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Title: Need to amend the Mental Health Act, with a view to give legal protection to the voluntary organizations engaged in the rehabilitation of mentally sick patients - laid.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA): There are lakhs of street boys and poor people who have no land, properties or homes, who are wanderers or Beggars or poor people who have no one to look after. Many of them are mentally and physically ill. A lot of service minded persons and organizations come forward to help them by giving them shelter, food, living and other opportunities for rehabilitation. Such care, love and affection has to be recognized. There are cases where the mental patients and others affected by serious diseases have also to be given medicines and help to get medical care. They may not be patients requiring to be admitted in hospitals, but be given medicines on time under advice from Doctors. But as there is no statutory recognition for such service, those involved in such voluntary work may face the wrath of certain statutes such as keeping medicines, storing them, and administering them to the inmates of such service homes. Mental Health Act is one such statute where there are restrictions in this regard which may invite punitive steps against those who help persons of such nature with mental disorder. It is necessary to amend the Mental Health Act and to bring proper laws to protect such services which are selfless and with good intentions.

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