'More discussions needed on mental health issues'

SCARF hands out awards for mental health reporting

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Lauding the Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) for its continued recognition of reporting in mental health, Justice Anita Sumanth of the Madras High Court spoke on the need for discussions and sensitisation on issues of mental health. "All of us, at some point in our lives, have been in need of support," she said.

Justice Anita was speaking at the seventh edition of the SCARF Media Awards for Mental Health Reporting, held in the city on Saturday. Speaking about legislation, she said there were roughly 23,000 cases of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 pending at present. She also spoke about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The awardees in the English category were: Saravana Raja, a mental health rights activist, for a personal account on the news portal

Winners of the SCARF Media Awards for Mental Health Reporting with Justice Anita Sumanth. ▪ B. VELANKANNI RAJ

thenewsminute.com; Swetha Dandapani, a communications professional for an article on huffingtonpost.in; Hamsini Ravi, a communications specialist for a piece on theswaddle.com; and Nidhi Adlakha, a journalist with *The Hindu*. In the regional category, the awardees were Usha Narayanan of *Kungumam Doctor*; Swetha Kannan, a reporter with *Kungumam Thozhi*; and a special mention for Anil Varthak, vice-president, Schizophrenia Awareness Association.

Chairperson of the awards committee Jaya Sreedhar said evidence-based reporting on mental health would help readers/viewers help interpret the enormous amount of information available online. Reporting that helped take away stigma helped, she said. SCARF vice-president R. Thara said the foundation, along with research NGO Sangath, was launching a training programme for journalists in January 2020, under project 'Essence'.

R. Padmavati, director, SCARF, and R. Managala of SCARF were among those who participated in the event.