

Brochure published on 29.10.2020

Call to Action Project

“Mental Health for All---Greater Investment and Greater Access”

World Mental Health Day2020

Celebrated by :

**SEVAC Mental Health Facility &
SEVAC Clubhouse of India**



Supported By :



Convener & Moderator



Project Coordinator



INDEX

- *Preface*
Dr. Tapas Kumar Ray
- *Message from Dr Ingrid Daniels*
- *Message from Jack Yatsko*
- *Message from Deborah Wan*
- *Mental Health and Human Rights in India*
Mr. Surajit Dey
- *Column of the Director of the SEVAC Clubhouse of India,*
Dr. Prativa Sengupta
- *Pioneering initiatives of SEVAC in celebrating Mental Health Day*
in India, Dr. Arnab Banerjee
- *Mental health – greater investment - greater access*
Dr. Shyamal Chakraborty
- *Health for all, Dr. Amarnath Mallick*
- *Mental Health: a layman’s point of view,*
Prof. Mrs. Krishna Bhattacharya
- *Sharing - Ms. Rekha Aththidiye*
- *Mental Health Scenario in Bangladesh---a glimpse*
Hosne Ara Begum
- *Delhi Declaration on Mental Health*

Preface

Dr. Tapas Kumar Ray
Founder Secretary
SEVAC Clubhouse of India &
SEVAC Mental Health Facility
Moderator of the Programme



At the outset most humbly I would like to mention that this E-Brochure does not have any academic flavor. Rather it is the symbol of togetherness and steadfast determination of likeminded mental health advocates for furthering the mental health movement across the world.

The spirit of this movement has already been set by the WFMH in the theme of its World Mental Health Day 2020....”Mental Health for All---Greater Investment & Greater Access”.

Over the period of last three decades SEVAC Mental Health Facility & SEVAC Clubhouse of India has been working relentlessly with the same ethos and trying to cater to the needs of the persons with mental illness putting emphasis on the promotion and protection of their human rights . But it is the toughest challenge to ensure even a ‘minimal investment’ for facilitating the access of the persons with mental illness to necessary service delivery system.

So we realize how important it is to take forward the theme of the World Mental Health Day 2020 to bring about a positive change in the Global Mental Health Scenario.

I deem it a matter of privilege to mention that SEVAC is an old voting member association of the WFMH and SEVAC Clubhouse of India is the first and only accredited Clubhouse in our Country. We are thankful to WFMH for giving us a chance for being a part of the “Call to Action” project. I am also thankful to all who sent messages and contributed articles to encourage us to publish this brochure.

Before I conclude, I must say that SEVAC Family will never give up its mission and will play the role of committed shoulders to further the mental health movement across the globe.

Dr Ingrid Daniels
President World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH)



Dear Tapas

I trust that you are feeling better today and that all is good. Herewith please find my message:

“The World Federation for Mental Health sends you greetings as we celebrate World Mental Health Day on the 10 October 2020. The theme, Mental Health for All: Greater Investment- Greater Access, is a call to action to ensure increased access to mental health care for everyone, everywhere despite their circumstances. Now more than ever as the COVID-19 pandemic leaves its trail of negative mental health consequence, we call for mass scale investment in mental health. Mental health needs to be prioritised as an urgent emergency response to the pandemic and to address the preexisting mental health deficits and neglect seen over many years. Mental health is an inalienable human right which has significant outcomes on human potential, health outcomes, social factors and productivity. We will not be able to achieve social justice and the sustainable development goals without the mental health investment. We wish to thank SEVAC for their tireless commitment to ensure that everyone, everywhere has access to mental health. Your footprint in mental health investment has been large and unflinching. We wish you great success as you continue to heed the call to ensure mental health access for all.”

Best regards

Ingrid



October 10, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,



In recognition of World Mental Health Day on October 10, 2020, Clubhouse International joins with SEVAC in supporting their programs and events marking this significant day.

Clubhouse International is proud to have a long association with SEVAC Clubhouse as our only accredited Clubhouse in India. The work that Dr. Prativa Sengupta, Dr. Tapas Kumar Ray and others are doing is changing the way the world treats people who have a mental illness.

Please join us in acknowledging the services and supports that SEVAC provides to so many in the community on this very special occasion.

Kind regards,

**Jack Yatsko
Chief Operating Officer**

MESSAGE FROM Ms. Deborah Wan

**Past President, WFMH
Advisory Panel Member
Global Alliance for Mental Health Advocacy**



Greetings from Hong Kong, as the global is facing the pandemic of COVID-19 which affected the population's mental health so in Hong Kong, a recent survey showed that mental well-being index falls below the passing mark of 50 using the WHO-5, 45.12 score in 2020. Moreover, in another larger scale of survey, 71% reported moderate to severe levels of depression. Mental Health is of paramount importance in this year and I echo World Mental Health Day's theme of World Federation for Mental Health : Mental Health for All: Greater Investment Greater Access. I appeal to every country should put greater emphasis on mental health prevention & promotion, treatment and recovery.

