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ABSTRACTS



NGO's and Their Role in Mental Health Care in India

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Non-Government Organizations are institutions recognized by the government as nonprofit organizations, which are welfare-oriented and play a key role as service providers, activists, and researchers in various fields about human and social development. Many times NGO's are born in response to major disasters and crisis to provide emergency relief, and after the disaster is over may continue the good work.[1] More than 10% of our population is suffering from various mental health-related problems. The paucity of treatment facilities and psychiatrists in the government sector has resulted in a huge treatment gap in mental health care. As per the survey conducted by NIMHANS in 2016, the treatment gap is to the tune of more than 84%. [2] The NGO's have played a significant role in not only bridging this gap but have also helped in creating low-cost replicable models of care. [3]

NGOs' role in the field of child mental health, schizophrenia, rehabilitation, care of the wandering person with mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse has been tremendous.

The NGOs' activities include treatment, rehabilitation, community care, creating awareness, capacity building, and research works. NGOs are generally started by a leader or a group of people who are motivated for a cause, and hence they do not consider it a job but more of a commitment. Often people are skeptical about the role of NGO's but once given the opportunity, NGOs can innovate and complement the state-run services. [4]

The NGOs have contributed significantly to the care and rehabilitation of persons with mental illness in our

country. The majority of the NGOs function in urban areas and services in a defined locality and community. The number of NGO's are very few, which have a Pan India presence. Few mental health NGO's have been started by the caretakers of the patients. An essential aspect of mental health NGOs is their focus on the community's perceived needs. [3]

There are four types of mental health NGO's working in our country –

1. Those involved in treatment care and rehabilitation
2. Community-based activities and prevention
3. Research and training
4. Advocacy and empowerment.

Empowerment of the local community and their involvement in NGO's help the facility run for a more extended period.

There are a few primary advantages of mental health NGOs, like:

1. Ability to work in partnership - they can strike and maintain collaboration and partnership with other agencies with comparative ease than the government sector. Things have to follow a particular route and take a longer time.
2. Innovation in activities: They are more close and acceptable to the community and hence aware of their needs and provide services accordingly. [5]

Limitation of mental health NGO's

1. Sustainability: Funding and resources could be a significant limiting factor; if the mental health NGO's are not generating income of their own, there could be problems regarding payment of regular salary and retaining of staff.

2. Scope of the mental health NGO: Their functioning is limited to one city or a town. There are very few, which have a Pan India presence.[6]

List of a few important Mental Health NGO's working in our country.

1. Sumaitrivoluntary organization –located in Delhi, is a crisis intervention center for depressed and suicidal patients.
2. Sanjivini Society for Mental Health – started in Delhi in 1976 as a registered nonprofit voluntary Organization – They provide free counseling services to people above 14 years and also run a rehabilitation center.
3. Saarthak – Campaign for the rights of persons with mental illness. It works for the education of children with disabilities.
4. Roshni – NGO in Delhi, which was started in 2006. It is a family support and advocacy group of family and caregivers for persons who have major mental illnesses.
5. Action for Autism - an NGO for education, charity, and advocacy which provide support and services to person with Autism and those who work with them. The National center is in Delhi. There are 22 centres in the country.
6. Minds Foundation (2010) – works to increase awareness regarding mental illness and provide access to mental health care. It has a pan India presence and follows a three-phase approach namely.
 - Educate
 - Treat
 - Reintegrate into the local community.

It started in Nizamabad and has branches in Mumbai, Vadodra and Bhavnagar.
7. Anjali Mental health rights organization- (Working in Kolkata) It works to humanize mental health and create awareness. It educates people and makes them aware of their rights with the disability.
8. Manas foundation – It started in Delhi in 2000 by a group of mental health professionals in response to their experience of the growing need for community based mental health care.
9. Sangath -It works to promote the right social, psychological, and physical health of children and adolescents.
10. Banyan - Started in 1993, Based in Chennai and caters to mentally ill and homeless women.
11. Schizophrenia research foundation (SCARF) - A very well known mental health NGO Nationally and internationally. It was started by the first women psychiatrist in the country Dr. Sharda Menon. It provides care and rehabilitation of patients with a severe mental disorder.
12. Aasra - A Mumbai based mental health NGO which runs a 24 hours helpline service of active, non judgmental and non critical listening.
13. Ashadeep mission – Formed in 1996 in North East India to rehabilitate patients of chronic mental illness.
14. Neptunes Foundation - Mumbai based NGO which started in 2000. They work to identify homeless people with mental illness wandering the streets. They treat them and then try to unite them with their families.
15. PariPurnata halfway home-based in Kolkata and tries to help mentally ill patients to unite with their families. It provides a temporary home where patients can avail of treatment like pharmacotherapy, occupational therapy, non-formal education, and counseling.
16. Khusboo welfare society - Situated in Gurgram Haryana and provides holistic care and services to people with mental illness and multiple disabilities. It runs special education schools for the disabled.
17. The Richmond fellowship society India - It is a Pan India NGO working in the field of rehabilitation of patients of chronic mental illness. In India, there are four branches at Bangalore, Delhi, Sidalgutta, and Lucknow. It was started in 1986 in Bangalore and runs various facilities like Daycare services, halfway home, long stay home, and outreach programs. The RFS is the world's largest Global charity network concentrating on mental health.
18. Alzheimers and related disorders society of India (ARDS) – Started in Cochin and has several centers across India. It is engaged in care support and training in Dementia care.
19. Association of the mentally challenged-Based at Bangalore, their mission is to educate, train, rehabilitate intellectually challenged individuals and provide support and care.
20. Action for Mental Illness (ACMI) –It is an NGO working for advocacy for the rights of persons with mental illness and provides help regarding legal services to the mentally ill. It has a Pan India framework.

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