



HELPING HANDS

Overcoming learning difficulties

DPS-Prerna's programme provides education that will help students overcome learning difficulties, says VARUN SONI

Fourteen-year old Brahmjot Singh used to fail miserably in class. His parents then admitted him to DPS Prerna, a special school for children with learning disabilities, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. Here, Brahmjot was detected with dyslexia, a serious learning difficulty, and in the next three years, he not only did much better but achieved a rare feat as well - he invented hydrogen fuel. Hearing about this, the Spanish Embassy in India got in touch with Brahmjot and asked him to demonstrate his invention. Today, the 17-year-old has signed a lifelong contract with the Spanish government to be part of a research team trying to establish hydrogen as the fuel of the future.

Brahmjot is an Indian in the same league as Thomas Alva Edison, Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill, Whoopie Goldberg, Tom Cruise, Sylvester Stallone and Walt Disney. They all suffer from dyslexia but braved the odds to be achievers in their own right.

Dyslexia is a difficulty in learning to read, speak or write. Research shows that 25 per cent of Asian children suffer from dyslexia. In India, an estimated 30 million children are known to be dyslexic. It is more prevalent among boys than girls with the ratio being approximately 4:1. However, today there is more awareness about the learning problem and associations have been formed in various cities and states. Parents and teachers have been sensitised as well

and the CBSE board gives dyslexic students a number of concessions.

But, is that all that needs to be done for dyslexic students? No. What is needed is a wholesome solution. DPS-Prerna, run on the campus of Delhi Public School (DPS) in Ahmedabad, provides this.

Says Manjula Pooja Shroff, Chairperson, Calorex Foundation, the company that promotes the school, "The objective is to provide education that will help dyslexic students overcome their difficulties and develop into well-balanced personalities. The school, which follows the National Open School system, has classes from III-XII."

The process of identifying a dyslexic student starts with a referral made by the class teacher. A psychologist assesses the child to find out whether he/she has an average or above average IQ or whether he/she is a slow

learner. A psycho-educational test is performed to identify whether the child has learning difficulties or not. If yes, the psychologist assesses how far the child is lagging behind in areas like reading, writing, Maths, comprehension, memory etc. The final check-up is done by a pediatric neurologist.

After a child is detected with dyslexia, weekly lesson plans are prepared for him according to his/her difficulties. "Called the Individualised Educational Programme (IEP), the customised learning package involves multi-sensoring techniques, field trips, hands-on activities, alternative assessment procedures and co-curricular activities," says Shroff. And if Singh's example is any inspiration, here is a solution for your dyslexic child! ■

For further information contact 02717-234808



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