

[1] The Sikkim State Legal Services Authority under the directions of Hon'ble Mrs. Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, Acting Chief Justice, High Court of Sikkim and Executive Chairperson, Sikkim State Legal Services Authority organized *Launching of the Mental Health Programme for the Employees of the Government Departments on the Occasion of World Mental Health Day on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 (Wednesday)* at the newly constructed ***Sikkim Judicial Academy, Sokeythang East Sikkim***. The said programme was chaired by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan, Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Judge-in-Charge, Sikkim Judicial Academy.

Also present during the launching were Shri Suraj Chettri, Member Secretary, Sikkim SLSA, Mrs. Samita Sharma, Director, Sikkim Judicial Academy, Mrs. Matilda Isaacs, Special Secretary, Sikkim SLSA, Dr. C.S Sharma, Head of the Department of Psychiatry, other Doctors and Psychologists from the Department of Psychiatry, STNM Hospital, Officers/Officials from Sikkim Police Department, Press and Media and staff of Sikkim SLSA.

[2] The launching was in consonance to her Ladyship's prime concern, which was with regard to the Mental Health issues arising out of work stress and other factors which were being faced in this State, which needed to be addressed, and, for imparting sensitization and awareness amongst various State Government Department's Officers/Officials regarding mental health and the issues relating thereto.

[3] The Resource Persons for today's programme were Dr. C.L. Pradhan, Senior Psychiatrist/General Secretary, SSB-IPS, and Mrs. Nancy Palmu Chankapa, Clinical Psychologist, Health Care, Human Services & Family Welfare Department, Government of Sikkim.

[4] Hon'ble Mr. Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan, Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Judge-in-Charge, Sikkim Judicial Academy, in his Lordship's address, elucidated on the fact that mental health is one of the greatest resources which will help us in building the society, a better mental health can help progress the society further. His Lordship also informed that individual dignity is fundamental and a part of Article 21 of the Constitution of India, which guarantees life and liberty, and that mental illness could be a part of the family, or relatives or friends or neighbors and awareness with regard to the same is the key solution to such problem.

His Lordship also urged the Police Officers/Officials about the role and responsibility they require to undertake with regard to the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, which is already in place and enforced for providing mental healthcare and services for persons with mental illness. His Lordship also urged the participants to first understand what mental health, mental illness and mental retardation is, then only one would be able to handle the situations concerning them.

[5] The programme commenced with the welcome note by Shri Suraj Chettri, Member Secretary, Sikkim SLSA, who gave a brief introduction about World Mental Health Day, which is celebrated on 10<sup>th</sup> Day of October every year for educating and generating awareness amongst people about mental health issues and to advocate against social stigmatization of mentally ill persons and to invite attention regarding mental illness and its effects on people.

He also informed that under the direction and guidance of Hon'ble Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, Acting Chief Justice High Court of Sikkim and Executive Chairperson, Sikkim SLSA, the Sikkim SLSA in co-ordination with the Sikkim State Branch of Indian Psychiatry Society, Sikkim Chapter is organizing series of positive mental health programmes for the employees of different Govt. Departments of Sikkim starting with Police Department on 10.10.2018.

[6] During the working sessions that followed, Resource Person, Dr. C.L. Pradhan, Senior Psychiatrist/General Secretary, SSB-IPS, Health Care, Human Services & Family Welfare Department, Government of Sikkim highlighted on the topic Positive Mental Health, wherein issues on mental disorder, personality traits, mental hygiene, the ABC Rules of managing stress, cause, set of causes, or manner of causation of the disease or condition, signs of depression and coping skills were deliberated on whereas Resource Person, Mrs. Nancy Palmu Chankapa, Clinical Psychologist, Health Care, Human Services & Family Welfare Department, Government of Sikkim, highlighted on the topic Effective Ways to Reduce Stress in the Work Place wherein the knowhow of stress signals and how to cope with stress were elucidated. This was followed by interactive sessions between participants and Resource Persons.

[7] The moderator of the programme was Mrs. Matilda Isaacs, Special Secretary, Sikkim SLSA while the vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Bikash Sharma, Deputy Secretary, Sikkim SLSA.