

HC gives rehab centre the mod

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RUSHING aside residents' fears, the Bombay High Court has upheld Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation's (SRF) right to run a rehabilitation centre for mentally ill at Kandarpada in Dahisar (W). The centre provides shelter to mentally-ill destitutes for free. It also provides for their treatment and rehabilitation.

The centre was facing stiff opposition from the Kandarpada residents who perceived a threat to their children and womenfolk from its inmates. They wanted the centre shifted to a "safer place" and had filed a petition at the Bombay High Court against the centre and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

Upholding SRF's right to run the centre, the bench comprising Justice A C Agrawal and S D Gundewar observed that since the foundation was engaged in providing psychiatric care, food, shelter and rehabilitation facilities to destitutes free of charge, it becomes every citizen's duty to support it in whatever way possible.

The foundation had sought a licence to run the centre on March 14 from the BMC. But its application was not processed as the residents' petition was pending in the court. The bench directed the state any problems." The residents, government to appoint an inspection committee as per the prescribed norms of the Mental Health Act, 1987 within three weeks. The inspection committee will inspect the SRF centre and submit its report to the government within period of three months.

Dr Bharat Vatwani, a trustee of the SRF said, "None of the psychiatric hospitals in the state have a licence. I am running my psychiatric institute at Borivli as a nursing

Dr Vatwani said, "This judgment is moral victory for the mentally ill destitutes who have been rejected by the society."

About the residents' fears he said, "We have been running a similar rehabilitation centre at Borivli for the past 10 years and none of our neighbours there have faced however are far from convinced. "We appreciate the project but its location is not acceptable to us."

"There is no security in this centre and local residents would be victims of mentally ill patients who cannot be held responsible by the law," lamented another residents.