

# Rs 100 cr corpus lies unused with autism trust

Only 0.06 per cent spent on autistic people, court hearing PIL told

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**A**NATIONAL Trust with a corpus of over Rs 100 crore for the welfare of those suffering from autism, cerebral palsy and mental and multiple retardation spends only 0.06 per cent of its annual budget on autistic people.

This came to light during the hearing of a PIL filed by the parent of an autistic child in Delhi High Court yesterday.

On hearing this, a two-member division bench comprising Justices M K Sharma and Reva Khetrapal ordered the trust to submit details of how it has spent its money since its inception. There are about 20,000 autistic children in Delhi alone.

The bench was perturbed by "the stand of the petitioner (Shobhna Takkiar) before us that despite a grant being given by the Centre, people with autism are not getting any benefit".

Counsel for the petitioner told the judges that as per the trust's own balance sheet, just 0.06 per cent of the outlay is spent on the autistic.

An irked Justice Sharma sought to know how many organisations the trust has funded and the number of beneficiaries. "Your purpose should be to expand your reach to people who are in need rather than just a limited few," he said.

The bench further noted

## WHAT IS AUTISM

THE word "autism" was coined by Leo Kanner to describe a disorder in children showing marked self-absorption and aloofness, resulting in severe social and behavioural problems.

A brain disorder known as the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) begins in early childhood and persists through adulthood. This includes a group of disorders that broadly affects three crucial areas of development: communication, social interaction and creative or imaginative play.

how the corpus fund which is provided to the trust is released to NGOs who are working with the autistic.

The trust's counsel informed the judges that a few Delhi organisations like Action for Autism and Tamanna are educating and rehabilitating autistic children.

In response, the bench sought details about how many children have benefited. "What are the funds given for, how many children are being given free education?" the judges asked.

The court ordered that the trust would have to submit details within four weeks even as it posted the matter for a July 10 hearing.