

All Will Definitely Change!

Today (24 May) is celebrated as 'World Schizophrenia Awareness Day'. On this occasion, here is an article that stresses the urgent need of organising programs for eradication of stigma associated with mental disorders apart from the proliferation of mental health care services.

The mentally ill have to face dual challenges. They have to fight not only the symptoms of the disorder which cause an upheaval in their life but also the vicious and apathetic attitude of the society towards the condition. Due to the stigma associated with the condition, the mentally ill cow down to the societal pressure and are unable to pick the options that can lead them from illness to wellness. Therefore eradication of stigma is as important as proliferation of mental health care services. The international medical journal 'Lancet' also emphasises that the persons with a lived experience of mental illness should take a lead in this regard and take sustained efforts towards the eradication of stigma.

On 'World Mental Health Day'-2022, Lancet invited poems pertaining to stigma and discrimination from the persons with a lived experience



of mental disorder, out of which a few were published in the report of the Lancet. Even though these poems are penned in English by poets from different countries, a common thread of negative experiences, pain, stigma, discrimination and resilience runs through them all, which lends them a universal

significance. The chief aim of Eklavya Foundation is to eradicate the stigma associated with mental disorders and therefore it took steps to translate these poems in Marathi so that they are available to Marathi readership. This translation (in bilingual form) will be available on 24 May i.e. on World

Schizophrenia Awareness Day.
(To avail a free e-copy drop a message on eklavyamh@gmail.com or WhatsApp 9096827953)

After reading these poems, one realizes that these poems express subtle, traumatic emotions of the mentally ill, in minimum possible words. For instance while voicing her experience of stigma , Camilla Fitzjohn in her poem ‘**My own private nightmare**’ states:

Backs are turned.

Hostile stares.

No one sees the real me.
(English original)

Anne Hoffman, while admitting that the experience of discrimination is painful asserts the need to go beyond it, in her poem ‘ Make a Difference’:

The media portrays fear

They inform the public about the tragic side

As individuals we need to make it clear

Tell people our story, achievements

What they like to hear

Make a difference

It’s up to you

It can’t hurt

To give your point of view

Tell the truth, how it feels to you

Change people’s image and point of view

Some people get up and walk away

There’s always hope it will change one day (English original)

The recipient of Ramon Magsaysay Award, Dr Bharat Vatwani emphasises that the mentally ill should not suffer in silence but take an initiative through the following poetic lines quoted in the preface:

**While Stigma (Darkness)may never be dispelled,
in its supposedly, seemingly,
all-pervasive encompassing entity,**

**Enlightenment (Light) too can never be quelled,
in its definingly, definitely,
all-endearing ever-radiating
Soulful Glory,**

**For the Light shall burn its brightest,
when it is held in Your Hands.
And it is held in Your Hands.
You are the Chosen One.**
(English original)

Eklavya Foundation believes that these translated poems would pave the way for the eradication of stigma and discrimination that the mentally ill suffer from and serve as a beacon light in the journey of the mentally ill through the disorder.

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