

Training boost for special educators

Equipped To Deal With All Kinds Of Disabilities

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New Delhi: Dharmendar Kumar, a special educator working in a Delhi government school, specialises in dealing with children with visual impairment. However, he says he can now also take care of children with learning disabilities and mental retardation. This has been made possible because of the cross-disability training provided by the Directorate of Education to equip special educators to handle children with all kinds of disabilities.

Inclusive education is now an important aspect in all schools. When the special edu-

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cators were first posted, they faced many problems. The schools had children with varied disabilities, so it was not possible for one special educator to implement Individualised Education Plan (IEP) for all.

“When this problem was highlighted at the district level, I started holding monthly meetings where special educators gave presentations on other disabilities, apart from the ones they specialised in. However, when special educators from across schools raised this problem, the inclusive education branch took over this initiative,” said Stuti Gaur, special educator coordinator in Southeast district.

There are 10 NGOs, including Tamanna, Amar Jyoti, Blind Relief Association and

Orkids, with expertise in different disabilities who are imparting the training. The process started in 2017 and it has now started showing results.

Kumar, who was trained a few months ago, said, “My training lasted five days in which I was taught about identifying children with learning disabilities, conducting their assessment and to make a comprehensive programme for their development.” He caters to 10 children in his school. He is a guest teacher with five years’ experience.

“Though there are many constraints considering the large number of students in government schools, the initiative has helped the children academically. We were also taught the importance of involving other teachers and the principals so that the schools can be truly inclusive,” said another special educator.

Disability activists said that such a step was necessary, though the government schools still do not have an adequate number of special educators. Earlier, Delhi government was pulled up by a court over 1,500 vacancies in schools.

“Just training special educators is not enough. It is also important to sensitise the heads of the schools because if they are not open then a special educator won’t be able to perform his task. There is also a need to provide training in newer disabilities like autism and dyslexia,” said Satendra Singh, disabled rights activist and teacher at University College of Medical Sciences.