Deborah Wan from Hong Kong

Speech of
Mr. Surajit Dey
Registrar Law
National Human Rights Commission, INDIA
At the virtual seminar held on 10.10.2020



“Mental Health and Human Rights in India”.

Good Morning.

It gives me immense pleasure to be here, not only as a participant but as a speaker for this international conference. I believe that talking about mental health; especially in the context of COVID-19, is indeed the need of the hour. The Covid-19 pandemic has generated an unprecedented crisis, putting immense demands on the country's health care system. It is now known as causing a pandemic of mental health, with a variety of psychological concerns and difficulties arising during various periods of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since January there has been a worldwide outbreak of COVID-19, and it was declared as a pandemic. WHO Director- General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus stressed upon the fact that the best defence against any outbreak is a strong health system and COVID-19 is now revealing how fragile many of the world's health systems and services are, thereby forcing countries to make difficult choices on how to best meet the needs of their people.

NHRC has been working in the light of issuing advisories in various domains during the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to give recommendations/ suggestions to the Union/ State Governments and various stakeholders, which include Advisory on Health and Advisory on Mental Health. We have been studying the repercussions of COVID and future response of the same during this entire period of the pandemic. As a representative of the NHRC, I may take this opportunity to reflect on the importance of mental health and human rights, especially in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said that the coronavirus pandemic is a human crisis that is fast becoming a human rights crisis and that people and their rights must be front and centre in a crisis situation like this. He further said that human rights responses can help beat the pandemic by focusing on imperative healthcare for everyone and highlighting who is suffering most, why, and what can be done about it. He very well indicated how the virus affects everyone irrespective of gender, caste, age and how it exposes deep weaknesses in the delivery of public services.

A disaster at the size of the COVID-19 pandemic influences us at the physical level as well as leaves a permanent engraving on our psychological prosperity. The COVID-19 pandemic is ending up being a significant stressor for the vast majority of humankind, including our nation. The underlying spotlight is essentially on the physical outcomes of the disease. In any case, there is developing acknowledgment that the critical psychological well-being outcomes rising out of this fiasco should be tended to. These outcomes could emerge out of the immediate results of contamination, the prohibitive estimates forced to shorten the spread of disease, or the financial effect of the pandemic. The various situations that could lead to mental health issues related to the pandemic include loss of a loved one, loss of a job, being quarantined or in isolation, difficult family dynamics or uncertainty and apprehensions about the future. The most vulnerable people are those who are already suffering from some kind of mental illness or have certain symptoms prior to the pandemic. Studies are already emerging about exacerbation of symptoms in those persons. It is also noticeable that the pandemic situation is becoming a cause for psychological distress leading to symptoms of mental illnesses like Depression, Anxiety, PTSD, Adjustment Disorder, Substance Abuse, and many more. The increase in mental morbidity has already become a cause of concern for the specialists. Studies have indicated that there could be prevalence of a multitude of psychological symptoms like uneasiness, anxiety, low mood, difficulty in sleep, appetite disturbances, as well as severe mental illnesses and substance use and abuse. One in 4 persons may experience symptoms of common mental disorders like depression or anxiety, according to recent surveys. Vulnerability to mental health issues are high for front-line personnel, including Health workers and police, as they are in continuous contact with infected patients, have long working hours and inadequate resources. It is also recognized that Covid-19 could present with neuropsychiatric manifestations and that new psychiatric symptoms can also develop post Covid-19. Therefore, it is extremely crucial to address the pandemic in the context of mitigating its impact on mental health. According to a survey conducted by the Indian Psychiatry Society, reported cases of mental illness in India had risen by 20% within a week of the start of the lockdown (world economic forum). National Mental Health Survey reported that about 10% of adults meet diagnostic criteria for a mental health condition. Depression is one of the leading causes of disability. The Global Burden of Disease study estimated that nearly 200 million people in India have experienced a mental disorder. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds. Poor mental health hinders the ability of a person to achieve their full potential, success at work, and contribute to their society. Disorders such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, to mention a few, can interfere even at the developmental stage and affect the ability of the adult to function in families, jobs, and community. Accompanied to this would be increase in Psychosocial Issues like stigma, discrimination, gender or child related violence, etc.

