

Karnataka State Mental Health Authority

August 23, 2021

In news- Recently the state government of Karnataka approved the implementation of the Karnataka State Mental Healthcare Act 2021 under which the State Mental Health Authority will be set up.

Need for constituting this authority

- **Mental health issues were reported widely among citizens** in the state, especially during the crisis linked to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- This pushed experts, including those from the National Institute Of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in Bengaluru, to pressure the government to constitute an exclusive body to keep mental healthcare services provided in the state in check.
- The state government was also **obliged to implement the Karnataka State Mental Healthcare Rules** (2021).

About the State Mental Health Authority(SMHA)

- The authority **will maintain a register of clinical psychologists, mental health nurses and psychiatric social workers** registered to work as mental health professionals, and publish the list.
- **This registry will be utilised to** ensure services are offered in a timely and efficient manner to the needy across the state.
- It would oversee timely and efficient delivery of mental healthcare services to citizens in the state.
- A committee chaired by the Director of NIMHANS has been given the charge to constitute the draft rules for the authority.
- The State authority should meet not less than four times

in a year.

Composition of SMHA

- As per the guidelines of Mental Healthcare Act, **principal secretary of the Department of Health and Family Welfare will be its head.**
- The Commissioner, and Joint Secretary of the Health Department, and the Director of Medical Education will be included as members of the authority.

Karnataka State Mental Healthcare Act 2021

- It helps in providing healthcare and services for persons with mental health issues. It will protect, promote and fulfil the rights of persons in need of treatment for mental health.
- Under the Act, a State Mental Health Authority will be set up and a **committee under the Chairmanship of the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) Institute** will be constituted for drafting guidelines for the authority.
- **The state act is being implemented in tandem with the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017** announced by the Union government.