



KOSHISH

The voice of people with mental distress/psychosocial disability

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Mr. Devkota in his acceptance speech at Dr. Guislain "Breaking the chains of Stigma" Award Ceremony on October 10, 2013

About the Dr. Guislain Award

The Dr. Guislain Award 'Breaking the Chains of Stigma' is an initiative of Janssen Research & Development and Museum Dr. Guislain, uniting two institutes that have a longstanding involvement and heritage in the field of mental health care and research.

Dr. Joseph Guislain (1797-1860) was a driven activist for patients with mental illness and the first Belgian psychiatrist to provide scientifically-based treatment for these individuals. As a passionate advocate for those with mental illness, Dr. Guislain worked tirelessly to stand up for the rights of patients and help improve their social position. He lectured and published extensively about mental illness and enjoyed considerable recognition by his contemporaries.

The Museum Dr. Guislain was founded in 1986 in Ghent, Belgium, and its exhibits address the history of psychiatry in a permanent collection and through a series of half-yearly changing thematic exhibitions. The Museum features an array of psychiatric photographs, two centuries of comprehensive archives and an extensive library chronicling the history of psychiatry. Comprehensively, the Museum seeks to educate the public and rectify the misunderstandings and prejudice associated with treatment for mental illness. The Museum Dr. Guislain attracts 65,000 visitors each year.

(Source: Museum Dr. Guislain)

"BREAKING THE CHAINS OF STIGMA"

Matrika Devkota, chairperson of KOSHISH, has been selected as the 2013 winner of the Dr. Guislain "Breaking the Chains of Stigma" Award for his tireless work to fight stigma by empowering those suffering from mental illness to serve as self-advocates.

The Dr Guislain Award programme is a joint project of the Museum Dr Guislain and Janssen Research & Development, LLC. Janssen provides financial and in-kind support for the programme.

"The Dr Guislain Award represents the work done by mental health advocates worldwide to fight the often unseen consequences of stigma," said Siri Hustvedt, jury member of the Dr Guislain Award selection committee and author of a book about her own neurological illness. "Devkota is a luminous example for all of us who hope to end stigma, and we are happy to honor his important work in the mental health community."

"His work has allowed patients the ability to advocate for themselves and contributed to increased public knowledge of mental illness."

"It has been rewarding to work on behalf of patients facing significant stigma as a result of mental illness," said Devkota. "Through our various efforts, we have seen the beginning of substantial changes made to Nepal's mental health infrastructure and policy. I look forward to continuing my work and advancing the rights of those facing stigma as a result of mental illness."

"Mr. Devkota's passionate advocacy for those with mental illness has made a tangible impact for patients living with significant mental illness in Nepal," said Brother Rene Stockman, general manager of the Museum Dr Guislain. "His work has allowed patients the ability to advocate for themselves and contributed to increased public knowledge of mental illness."

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Rescued from the street

Shanti was found in the street of Balaju, West of Kathmandu with plastic wraps around her body. According to local people, she has been living on the street for six months. She never caused any harm to pedestrian and in return she was getting food and clothes from the locals. "She is least bothered about food, money or clothes and more concerned on moving her hands around the plastic bags which she has kept safely", local said.

Shanti rescued on 19th September 2013 by KOSHISH team. With the support of local police, the team brought her in KOSHISH's Transit Home by police van. She was aggressive and violent when the team was tried to rescue her. She was shouting all the way saying "hey mum, hey dad they are going to kill me, save me".

There was dirt all around her body and hairs were not combed for years. The caretaker and nurse from Transit Home managed to make her neat and clean. She was provided food which she ate as if she was starving to death. She seemed very restless and was talking unconsciously. Having spent several months in the street, she was lacking her personal hygiene.

KOSHISH is putting a great effort to restore her mental health condition under strict supervision.



Shanti living in the street with body wrapped with plastic

KOSHISH SERVICES

Transit Home Service :

OPD on every Monday & Thursday after 2.00 pm at KOSHISH Transit Home, Bagdol, Lalitpur

Peer Support Activities & Counseling :

Every Tuesday (except last Tuesday of English Calendar) on 11:00 am at KOSHISH Office, Thasikhel, Lalitpur

Peer Support Formal Group Meeting :

Last Tuesday of English Calendar on 11:00 am at KOSHISH Office, Thasikhel, Lalitpur

Bhaktapur OPD Service :

Every 3rd Tuesday of Nepali month from 2:00-4:00 pm at Bhaktapur Hospital, Bhaktapur.