Though there is progress in some nations, however, persons with mental health problems frequently still suffer significant abuses of human rights in most countries. There is still a huge gap between people needing care and those with access to care. Mr. Dainus Puras from the UN mentioned that despite significant evidence that there cannot be health without mental health, mental health has no equality with physical health in terms of budgeting, education or practise anywhere in the world. In many countries people do not have access to basic mental health care and treatment; there is absence of community care and rehabilitation. The usual care available is in psychiatric establishments which are very often associated with human rights violations in terms of lack of resources, accessibility issues, and lack of clinicians, discrimination, as well as inhuman, degrading treatment and living

conditions for the patients. Patients with mental illnesses are often excluded from community life and denied fundamental rights and are also seen to be discriminated because of their condition in the fields of education and work. As a result, many individuals with mental illnesses live in severe poverty, which in turn affects their ability to receive proper treatment, participate in society and recover from their illness, thus forming a vicious cycle.

In the past times, barbarous and inhuman procedures were followed with people having mental illnesses, which were clearly against the human rights like Electro-convulsive therapy without the use of muscle relaxants and anaesthesia or Sterilization of men or women as a treatment for mental illness or chaining of patients, to name a few. There is an essential and interdependent relationship between mental health and human rights. Human rights violations affect mental health negatively and such coercive mental health practices violate human rights. Having said that, advancement of human rights surely benefits mental health, along with physical and social health.

The most basic human rights challenges to mental health are stigma and discrimination. The WHO (2014) also states that social stigma remains an obstacle to finding and obtaining care for issues related with mental health. The burden of the illness is not enough, it is always charged with 'Labelling' and the whole family, friends, relatives are affected. They may also share the stigma with the patient, which is often known as Associative or Courtesy stigma. Interrupted or limited access to education restricts competitive job prospects for people with psychosocial difficulties and mental health problems which in turn perpetuate social disparity. Discrimination and stereotypes discourage healthy relationships, social interactions and the supportive environment, required for the well-being of each person with regard to school, family, neighbourhood or workplace. Literature suggests that Anti-stigma campaigns or intervention programs could benefit people and the society as it aims to create and increase awareness and understanding towards people with mental illness. However, in low or middle income countries, such programs are not initiated and they spend the least on 'mental health' of the people. Implications of such inadequate attention and expenditure towards mental health include inadequate provision and minimal accessibility of quality mental health services, insufficiently trained and available mental health professionals and inadequate delivery of services that meet human rights standards.

The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 aims to provide mental healthcare and services for persons with mental illness and ensure these persons have the right to live a life with dignity. In the Mental Health Act (MHA) 1987, a human approach to the treatment of mental disorders began with human rights provisions, but without emphasis on issues such as consent. In MHA, 2017, human rights have been given significant importance and include the right to access mental health care, affordable and quality mental health services, equality and non-discrimination, acute care and outpatient and inpatient services, right to a dignified life, protection from cruel treatment, privacy, emergency and ambulance services. A person with mental illness also has the right to confidentiality in respect to his mental health or treatment.

What can be done:

- **Develop and operationalise mental health policies and laws**
- **Prevention programs to combat stigma and discrimination**
- **Raise awareness and advocate for the rights of people with mental illness**
- **Grievance redressal for human right violation – by the patient, caregiver, or anyone who witnesses**
- **Train and sensitise people regarding mental health, especially who deal with humans, including health care workers and staff, police personnel, lawyers and judges who make important decisions concerning the lives of people with mental disabilities**

This unprecedented combination of adversities presents a serious threat to the mental health of entire populations. However, I am positive about presence of some protective factors that are promising to work on the issues and violations of human rights of persons with mental illness. The current pandemic situation offers mental health an opportunity to give attention to innovative forms of care. This is the time when we can focus on promoting awareness that mental health is as important as physical health and that it does not always require medicines and institutionalisation. Psychotherapy and psychological counseling as professions and services have been emerging in this time, and I believe that together we can combat this epidemic as well.

Thank you.

**Column of the Director of the SEVAC
Clubhouse of India
Dr. Prativa Sengupta**



At the very beginning I must admit that it was a big challenge for me to take the responsibility for celebrating the Mental Health Day, 2020 as a partner of the " Call to Action Project" which was sponsored by the World Federation for Mental Health .

This year the theme of the World Mental Health Day was "Mental Health for All, Greater Investment and Greater Access". In fact this is the essence of the movement, which we will have to take forward across the world with unquestionable commitment.

Keeping the said theme in view, if we try to take stock of the overall mental health scenario in our country , we cannot find any bright picture. As for instance the crisis of the SEVAC Clubhouse may be referred to. Unfortunately no resource is available to operate this pioneering facility in a befitting manner to facilitate the greater access of the persons with mental illnesses for their mainstreaming and meaningful rehabilitation. Paradoxically, SEVAC Clubhouse is the only as well as the first accredited Clubhouse in India. This example is enough to reflect the ground reality.

