

# Let the stars shine through dyslexia

## History of LD in Maharashtra

**1987** SNTD College starts BED (special education) course; special educators for remediation

**1992** Parent groups start lobbying for recognition of SpLD so that these children continue education in regular schools

**1995** Maharashtra Dyslexia Association started by parents of SpLD

**1996** LD clinic at LTMG Hospital started by Dr Madhuri Kulkarni

**1996** Govt of Maharashtra issues GR in India, which grants provisions for 9 and 10 standard students

**1999** ICSE and CBSE boards also grant provisions

**2000** Provisions extended from classes 1 to 12

**2003** Provisions extended to college courses, seats reserved for SpLD students in physical handicapped category in colleges including professional courses

Courtesy TISLDF

## What is LD?

**Specific Learning Disability (SpLD)** is a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following:

- Oral expression
- Listening comprehension
- Written expression

Samarpita Mukherjee looks into the world of this disability which affects a child's ability to read, write or calculate

It begins with play schools, goes on to interviews for admission to kindergartens and school, and then comes tests and examinations — these are the stepping stones in the lives of today's parents and children, as was beautifully depicted in Aamir Khan's film, Taare Zameen Par. The pressure is on from the day the children are born and life seems to leap from one examination to the other. It's not enough that children merely achieve academically; they have to be all-rounders too. So we see harassed mothers and fathers ferrying their children to swimming lessons, art class, piano lessons, pottery classes, and more. Yet, you have children that just don't seem to fall into line — like the boy who is an excellent tennis player, but has no interest in schoolwork. Or the girl who does brilliantly in written examinations, but miserably in oral presentations. Or the child that excels at creative writing, but cannot seem to add two numbers together. Given this scenario, parents are always looking for ways by which

## Special schools

### Sols Arc

Address: 121 Aram Nagar II, Versova, Andheri (W).

Call 26350833 or 26350834.

Email: solsarc@rediffmail.com.

Website: www.solsarc.org.

### Child Reach School

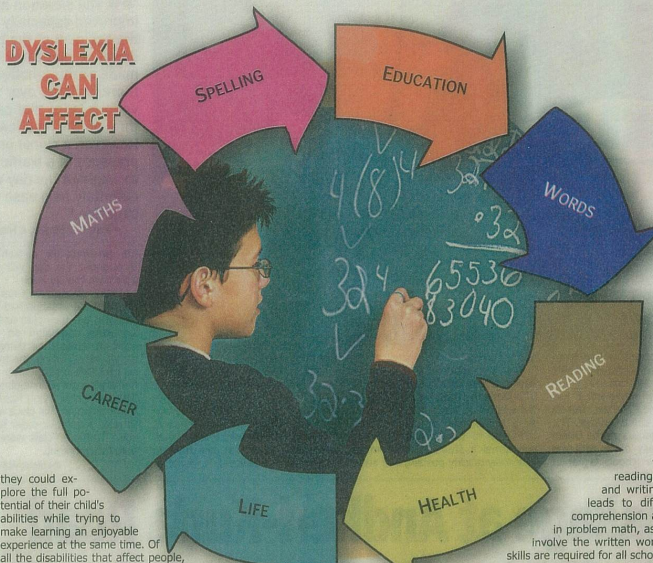
Address: BMC Building 2nd Floor, Tank Lane, Near Akbar Ali, Santacruz (W).

Call 9869159851.

### Infant Ssy Programme

Address: c/o Mets Rishikul Vidyalyaya 2nd Floor, Bandra Reclamation.

**DYSLEXIA CAN AFFECT**



Graphic: Yogesh Jain

they could explore the full potential of their child's abilities while trying to make learning an enjoyable experience at the same time. Of all the disabilities that affect people, one of the least known about is learning disability (LD) or dyslexia which is a not-so-prominent handicap that is purely academic. A child who suffers from learning disability may have problems in reading, writing or maths. "My son couldn't wear his socks properly till he was around six. He just couldn't distinguish between the right side and the left. The same was with wearing shoes. In school,

and I have been very close since childhood and I know what I struggle it used to be. Teachers would keep comparing his performance in school with mine. Abhinav was never a naughty child, he was thoughtful and caring. It wasn't like he was one of those intentionally inattentive children. Back then, none of his

reading, spelling and writing; which leads to difficulty in comprehension as well as in problem math, as they too involve the written word. These skills are required for all schoolwork so it was no wonder that he was having trouble coping. His undiagnosed learning disability led his peers to reject him because he did not do well in class. His parents and teachers did not understand his difficulty and labelled him lazy. In a class of 40 children, the teacher could not give him the extra attention he needed. Gradually, he was relegated to the backbench, which was self-defeating as he

## The doctor suggests

Dr Chaitail Desai, child specialist gives the following tips to Abhinav's parents and others who face the same problem

■ There are no medicines available to increase the memory. Non-allopathic medicines which claim to increase memory have never had any clinical trials. If your child has got learning disability and its best that we should try to see whether any change in the way we teach him could help. Try talking to his teacher or his educational psychologist, if he has one.

■ Your child may be a slow learner i.e. he may be having beginnings of dyslexia which makes him slow at writing. It is also possible that he requires more practice with speed. Try and give him dictation at home so he builds up speed. Don't worry about his slow eating, as long as he finishes off his meals.

## Counsellors

### Dr Syeda Rukhsheda

Call 26361934, 9819700480 or 26391696.

Address: Bungalow 9, Sahil Sheffield Towers, 2nd Cross Road, Lokhandwala, Andheri (W).

### Special Educator

Contact person: Simmi Hejmadi.

Call 26788983 and 9324663258

Address: C/410 Bhalraj Chs, Veera Desai Road, Andheri (W).

### Dr Sharmila Shetty Banwat

Call 26332487 or 9820333069.

Address: 19/104 Near Oshiwara Police Station, Lokhandwala, Behind Tarapore Gardens, Andheri (W).

