



Cabinet Nod to State Mental Health Policy

Why in News?

On July 7, 2023, Dr. R. Rajesh Kumar, Health Secretary, Uttarakhand said that strict action will now be taken against de-addiction centres and psychiatric institutions operating in the state by flouting the rules and standards. In this regard, the State Government has approved the State Mental Health Policy Manual.

Key Points:

- Now all mental health institutions and de-addiction centres will be operated under the rules of the State Mental Health Policy Manual.
- Apart from institutions, psychologists, mental health nurses, psychiatric social workers will have to compulsorily register with the State Mental Health Authority. A fee of Rs 2,000 has been kept for temporary registration of mental health institutions, but registration of mental health experts will be free.
- Two thousand rupees will be payable for a temporary license of one year. After that, a fee of 20 thousand will have to be paid for permanent registration.
- For violating the rules, a fine of 5 to 50 thousand rupees will be imposed the first time, 2 lakh the second time and 5 lakh in case of repeated violation. A provision has been made to fine up to Rs 25,000 on the employees working in unregistered de-addiction centres.
- If a person violates the rules, then in such a situation, that person will be punished with imprisonment of six months or a fine of Rs 10,000 in the first instance, and for repeated violations, a jail term of two years or a fine of Rs 50,000 to 5 lakh.
- It is known that the State Mental Health Authority was constituted in the year 2019. After this, the state government has formed a board for monitoring and hearing in seven districts. Of these, boards have been formed in Haridwar, Dehradun, Udham Singh Nagar, Pauri, Rudraprayag, Chamoli, Tehri and Uttarkashi districts, while the process is underway in six districts.
- Under the State Mental Health Policy Manual, de-addiction centres cannot keep a mental patient hostage in a room. The patient will be kept in the de-addiction centres and will be discharged only on the consultation of the doctor. Fees, stay, and food menu will have to be displayed in the centre.
- A doctor, a psychiatrist will have to be kept for the treatment of the patients. There should be an open space in the centre for the mentally ill.
- Monitoring will be done through the Mental Health Review Board at the district level. Mental patients will be given a phone facility to talk to their relatives. Apart from this, the distance from one bed to another has also been fixed in the rooms.
- With the implementation of this policy, mental patients of the state will get better treatment facilities. Along with this, there will be a ban on incidents happening in mental health institutions.