However, to celebrate the mental health day in its proper spirit I held several meetings with our Clubhouse Members to chalk out the guideline of this programme. It was decided that we would plan a month long programme . It was also decided that we would involve some of our likeminded friends from the Indian Subcontinent. Hence Ms. Rekha Aththidiye from Sri Lanka and Hosne Ara Begum from Bangladesh joined us and observed the WFMH Day in their respective fields of work.

Precisely, following the collective decision of the SEVAC Clubhouse Family a multidimensional approach was adopted to spread the theme of the WFMH Day from the community level to sub-continental level . Such as :

1. Our Clubhouse Members organized Awareness Generation Programmes and Cultural Programmes at Community Level to sensitize the people regarding different aspects of

mental health, mental illness, mental illness related stigma and the way to live quality life . Side by side they highlighted the strategy for achieving mental wellness.

2. Intensive attempts were made for motivating the students, teachers and the women and youth groups to spread the theme of the WFMH Day at different strata of the society.

3. Networking with the National Human Rights Commission of India, different forums of the Mental Health Professionals including the Indian Association of Private Psychiatry was developed.

4. Likeminded friends of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh were motivated to join hand with us,

5. We participated in virtual seminars

6. A walk (March) to uphold the theme of the WFMH Day was organized

7 . It was planned to publish an e-brochure .

Now I would like to take the opportunity to convey our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Ingrid Daniels, Jack Yatsko , Surajit Dey, Deborah Wan for their encouragement and support. Side by side I convey my thanks to Anna Sackett Rountree, Anita Brix Lamback and Teri Chadwick who guided me to plan this event in a proper manner.

Before I conclude, I would like to mention that all credits for organizing this event go to our Clubhouse family.

Pioneering initiatives of SEVAC in celebrating Mental Health Day in India

Dr. Arnab Banerjee
President & Chief Psychiatrist
SEVAC Mental Health Facility



It is my pleasure to reminisce the endeavor, which SEVAC undertook to celebrate the World Mental Health Day in India in the capacity of the Voting Member Association of the World Federation for Mental Health.

In early twenties Mr. Preston J Garrison , the then Secretary General of the WFMH requested Dr. Tapas Kumar Ray (the Founder Secretary of SEVAC) to take the initiative to celebrate the World Mental Health Day across India . Consequently, we developed an NGO network under the purview of our ‘Operation Dignity Project’ and started observing the World Mental Health Day in different states of our country. All those programs were also financially sponsored by SEVAC. As a matter of fact during that time the World Mental Health Day was not celebrated in our country, widely. So we made an attempt to spread the theme, importance and significance of the World Mental Health Day at the community level through our network partners.

Thereafter Mrs. Shona Sturgeon, the then President (elect) of the World Federation for Mental Health visited India following the request of Dr. Ray in the year 2004 to celebrate the Mental Health Day in collaboration with SEVAC. Hence a national seminar was organized on 10th October 2004 at the Indian Habitat Centre, New Delhi, in the gracious presence of Justice Late Ranganath Misra (First Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission and Former Chief Justice of India), Justice Late V. S. Malimath (Former Member, NHRC), Mr. P. C. Sharma (the then Member of the National Human Rights Commission) , Prof. Shridhar Sharma and many other eminent Mental Health Professionals, Social Activists and Human Rights Leaders. Shona Stugeron was the Chief Guest of this function. In fact this event may be treated as a landmark initiative in observing Mental Health Day in our country. Now we feel pleasure when we find that over the period of the last few years the World Mental Health Day is being observed with vivacity and enthusiasm at different levels across the country.

Some photographs are being shared herewith regarding the aforementioned landmark initiative.



**Mental health – greater investment - greater access.
Dr. Shyamal Chakraborty.
President-Indian Association of Private Psychiatry.
West Bengal State Branch.
Consultant Neuro Psychiatrist.**



That's the slogan of mental health day this year. Actually mental health and illness are not synonymous. Mental health is implied to any illness - may be Neurological or Cardiological, Gastrointestinal and so on. If you go through the etiology of any illness you will find that psychological factor plays an important role.

Now come what does mental health mean? Better it should be behavioural health. Behavioural health is a predictor of any illness including mental illnesses. Mental illnesses have two parts- Neurological and Behavioural. Psychopharmacology basically takes care of the Neurological part but Behavioural part is to be dealt by non-pharmacological ways like Behaviour therapy, Psychotherapy etc.

It's a great task but we have to achieve this and so greater access in this field is of urgent necessity. Greater access to fight against stigma, greater access to change the outlook of the society including our fellow doctors of other discipline. The term Insane must be abolished from our dictionary. 'Mental' is also needed to be discarded because now it is well established that Neurotransmitters and Neuromodulators have important role in the genesis of Psychiatric illnesses.

Greater investment in the form of Liaison Psychiatry has to be developed. Psychological assessment before any surgery should be made mandatory. If you focus as a behavioural problem and that may manifest to any person – if we do believe this as well as having respect to mentally ill patients and can develop positive Psychiatry that can be the only solution to fight against stigma.

