

Helping kids with learning disabilities

ADYSLEXIC doesn't have it easy, and though there are some like Tom Cruise, Walt Disney, Sylvester Stallone, Whoopie Goldberg and Albert Einstein who have made it big, the going isn't smooth for those diagnosed with this learning disability.

According to experts, dyslexia is a neurological disorder that interferes with a person's ability to store or produce information, therefore creating a 'gap' between one's ability and performance. It can affect one's ability to read, write, speak and compute. Individuals with learning disabilities are of average or above average intelligence and not slow learners or mentally challenged. Learning difficulty is not a disease. Therefore, there is no medical treatment for this problem. It is not 'curable' but individuals can learn to compensate for and even overcome the areas of weakness through special education.

And working in the area of identifying and helping children with learning disabilities, the Calorex Foundation is doing good work in Ahmedabad. The good news, however, is that the Foundation is now engaged in talks for extending its services to students in the Capital.

"In India a lot of children with dyslexia go unnoticed and they suffer due to the various pressures put

come to us with learning disabilities but have caught up and done very well," says the chairperson of the Calorex Foundation, Manjula Pooja Shroff.

"Another thing that has come to our notice is the fact that parents often come to us when things have gone out of hand. Also, talks are on to extend a helping hand to students in the Capital, where there are not many institutions dealing with this problem. We have to get the message across that children with dyslexia have to be identified well in time and that they need to be given help as soon as possible," adds Manjula.

In Delhi last week talking about the special needs of those with dyslexia, Manjula said: "We have to understand that people with this disability have huge potential and need to be taught the 'routine' in an interesting manner so that they can understand and retain the information provided to them. We have tied up with some schools to help children but there is clearly a need to do a lot more."

Pointing to how students with disability have shaped-up, Manjula quotes an example of a student from Ahmedabad who has managed to develop an efficient and cheap alternative fuel development method. "The inventor Brahmajyoti Singh (17), is a brilliant student,



Manjula Pooja Shroff

on them. Their difficulties are not understood and the families often cannot understand why an otherwise bright child does not score well. That is where we come in. Our programme starts with first helping the teacher identify children who need help and then talk to the parents about getting help. We have examples of children who have

who suffers from dyslexia and has managed a feat that is likely to create a revolution, since the device is most efficient. The message that we want to give out is that students should be helped well in time," said Manjula.

By Bindu Shajan
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