

# Mentally challenged students want adult writer for board exam

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**Mumbai:** Students with mental challenges, like retardation, taking the state board exams (SSC/HSC) must be provided adult writers, given the option to drop a language and allowed to use calculators. These are some of the demands that came up during a discussion held at SNDT Women's University, Juhu, on Saturday to draft a list of concessions for students with mental retardation.

Sol's ARC, a learning centre for special children, hosted the discussion with experts from the field of special education.

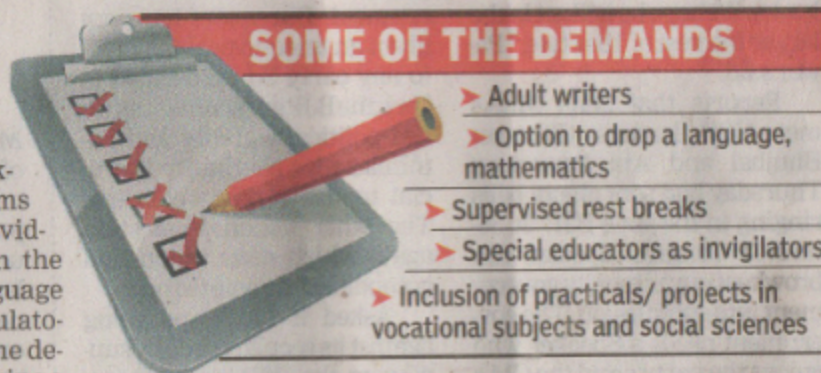
Currently, the board allows such students a few concessions like 20 extra minutes per hour, an exam

centre close to home and provision for a writer to those with an intelligence quotient of less than 90. Students with autism, visual or hearing impairment, cerebral palsy and learning disability are allowed to drop a language, select a lower level of mathematics, etc.

Sonali Saini, chairperson, Sol's ARC, said, "Students with mental retardation do not get the

concessions they need and many drop out and switch to National Institute of Open Schooling which has a vast syllabus putting students at a huge loss."

The list of demands includes providing adult writers, option of dropping a language and opting for a lower grade of mathematics, usage of a calculator, provision for oral assessment and a large pool of vocational subjects to



choose from.

The group also discussed the need for an option to appear for a few subjects each year and get a consolidated mark sheet.

"Students and parents also struggle to get a certification from hospitals [for the retardation] and then fight to get the board to give concessions," said Dr Harish Shetty, psychiatrist.

Former MP Priya Dutt is also a participant of the drafting process. "There is a need to draft a point-to-point set of demands and leave no space for ambiguity so that the process is streamlined and uniform," said Dutt.

Once drafted, the list of demands will be circulated among experts and suggestions will be discussed with officials of the education department.