I think that mental ailments like anxiety, obsession, and delusion are present in each person to some degree but when that degree is much more then he or she may not capable to adjust in the society. Each and every individual in his or her lifetime has to face some obstacle that may impair mental health. So we have to fight against our false belief and superstition that is more dangerous even than Corona virus.

Health for all
Dr. Amarnath Mallick
Consultant Psychiatrist
Kothari Medical Centre



Even in pandemic, we are celebrating ‘Mental Health Day’ on 10th October like other years. WHO says ‘Health for all and kindness’. Health includes physical, mental and social wellbeing. Health for all include Transgender and gender diverse persons also.

Socially conscious people and natizen have called on counseling and psychological services for increased attention to social justice with terns gender diverse persons. A number of transgender and gender diverse individuals face risks of mental health problems and sociability often as a result of trans-phobia and gender minority stress. Transgender people experience social discrimination and violence in different sphere of life. Gender diverse individuals are vulnerable to suicide, depression, anxiety and substance abuse.

Basic needs of Transgender and Gender diverse clients are –

Counseling for career and lifestyle development;

Assistance for physical and mental health;

Rehabilitation – individual and community;

Education, Research and group work.

Traditionally in most countries, persons who live outside the gender binary are considered as problem. Their gender does not fit with the boxes that society has fixed and therefore unsafe in expressing their true identity. Unfortunately gender diverse people are likely to struggle with basic needs like Shelter, Food, Education.

Checks are needed with regard basic human rights of transgender and gender diverse people.

Psychological and Psychiatric Associations along with NGOs have to take active participation in counseling and case of transgender persons.

The biggest challenges and goals of mental health professionals are to reduce barriers and providing adequate health care to all transsexual, transgender people. Stigmas and prejudices are barrier and mental health organizations have to overcome such barrier to provide adequate physical and mental health care to transgender to fight for their human rights.

Mental Health: a layman's point of view

Dr. Mrs. Krishna Bhattacharya)
Former Professor & UGC Emeritus Fellow,
Dept. of Linguistics,
University of Calcutta, Kolkata



Prologue

At the outset I must admit that I am neither a psychiatrist nor a psychologist, nor even a general medical practitioner or a social worker dealing with mental patients. Simply as a layman I can say a few words on this issue.

Mental Health vs Physical Health

As it is said mental health refers to emotional and behavioral welfare. Does physical health exist without mental health? It is popularly said: Health is wealth. Here health refers not only to physical health, but mental health as well. Everybody knows about this popular caption that 'no health without mental health'. It is a well-known fact that mind and body are interconnected. Without mental balance body cannot be healthy. Lack of mental balance is reflected in varied physical expressions like depression (showing lack of energy to do anything), restlessness, occasional meaningless talking, talking too much or too little, sleeplessness, eating too much or too little, unusual changes in mood, unnecessary fighting with family members and so on. There is a saying in Sanskrit: *sa jivati mano yasya mananena hi jivati* 'that person could be said to live whose mind is alive'. Mental health is, therefore, very desirable to live a life in its true sense.

Causes of Mental Disbalance

In the scenario of the present day world there are many factors which may cause mild to severe mental stress and tension. For example, hectic daily life, hardship in earning daily livelihood on the part of the lower income group, especially of the daily labourers, economic pressure, tension in family life, consumption of fast food in place of home-baked food, without earlier decision on one's own priorities in life hankering for consumers' goods like smart phones and other gadgets, lack of contact with relatives – even with parents, friends, neighbors and so on. All these contribute to mental anxiety, depression, nervous breakdown and so on causing mental imbalance.

Further, we are not happy with what we get in our life. Even we do not know what we want. Let me recall two lines from Rabindranath Tagore (*Utsarga*, poem no 7): *jaha cai taha bhul kore cai, jaha pai taha cai na*. ‘What we want is wanted by mistake and we what get, we do not want.’ We hanker for many things. Sometimes we desire for *Akashkusum* i.e. ‘an absurd thing’. Similarly, there is an idiom in Bangla like *cand caoya chele/meye* i.e. ‘a boy/girl who longs for some absurd things which cannot be achieved in life.’ Consumerism is the predominant characteristic of the present society. From higher income group to lower income group or from rich to poor – people are running after different consumable amenities.

Thus the way of our leading life in the present day is one factor of many health hazards heading towards mental imbalance. Most of the young people do not pay some attention to what they are supposed to do every day. In most cases we find unawareness of the importance of physical exercises, preference to fast food, over dependence on medicine etc. Most of them think that whatever be their daily life style, they can overcome all health hazards by taking medicine.

