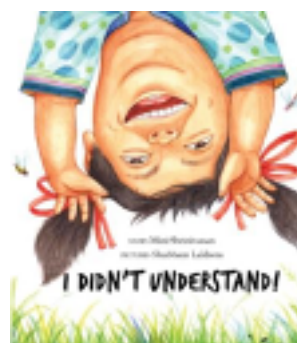
*The Bookworm* is about a boy called Sesha who is bullied because he stutters. Children imitate him, mock him and laugh at him. But when he and others recognize his talents, attitudes change.

Sesha is good at drawing and other children in his class want to learn from him. They are also impressed with the knowledge he has gained from reading books in the school library, so they seek his help to pick out books for themselves. The book raises a pertinent question - whether children with disabilities can expect to be treated with dignity only if they excel at something? Is that fair?

### **I Didn’t Understand! (2018)**

Author: Mini Shrinivasan

Illustrator: Shubham Lakhera



Publisher :Tulika Publishers

Languages: English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada,



Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali

Age: 5+

*I Didn't Understand* is a book about Manna, a child with Down's syndrome subjected to bullying by her peers. The fact that her school has a 'special room' and a 'special teacher' for 'children with special needs' does nothing to prevent other students from sticking out their feet to make her fall or from throwing sand in her food. Manna is portrayed as an innocent child who does not understand why her peers do these things and does not hold any grudges. Her kindness even towards those who harm her melts their heart and prompts them to make amends. The question is why are children with disabilities portrayed as guileless and benevolent. They may be liked because of these qualities but this kind of portrayal seems to cover the anger, pain, and the repeated rejection they experience from not only from their peers at school but also their parents, teachers, siblings and relatives.

**I have a sister. My sister is Deaf (2001)** First published in 1977

Author: Jeane Whitehouse Peterson

Illustrator: Deborah Kogan Ray (adapted by Avinash Desphande)

Publisher: Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti. (Indian version)

Languages: English, Hindi

Age: 8 to 10 years



*I have a sister. My sister is Deaf* is a book about a young girl who has a sister who is hearing impaired since infancy and how she deals with that fact. In fact, she can hardly hear but can do various kinds of work. She cannot hear the

telephone ring and sleeps through an enormous storm. Her various struggles are depicted through a series of pencil drawings in a picture book format. The story focuses on the outward struggles of the sister and how the young girl relates to her sister.