

Empirical Study of homelessness and rapes in destitute mentally ill women found on Indian roads and in rural area.

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In rural India many mentally ill women are abandoned by their family members on Indian roads and religious places to die. Mental illness is a stigmatized situation for rural population. Many types of mental illnesses found in rural women including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression and anxiety. Family members spurn them leading to homelessness. 90% women are raped and gang raped on roads leading to unwanted pregnancies and many sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and syphilis. Childbirth is again a most challenging hurdle. Recovery from mental illness gives them again pain as women are not accepted and reunited back in their families. MAULI HOUSE is a pioneering charitable organization in India providing lifelong home, care, treatment and rehabilitation for these women. This study includes 120 women who are recovered from mental illness and not accepted by their families. In this study a detailed questionnaire was given to each subject to evaluate the possible causes of their mental illness, family history and their experiences when they were living on roads. Detailed in-camera interviews were taken to understand the scenario.

This study shows multiple causes of mental illness including broken families, postpartum psychosis, poverty, illiteracy, religiousness and superstitious ideas. Lack of awareness, treatment and social security is again the prime concern.

This paper should help to understand the causes of homelessness and rapes in destitute mentally ill women found on Indian roads and rural areas. It will give new insights for remedial measures to overcome the problems and a road map to stop abuse on these women and their children.