Significant changes can be noticed in her condition. These days she even participates in some of the activities like dance therapy, art therapy, gardening and she also assists in kitchen work.

As she has lost her memory her reintegration seems to be hard after her recovery. However KOSHISH has reintegrated many clients into their family with their little clues. Team has a hope that with the help of medicine and counseling she can rediscover herself and will provide some clues.

Like Shanti there are numbers of women spending their lives on the street who are not paid any attention by the governmental bodies.

Transformation of Life

Kumar (name changed) hails from Yasok VDC-2 of Panchthar district reintegrated into his family on 26th September 2013 after getting recover from his mental illness. He was rescued by the KOSHISH team on 28th May 2013.

Thirty five years old Kumar was an energetic, talented and healthy person as a youth. Around fifteen years ago, when he was in high school, he started to fall unconscious frequently. He started to demonstrate violent activities as well. His family members and neighbors get shocked and confused with his unexpected behavior. They were not aware about his illness. They took him to traditional healer for his treatment but there was no sign of improvement in his condition. So his family confined him in a shed as a means of his as well as others safety.

The news of Kumar was published in national newspaper with a headline '15 years in confinement'. After this news, KOSHISH team reached to the location. At that time he was confined in a shed and his both legs were locked inside wooden block. He couldn't stand and walk properly as his legs were locked for years. He was even reluctant to interact with others.

After rescued by KOSHISH he got treatment and now he can stand and walk properly. He is showing his usual behavior and not violent to others.

"I have no words to express my happiness", his sister replied to KOSHISH team while she was eager to receive him. She added, "the person who was locked for 15 years is now in this condition, which is unbelievable, thanks to all who supported us".



Kumar before rescue & treatment

Kumar with his sister after recovery

Awareness & Advocacy

Awareness to Social Work Students



Students from Padma Kanya Campus participating on awareness workshop

With realizing the need and role of people from various backgrounds in the field of mental health, KOSHISH has come up with the concept of multidisciplinary approach. This approach comprises bio-psycho-social model for the promotion of mental health that will bring integrated development on this issue. In this regard, a program was organized with the social work students in different colleges.

On 13th and 25th September 2013, the program was conducted in K&K College and Padma Kanya Campus respectively. In both the programs, there were 45 participants from social work student. The students showed keen interest and internalize the issue. The program was successful to make them understand about their role in this globally recognized issue.

Program for the Promotion & Protection of Mental Health

A one day interaction program on “The Role of Stakeholders in Developing Effective Mechanism for the Promotion and Protection of Mental Health” held at National Human Rights Commission on 7th October 2013 with facilitation of KOSHISH.

The program was organized with the objective to identify effective mechanism for the promotion and protection of mental health. The role of stakeholders in developing effective mechanism is also discussed in the program. The program started with the presentation of Mr. Matrika Devkota, Chairperson of KOSHISH on Status of Mental Health in Nepal. Mr. Surya Deuja from NHRC presented on NHRC initiatives and perspectives towards promotion and protection of mental health including legal aspects. The last session of presentation was on Status of mental health & sharing of NHRC experience by Ms. Samjhana Sharma from NHRC. Dr. Nirakar Man Shrestha, former Secretary of Ministry of Health and Population commented on the paper presented.

In the program there was a representation from Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Education, Non-governmental organizations, National Mental Health Network-Nepal, District Health Office-Kathmandu, Mental Hospital, Nepal Bar Association, TU Teaching Hospital etc. There was participation from Human Rights Activists and Journalists as well.

The program was organized taking into consideration the fact that Right to Health is a fundamental right of human beings. However the mental health is neglected issue in Nepal. Even the state has not shown much concern in mental health sector. The State has failed to accomplish its commitment at national and international level to ensure the right of people with mental health problem to live a dignified life. The protection, prevention and promotion of mental health issue have been strongly questioned. Therefore, the need of interaction program to discuss on the aspects related to mental health from central level to local level and the role of the Government for the facilitation, co-ordination and monitoring that addresses the core National Mental Health Policy 1996 and its significance has been felt.



