

## Drive to rescue, rehabilitate mentally ill destitutes in State

58 persons rescued in four months, says outfit member

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
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It is unfortunate that the mentally ill wandering destitutes are neglected despite tremendous advancements in the field of medicine, said Principal Adviser to the State Government Ajeya Kallam on Thursday.

Addressing a State-level meeting of 'Mano Bandhu', a campaign to rehabilitate the wandering mentally ill people across the State, kicked off by a group of individuals, Mr. Kallam said the different government departments and the civil society coming together for the cause in the State was a welcome step.

He said there was a need to enhance infrastructure like building shelter homes, recruiting specialist doctors and creating facilities for their rehabilitation. He appealed to charitable and religious organisations to join the cause and urged NGOs to sensitise people and govern-



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ment organisations on the issue.

Mumbai-based senior psychiatrist and recipient of Ramon Magsaysay award Bharat Vatwani said his organisation Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation had so far re-united more than 10,000 destitutes with their families across the country.

"We would like to collaborate with the AP Government and 'Mano Bandhu' to rescue, treat and rehabilitate mentally ill wandering destitute persons in the State," he said, adding that irrespective of their mental health, every citizen was entitled to a dignified life.

### **Govt. to ink MoU**

Director of Medical Education M. Raghavendra Rao said the government would sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Shraddha Foundation by Ugadi festival this year to extend the services needed to rehabilitate the wandering mentally ill people.

Chairman of the State-level Liquor Prohibition Awareness Committee V. Lakshmana Reddy announced that he would mobilise 5 acres of land for establishment of rehabilitation centres for the mentally ill wandering people.

Founder member of 'Mano Bandhu' B. Ramakrishna Raju said the organisation had so far rescued 58 people from streets across the State in the last four months. He said with the assistance of volunteers of LibTech India, a study would be conducted to understand the bottlenecks in the implementation of the Mental Health Act 2017 in the State.

Senior psychiatrist Indla Ramasubba Reddy appealed to the government to set up more facilities and shelter homes to cater to the needs of the mentally ill destitutes.

P. Srinivas from the Association for Urban and Tribal Development, Dr. Neelima from the Department of Medical and Health, and Annam Srinivasa Rao from Annam Foundation were among others who spoke while shelter home administrations from across the State and 'Mano Bandhu' members participated.