In the field of education also everybody wants his/her son or daughter to stand first or obtain very good marks so that he/she can secure a good job. But a few want their children to develop as good human beings with some idea of the value system. Eccentricity and aggressiveness are going to be normal properties of young minds. In most of the cases we want to get success by hook or crook as in Bengali it is said *yena tena prakarena* ‘by any means’.

Though food, health and education are the basic needs of the citizens of a country things in reality are otherwise. The result is unrest, dissatisfaction, lack of mental balance. Again let me quote another sloka *naalpe sukham asti, bhuumaiva sukham* ‘there is no happiness in the finite [small]; happiness is only in the infinite’ [translation by Swami Lokeswarananda]. It is true; there is no place of philosophy here. I want to mean that in most cases we do not know what should be the priorities in our life.

Again, in the context of the present pandemic situation especially, social distancing prescribed by the doctors though does, in fact, mean physical distancing, confuses people leading to a distance from the Corona-stricken patients and this social stigma has resulted in great social and mental problems.

Remedies

In view of the above as a common man I think importance should be given to the measures like sharing of mental stresses with others which will booster affected persons' mental strength, balanced diet, Yoga exercises, Praanayaam and meditation as probable interventions. In fact, our motto should be *sarve bhavantu sukhinah, sarve santu niraamayaah*. 'May all be happy, may all be free from ailments, both physical as well as mental'.

Finally, let me mention one oft-quoted sloka from Srimad Bhagavad Geeta which says:

*dukkheshv anudvigna-manah sukheshu vigata-sprihah/
viita-raaga bhayakrodhah sthita-dhiir munir-uchyate*// (Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, verse 56)

'He whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after pleasures, and is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a sage of steady wisdom.' (Translated by Swami Sivananda)

It is obvious that a common man cannot be a *Muni* 'sage' with all the virtues as described above. Moreover, in practical life as we experience each and every person has more or less some sort of eccentricity. Yet it is also our life experience that sometimes we may find few humans possessing *sthita dhii* that is, 'steady wisdom' or 'steady mental balance'. Should we not follow them?

**Ms. Rekha Aththidiye
Clinical Psychologist.**



“Mental health” has rapidly gained prominence and acceptance globally as being fundamental to overall health. The World Health Organization has ratified its importance through the inclusion of mental health within the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals to promote universal wellbeing across the lifespan.

The increased prevalence of depression, anxiety, stress and suicide contributes towards the global disease burden and economic and social vulnerabilities. The recent COVID 19 pandemic has underscored the importance of mental, physical and behavioural factors in overall wellbeing. While existing systems address these issues at a multi-sectoral level, there is much to do towards achieving proposed global development milestones.

Optimum health does not merely constitute providing medical assistance, therapeutic interventions or the absence of disease. Instead, it encapsulates healthy thoughts and emotions, social connections that promote overall wellbeing.

SEVAC Clubhouse stands as a beacon to this ethos in the South Asian region. As a psychological rehabilitation center in Kolkata, SEVAC works tirelessly to educate on mental health issues and rights, and offers a range of services geared towards optimizing mental health wellbeing.

As they forge ahead, I wish them strength and impetus to continue their invaluable work in the field of mental health.

Mental Health Scenario in Bangladesh---a glimpse

Hosne Ara Begum



It is my pleasure to announce that on behalf of ‘Blind Education and Rehabilitation Development Organization (BERDO)’ of Bangladesh, I organized and moderated a workshop on 13th October, 2020 to observe the International Mental Health Day being inspired and encouraged by SEVAC Clubhouse of India.

All the staffs of BERDO, Executive Committee Members, some of the well wisher of BERDO attended the workshop . Chairperson of BERDO Delivered inaugural address.

It was decided that to talk about “ Mental Health for All” first we need to determine what sorts of mental health problems are commonly ignored and cause unspeakable sufferings of individuals. Hence a detailed discussion took place on correlation between general health and mental health putting emphasis on: (1) Anxiety (2) Stress(3) Depression (4) Frustration (5) Summarization etc.

Participants also talked about misconception and stigmatization regarding severe mental illnesses like Schizophrenia , Bipolar Disorder , Severe Depression etc. and highlighted the unscientific measures, which the Faith Healers adopt to cure such patients . The participants opined that such practice should be stopped because it often makes the patients chronically ill.

The participants of the workshop unanimously agreed that the “Greater Investment” is immediately required for improving the appalling Mental Health Care Delivery System in Bangladesh in order to facilitate “ Greater Accesses” of the Persons with mental illness/ mental health problem to psychological and psychiatric care.

It was also mentioned that in Bangladesh there is only one Government hospital in Dhaka. where counselor, therapist, clinical psychologist and and psychiatrists jointly provide necessary care and treatment to the persons who are suffering from mental illness and mental health problems. . Beside this some clinical psychologists do private practice in Dhaka. Hence the participants of the workshop expressed their deep concern for not having adequate qualified mental health professionals in the rest of the country to bring succor to the persons with mental illness.

