

The Sikkim State Legal Services Authority (SSLSA) under the aegis of National Legal Services Authority organized a ***State Level Mental Health Programme for Sensitization of Stakeholders*** under NALSA (Legal Services to the Mentally Ill and Mentally Disabled Persons) Scheme, 2015 on ***19th August, 2023 (Saturday)*** at Sikkim Judicial Academy, Gangtok.

The programme was presided over by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Biswanath Somadder, Chief Justice, High Court of Sikkim & Patron-in-Chief, Sikkim SLSA in the august presence of Hon'ble Mrs. Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, Judge, High Court of Sikkim & Executive Chairperson, Sikkim SLSA and Hon'ble Mr. Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan, Judge, High Court of Sikkim & Chairperson, High Court Legal Services Committee.

After the welcome address was delivered by Ms. Subarna Rai, Member Secretary, Sikkim SLSA, Resource Person, Dr. Satyajit Ash, a renowned Addiction Psychiatrist from Kolkata deliberated on the topic "***Addiction and Geriatric Psychology***". He highlighted that Sikkim is one of the States with highest percentage of alcohol users and apprised that on abuse of substances, its psychoactive chemicals alter sensory experiences and produces a 'reward' i.e. pleasure. He explained the stages of treatment for substance abuse through detoxification and family therapy and stressed that help from self-help groups like Narcotic Anonymous and Alcohol Anonymous can be taken to prevent relapse. For information of all concerned, a Day Care Centre has been established by Sikkim SLSA at the premises of Urban Primary Centre (old STNM Hospital) which holds meetings of Narcotic Anonymous and Alcohol Anonymous on a regular basis. Dr. Satyajit Ash also deliberated on issues pertaining to senior citizens like physical, medical, psychological, emotional, social, legal and financial, which

affect the mental health of senior citizens. He informed the role of caregivers, law enforcement agencies and Judiciary.

Dr. Jai Ranjan Ram, an eminent Psychiatrist with over 33 years of experience in psychiatry and presently practicing at Apollo Gleneagles Hospital Kolkata addressed the gathering on the topic “*Child & Adolescent Psychology*”. He informed the participants on the role and responsibilities of community workers in matters pertaining to child sexual abuse. He also highlighted the mental impact on parents and guardians of children subjected to sexual abuse. He elaborated on the psychology of adolescents which can be triggered due to various reasons like relationships - family and social, hormonal changes in the body and social media which presently ranks at the highest as the cause for poor mental health amongst adolescents.

The programme was followed by a vibrant interactive session between the participants and the Resource Persons and numerous queries raised were addressed by the Resource Persons.

The programme was attended by Ld. Judicial Officers, designated senior Advocates, Members of the Child Welfare Committees and Juvenile Justice Boards, In-charges and Counselors of Old Age Homes, Detoxification & Rehabilitation Centres and Child Care Institutions, Officers from the Women & Child Development Department and Social Welfare Department, Medical Officers from the Health & Family Welfare Department, Police Officers dealing with children, Principals of all the Schools of Gangtok, Prison Officials and Warders, Other Persons of Lok Adalats benches of Sikkim, Public Prosecutors, Panel Advocates and Pro-bono Advocates of Sikkim SLSA.