

# HIMACHAL Tribune

## Serving those in need

Mentally-ill patients to be reunited with families

**BHANU P LOHUMI**

As many as 11 patients of Himachal hospital of Mental Health and Rehab, Shimla, will be rehabilitated and reunited with their families soon, courtesy Shradha Rehabilitation Foundation, Mumbai, working for the rehabilitation for mentally ill destitute living alongside road.

Dr Sanjay Pathak, Senior Medical Superintendent at Himachal Hospital of Mental Health and Rehab, Shimla, was apprised of the humanitarian work being done by the foundation and he got in touch with the Dr Bharat Vatwani, Trustee of the foundation, requesting him to rehabilitate long-stay patients, who were cured and discharged from different states, but were languishing in the hospital for the lack of social support.

The foundation has come forward to take 11 long-stay patients to their Karjat Centre for rehabilitation and reunion with families, he said, adding that the foundation had been instrumental in uniting hundreds of such patients with their families. Dr Vikesh got in touch with the doctors working at the foundation and received a call, conveying that the foundation was willing to help them out.

A five-member team of the foundation comprising social workers Shailesh Sharma, Deena Nath Nishad, Ramakant Doddi, Laxmi Priya



### Patient rehabilitated

The 11 patients include four women in the age group of 25 to 40 from Santosh Nagar, Mumbai, (Maharashtra), Mahboob Nagar, Telangana, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, and Puruliya, West Bengal. The other patients in the age group of 35 to 50 are from, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal and two from Nepal.

### Objectives of the foundation

To rescue maximum number of mentally-ill destitute persons, provide free shelter, food and psychiatric treatment to those rescued, trace out addresses of such persons and reunite them with their lost families in any part of India, promote massive mental health awareness among rural villages, families, police personnel, railway officials and the public, create network with other NGOs and government mental hospitals in other states to make collective effort.

Bishnoi and Namrata Bisht visited Shimla on May 23 and 24 to evaluate and select the inmates for rehabilitation and reunion with their families and took the inmates with them.

The team said these patients were neither aggressive nor forgetful. They were able to understand and make out what was to be done. The foundation would trace addresses of the destitute persons and reunite them with their lost families in any part of India.

These inmates were taken to Chandigarh, from where they boarded a train to Kalyan. "I have always felt that the recovered mentally ill roadside destitute deserves to be with their family and that we must make

an attempt to reunite them," said Bharat Vatwani.

There are 62 beds at the centre in Shimla, which remains packed to capacity and with shifting of these patients, space will be created to accommodate 11 more patients. Most of the patients are from other states.

While shortage of psychiatrists and poor facilities for taking care of mentally sick persons in the government sector has widened the treatment gap in mental health and impeded the rehabilitation of such patients. Organisations such as Shradha Rehabilitation Foundation, Mumbai, is providing yeoman service by rehabilitating such patients.