Introduction

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) of which India is a ratified member, will come into force in many countries in the coming months. As part of the UNCRPD, one of the aims is to protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities in all policies and programmes and to adopt legislative practices that are non-discriminatory. With the increasing number of countries undertaking reform of their mental health services and mental health laws, calls for a need to build on technical assistance and training in the field of mental health policy and legislation. The Centre views mental health legislation as a tool to achieve the goals of a mental health policy.

Presently there is no such centre in the country, and as far as we are aware, there is no such centre in whole of Middle East, South East Asia and the Far East. We believe a centre such as this can provide valuable national and international assistance to countries in developing and implementing their mental health policies and legislation.

Aims of the Centre

1. Promote rights based approach to mental health policy and legislation
2. Undertake and promote research in the area of mental health policy and legislation
3. Increase awareness about mental health policy and legislation issues amongst the stakeholders including the general public.
4. Advocate for mental health policy and legislation which protects and promotes the rights of persons with mental disorders.
5. Sensitise the community, service providers and stakeholders to protecting and promoting the rights of persons with mental disorders.

These aims of the Centre will be achieved through the activities given below

Activities

1. Teaching and Training: The centre will design and conduct long term (diploma and masters courses) as well as short term courses (certificate courses) for the target audience at National and International level. The International Diploma in Mental Health Law and Human Rights will be the flagship course of the Centre. The Centre will also develop and deliver short term courses for the target audience – for example, short term courses for the judiciary, police officers, and bureaucrats, international agencies, and Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations.
2. Legal Aid and Advice: to users and families on legal issues related to mental health.
3. Specialist Technical Assistance, nationally and internationally, to Judiciary, International agencies including funding and service delivery agencies, Institutions and Governments in drafting and implementing mental health policy and legislation.
4. Set up a Library with articles and books related to mental health policy and legislation.
5. Undertake Research projects in the field of mental health policy and legislation and also provide a base for national and international scholars wishing to undertake research in this area.
6. Conduct Workshops for the target audience on issues related to mental health policy and legislation.
7. Any other activities to promote the aims of the Centre.