

## Hope for Autism

**D**O children with autism stand a chance? They certainly do, says Hope for Autism, the eponymous organisation consisting parents of autism-afflicted children. It was formed in 1998 after Merry Baruah, chairperson of the Delhi-based Action for Autism, spoke at a workshop in Calcutta. Parents of about 40 autistic children who attended the workshop were struck by Baruah's optimism and cheerfulness, despite being the mother of an autistic child herself. The workshop over, they took a decision to form a parents' body which would meet once a month and share their problems.

Now almost two years old, Hope for Autism has come a long way since its fledgling days. Besides spreading awareness about autism, a rare and complicated malady in which the sufferer has difficulties in communicating, the body provides a forum for interaction among the families and counselling for parents who feel secure, knowing that there is a support system to fall back on, if need be.