

Concert for awareness of autism today

From Our Staff Reporter

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With a view to building up an effective service system for people affected by autism and to promote greater public awareness about the enigmatic mental disability, Action for Autism — a voluntary organisation of parents and professionals — has organised a concert in the Capital tomorrow.

Local groups "Just Us" and "Indian Ocean" will give the concert for awareness of autism. The venue is the Farmhouse Complex at Qutab from 7 p.m. A highlight of the evening's programme would be the participation of children suffering from autism.

It is estimated that one out of every 500 babies are born autistic, but the symptoms appear during the first three years of growing. Of the total number of children affected by autism, 80 per cent are reported to be males.

Though there are several causes of autism, the largely common symptoms are lack of communication skills, inability for social interaction and uneven skill development. A common example cited by medical practitioners is that a six-year-old with autism may be a computer wizard but be unable to recount what he ate for breakfast.

The AFA has been trying to organise timely help for autistic patients by raising awareness among the people. So far, the organisation has set up a school — Open Door — for children with autism, publish a newsletter "Autism Network" for dissemination of information and also launched counselling and training services for parents, professionals and students of psychology. Tomorrow's concert is one such step towards attaining society's support for assisting autistic patients.