Chairperson of KOSHISH Mr. Matrika Devkota grabbing attention of the participants through his presentation during the program

Breaking the.....

“Janssen is pleased to recognize the outstanding educational and advocacy work of Matrika Devkota and his commitment to combating mental health stigma throughout Nepal,” said Hussein K Manji, MD, Global Therapeutic Area Head for Neuroscience, Janssen Research & Development, LLC. “Devkota exemplifies the best qualities of advocates worldwide who work continuously to help people living with brain disorders, a goal that is aligned with our work at Janssen.”

The accomplishments of Devkota were celebrated on World Mental Health Day, in Mumbai. The ceremony also includes a special showing of the traveling exhibition Breaking the Chains of Stigma. This exhibition contains a global overview of the history of mental health and a selection of art composed by mental health patients.

More than 40 nominations were received from across the globe for Dr Guislain “Breaking the Chains of Stigma” Award, after which a jury of international mental health advocates and renowned authorities in the field deliberated on the winner. (Source: www.drguislainaward.org)

Efforts of KOSHISH

Stigma: A Major Barrier to Suicide Prevention



KOSHISH and National Association for Suicide Prevention and Research (NASPAR) jointly organized a programme to celebrate World Suicide Prevention Day on 10th September 2013.

The major focus of the program was to create a collective advocacy and awareness for the prevention of psychosocial problem and suicide. That will help to promote the right to health including health of person with psychosocial problem and reduce the suicide rate in Nepal.

Mr. Matrika Devkota, Chairperson of KOSHISH presented about the situation of women and girls having mental and psychosocial problems. Ms. Punam Shrestha, a member of NASPAR presented on the awareness, interventions and further plans regarding suicide prevention in Nepal. The acting secretary of Ministry of Health and Population, Mr. Tirtharaj Burlakoti chaired the programme and Mr. Frank Paulin from World Health Organization (WHO) attended the program as a guest speaker.

This was the third time celebrating 'Suicide Prevention Day' in Nepal every year though it was the eleventh. The slogan for this year was "Stigma: A Major Barrier to Suicide Prevention".

Workshop to Focus Media on UNCRPD



The workshop was organized involving a leading women journalists' organization SANCHARIKA SAMUHA and other women organizations on 19th of September, 2013.

In Nepal, media has played very crucial roles to promote and protect the rights of the people. Thus, having felt the necessity of involvement and mobilization of media, this workshop was organized to share the rights ensured by United Nation Convention on the Rights of Person with Disability (UNCRPD) with women journalist.

So that they could be catalyst for bridging the gap between the state and such vulnerable group such as; violence affected women and children with psychosocial problem in line with the rights ensured by UNCRPD which is already ratified by Nepal Government.

In the program Ms. Susmeera Aryal, General Secretary of KOSHISH presented and shared the rights ensured in UNCRPD under articles 6,7,13 & 19. She also shared on the present situation of women and children with psychosocial problem due to violence and focused on the role of media to create pressure for the implementation of UNCRPD.

Since, KOSHISH has been relentlessly working and advocating for the protection and ending the impact of all forms of violence against women and children, the women journalist could raise their own issue more effectively through media.

KOSHISH Presence in CBR Conference

KOSHISH attended 18th National Conference of Community Based Rehabilitation organized by National CBR Network Nepal. Conference was held on 23rd to 25th October in Ghorahi, Dang with slogan "Break barriers, open doors: for an inclusive society for all". The conference is aimed at building network among community based organizations working for disability in Nepal and sharing the experiences faced by each others during their time of intervention.

KOSHISH represented the issues of persons with psychosocial disability in the conference. It presented its community based mental health program in 9th CRE session of the conference. Mr. Fanindra Kumar Neupane, Program Development Officer of KOSHISH, presented on "Mainstreaming Mental Health in Nepal" and General Secretary and Psychologist of KOSHISH, Ms. Susmeera Aryal presented on "Psychosocial Disability as Disability" during the conference. Conference became very fruitful in delivering message of persons with disabilities.



Ms. Susmeera Aryal, General Secretary & Psychologist of KOSHISH, during her presentation on the conference