

Workshop for parents of autistic children

By A Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: Satish Bhandari's seven-year-old son cannot communicate. He throws tantrums, flaps his arms, is scared of sharp noises and fights shy of meeting people. Yet Mr Bhandari understands. Drawing his son out from his autistic world is now one of his principal aims in life.

An ongoing three-day workshop for parents of autistic children, organised by Action For Autism, seeks to provide them a wider forum for interaction, and train them.

Like Mr Bhandari, about 45 parents of autistic children have assembled in the Capital to attend the workshop, which will not only help them understand their children better but also acquire skills to deal with them. As Mr Bhandari say, it is encouraging to know how other people are coping with such situations.

In the three or four groups that were formed to facilitate practical discussions on Thursday, the scene

was unusual. Leaving aside their initial indignation of "this cannot happen to me", parents had a volley of questions for volunteers.

A parent wanted to know whether her child would ever learn to say "thank you or excuse me". Another queried how long it would take her child to distinguish between objects. The answers were positive and with a common underlying strain — be patient and do not give up.