Delhi Declaration on Mental Health-2013

Dr. Tapas Kumar Ray

Convener

It is evident the Training in Psychiatry in India is unquestionably of very high standard . As a consequence a large number of Indian Psychiatrists have been working across the world including USA, U.K and Australia with high reputation and dignity. It is a paradox that the number of Indian Psychiatrists working abroad is much higher than the Indian Psychiatrists working in their mother land. So we have every right to be boast of the grand success of them

According to the ‘pen and paper arrangements’ the existing Mental Health Scenario of India certainly deserves appreciations. Because we have ‘Mental Health Care Act -2017’ and ‘Mental Health Policy’ in our hand to bring succor to all who need mental health care. In addition to this, the State has made lofty commitments for the development of the mental health care delivery infrastructure of our country.

But if we take stock of the ground reality, we find that in our country the persons with mental illness are one of the most vulnerable groups from the view point of gross human rights violations . So from the very beginning of our journey SEVAC emphasized on the uninterrupted treatment, meaningful rehabilitation and human right promotion of the persons with mental illness. We also shared our observations with the National Human Rights Commission of India and implemented a host of projects with their support.

In the year 2013 we raised our voice for recognizing all mental health issues as core human rights. On this topic we organized a national seminar on 10th February 2013 with the support of European Union and National Human Rights Commission of India. From the said seminar the Delhi Declaration on Mental health was made. The said declaration is attached herewith.

With full responsibility I would like to say that the aforementioned Declaration is still very much pertinent in India from the view point of the WFMH Day call---“ Mental Health for All—Greater Investment and Greater Access”. So now let us have a look at the same.

DELHI DECLARATION ON MENTAL HEALTH

For recognizing All Mental Health Issues as Human Rights issues

Made from the

National Seminar on

Mental Health & Human Rights

Organized By

SEVAC

(A Mental Health and Human Rights Organization)

135 A, Vivekananda Sarani, Thakurpukur

Kolkata- 700063 (India)

Under the auspices of : Operation Commitment Project

Supported by : European Union

Venue: India International Centre

Dated: 10th February, 2013

Whereas the National Seminar on Mental Health & Human Rights was organised by SEVAC on 10th February, 2013 at India International Centre, New Delhi and whereas the seminar was inaugurated by **Justice Shri. K.G. Balakrishnan**, former Chief Justice of India and Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission and presided over by **Dr. Justice V.S. Malimath**, Chairman, Law Commission of Karnataka & Former Chief Justice of Karanataka and Kerela High Courts, and graced by **Justice Shri Chittatosh Mookjee**, First Chairperson of the W. B. Human Rights Commission & Former Chief Justice of Calcutta & Bombay High Courts, **Dr. G.V.G Krishnamurty**, former Election Commissioner of India, **Dr. Hans Van Vliet**, Head of Development Cooperation of European Delegation to India, **Dr. Rakesh Chadda**, President, Indian Association for Social Psychiatry & Prof. Dept. of Psychiatry, AIIMS, New Delhi, **Dr. Arnab Banerjee**, President, Indian Psychiatric Society, West Bengal Branch and Hony. President, SEVAC, **Shri J. S. Kochher** Jt. Secretary (Trg), NHRC, **Shri A. K. Parashar**, Joint Registrar and Focal Point(Human Rights Defenders), NHRC **Shri Shankar Sen**, **Shri Ashok Chakravorty**, **Dr. Prativa Sengupta**, Chief Psychologist of SEVAC, **Ms. Renuka Srinivasan**, Programme Manager, Delegation of the European Union to India and **Dr. Tapas Kumar Ray**, Founder Secretary, SEVAC and Convener of the Seminar, and whereas a large number of delegates participated in the Seminar among whom were NGO officials, Social Activists, Psychiatrists, Clinical Psychologists, Government Officers (both serving and retired) who after due deliberations made the following recommendations which were adopted at the seminar:

→ **The Seminar noted with concern that by 2020** (according to a WHO projection) mental illness , depression in particular, will be a major cause for worry, that mental illness affects health, freedom, security and wellbeing of

individuals, families, entire communities and of the society and nation, that it is not the concern of one Ministry or Deptt. or Agency but of the whole nation and

