

MEETING OF THE STATE HEALTH SECRETARIES

ON **MENTAL HEALTH**

Date : 4 September 2015
Venue : India International Centre, Seminar
Hall, 40 Max Mueller Marg, New
Delhi – 110 003

BACKGROUND NOTE

1. The National Human Rights Commission has been concerned about the protection of the human rights of mentally-ill persons because of their inherent vulnerability. Due to this vulnerability, they, many a times, face ill treatment by people coming in their contact in their home or at public places. The Commission is also particularly concerned about the inadequacy of Mental Health Care Infrastructure in the country to take care of the mentally ill patients. Many of the hospitals lack basic infrastructural facilities.

2. As a part of the larger mandate of promotion and protection of human rights of the citizens of the country, the Commission has been making efforts towards securing to this section of the population a life of dignity. It is the endeavour of the Commission that they are provided proper care and protection in the Institutions where they are lodged for treatment. The National Human Rights Commission, as part of its mandate under Section 12, has been visiting mental institutions under the control of the State Government, where persons have been detained or lodged for the purposes of treatment, reformation or protection, for the study of the living conditions of the inmates thereof and make recommendations thereon to the Government. The Commission has also been regularly monitoring the functioning of three mental hospitals in Agra, Gwalior and Ranchi as directed by Supreme Court in pursuant to PILs filed before it regarding lack of proper facilities in these institutions.

3. Taking forward the concerted efforts of the Commission towards the protection of human rights of mentally ill persons, the National Human Rights Commission recently filed a petition before the Supreme Court vide Petition No. CRLMP.NO.8032/2013 in W.P. (Crl.) No. 1900 of 1981, Dr. Upendra Baxi Vs. State of U.P. & Ors. and National Human Rights Commission. The petition has been filed to apprise the Hon'ble Court regarding the efforts made by the Commission in this matter, the **improvements** made and shortcomings still remaining. The Commission sought its intervention in the form of appropriate directions to concerned authorities for improving the situation regarding mental health infrastructure.

4. It is on the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the States have been directed to furnish the information as per the questionnaire prepared by the Commission. In this regard, the Hon'ble Court also directed the Central Government, Ministry of Health to constitute a Committee headed by the Secretary, who in turn, shall in association with the Health Secretaries of the respective State/Director Health Services of the Union Territories along with the Member Secretary of State Human Rights Commission and State Legal Services Authority, including two eminent Doctors of each State/Union Territories, shall make physical verification of the actual state of affairs existing in different institutions situated in the respective States/Union Territories.

5. The Commission has also constituted a Technical Committee on Mental Health to examine the information received as per the said Questionnaire as well as other related documents. This Technical Committee has been endorsed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The Supreme Court also directed that the Committee constituted by the National Human Rights Commission shall verify all the data given by the States/Union Territories and forward a report to the Hon'ble Supreme Court within three months.

6. Recently in the meeting of Commission's Core Group of Experts where important recommendations were made to improve the mental health care

infrastructure in the country. In order to discuss these recommendations further, it was decided that the Commission will also hold a meeting of all the State Health Secretaries. The recommendations of the meeting of Core Group are annexed as Annexure I.

7. In order to discuss the strategies for strengthening the Mental Health care and treatment in the country, its monitoring and evaluation and to have more comprehensive and integrated services for the mentally ill patients in the country, the Commission has decided to organize a meeting of the State Health Secretaries on **4 September 2015 at India International Centre, Seminar Hall, Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi - 110003.**