- therefore, it resolved to urge all stake holders – State and private agencies to take necessary steps to provide adequate and effective mental health care and facilities to the affected people in all parts of India. The measures needed to grapple with and overcome the increasing incidence of mental illness are many such as (a) adequate physical infrastructure (b) creation of cadres of professionals and care givers who are kind, compassionate and committed to promote, protect and preserve human life in the face of multiple vicissitudes (c) adequate budget provision and (d) according high priority to mental health within the health sector.
- **The seminar noted with deep concern the lack of serious concern** of the State to adopt a 'time bound policy' in order to combat the enormity of the aforementioned problem
- **The seminar noted with great concern** the gross inadequacy of mental health care facilities in the country on account of which quality of life of a large number of mentally ill persons is reduced to a subhuman state even after the sixty six years of independence
- **The seminar noted with deep concern** the unspeakable suffering and inhuman treatment meted out to mentally ill persons who are housed in different ill equipped mental hospitals across the country.
- **The seminar noted with concern** the deplorable conditions of the homeless mentally ill persons who wander everywhere in the country in naked or half-naked condition and try to satiate their hunger by collecting food stuff from the garbage bins
- **The seminar noted with deep concern** the presence of a large number of persons with mental illness languishing in different 'namesake custodial institution' / prisons of the country
- **The seminar noted with deep concern** the inhuman torture of a large number of persons with mental illness languishing in different shrines across the country in the name of faith healing
- **The seminar noted with deep concern** that the persons with mental illness are the easy prey to Domestic Violence in their respective family setup and the overall attitude of the society towards them being generally 'unfriendly' which comes in the way of their mainstreaming and psychosocial rehabilitation.

→ **The seminar also noted with deep concern** that due to total absence of any 'Support System' the 'Caregivers' of the persons with mental illness are rendered helpless to do their best to them.

In view of above the seminar unequivocally concludes that in our country the persons with mental illness are one of the most vulnerable groups from the viewpoint of human rights violations. **Hence the seminar unanimously resolves that 'All Mental Health Issues' should be recognized and addressed as 'Core Human Rights Issues'** needing meaningful attention.

The seminar urges National Human Rights Commission and all Human Rights Institutions, Civil Society and Organizations concerned about the Human Rights of different vulnerable groups to take appropriate measures so that the government both at the central and state level

- (i) recognize all Mental Health Issues as Core Human Rights Issues*
- (ii) adopt time bound policies as also planned and coordinated measures*
- (iii) make adequate budgetary allotments for improving the deplorable mental health scenario of the country within a set deadline.*

The seminar urges the Government of India and all the State Governments to make generous grants to support the activities of all the NGOs who are engaged in serving the cause of the persons with mental illness for which considerable fund are required particularly for the treatment of outpatients and inpatients and for their meaningful rehabilitation

The seminar urges the Judiciary to be more proactive and sensitive to the plights of the persons with mental illness and take necessary measures to motivate the government not to ignore the plights of the persons with mental illness.

The seminar urges all international and national donor agencies and corporate houses to generously support the cause of the persons with mental illness.

The seminar urges all the media and communication agencies to crusade against the mental illness related myths and taboos which subject the mentally ill people lot of humiliation, indignity, persecution and discrimination.

The seminar urges all NGOs and Civil Society Organizations working for the cause of mankind to play a proactive role to sensitize the society about the fact that most of the persons with mental illness can get cured and can lead a meaningful life if they are treated properly.

The seminar urges National Human Rights Commission to request the Government of India to collect and furnish information free of cost in Booklet form containing about the details of facilities available for treatment of mentally-ill patients, (male/female) viz. names of institutions of Government & State Government, names of NGOs, names of Doctors including their qualifications and fees, medicines and all other facilities available etc.

The seminar resolves to record its profound appreciation of the European Union for extending their generous support to SEVAC, which has been working relentlessly for the cause of the persons with mental illness with emphasis on their uninterrupted treatment, rehabilitation and human rights promotion for last two decades.

Dr. Justice V. S. Malimath
Chairman, Law Commission of Karnataka
Former Member, NHRC
Former Chief Justice of Karnataka & Kerala
High Court

Shri G. V. G Krishnamurthy
Former Election Commission

Shri Shankar Sen
Former Director General, National Human
Rights Commission

Dr. Arnab Banerjee
President, Indian Psychiatric Society, West
Bengal Branch

Ms. Renuka Srinivashan
Programme Manager,
Delegation of the European Union to India

Dr. Tapas Kumar Ray
Founder Secretary, SEVAC &
The Convener of the Seminar

Justice Shri Chittatosh Mookerjee
First Chairperson W. B. H. R.C.
Former Chief Justice, Calcutta &
Bombay High Courts

Dr. Rakesh Chadda
President, Indian Association of Social
Psychiatry & Prof. Dept. of Psychiatry
AIIMS, New Delhi.

Shri J.S. Kochher
Jt. Secretary (Trg)
National Human Rights Commission

Shri Ashok Chakravorty DIRECTOR
Former Inspector General, National Human
Rights Commission

Shri A. K. Parashar
Joint Registrar & Focal Point (Human Rights
Defenders), National Human Rights Commission

Dr. Pratiya Sengupta
Chief Psychologist, SEVAC