

# Women and girls with a disability in India

December 2014



## Who are we?

We are Human Rights Watch.

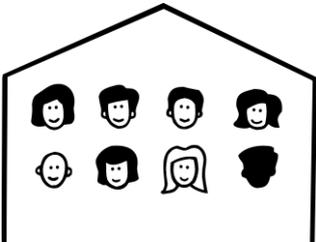


We work to make sure everyone in the world is treated fairly and gets their rights.

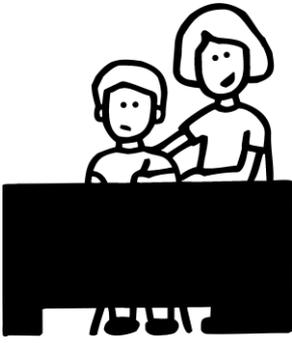


## What is this report about?

This report is about women and girls with a disability in a country called India.



The women and girls we met have an intellectual disability or mental health needs.



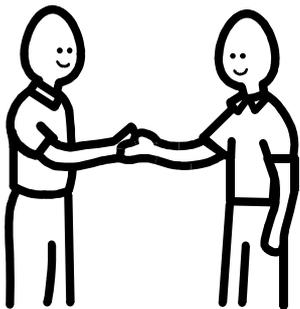
An intellectual disability is when you may need support to do everyday things or understand information.



A mental health need is when you may need support with the way you think or feel.

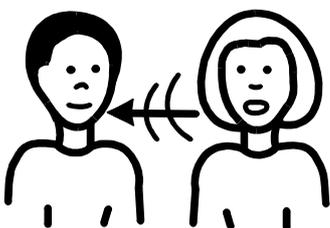


A mental health difficulty can make someone feel sad, angry, excited, or worried a lot of the time.



We looked at how women and girls with these disabilities in India are treated.

We went to some hospitals and special homes.



We talked to lots of people:

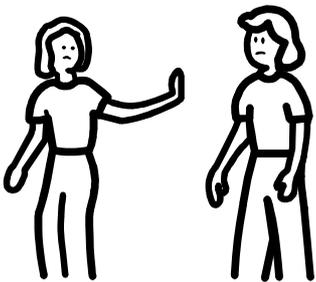
- women and girls with a disability
- families and carers
- staff

- people from the Government and Police

## What we found out about women and girls with these disabilities in India



Many of these women and girls have to live in hospitals or homes away from other people.

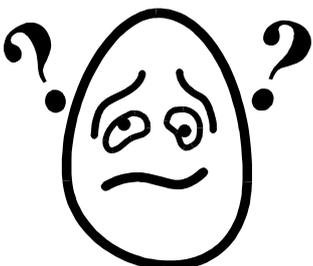


This can be for lots of reasons. For example:

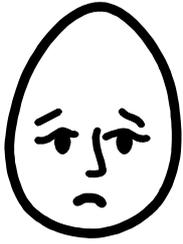
- people send them there because they think it is bad to have a disability



- there is not enough support near where people live
- there are not enough health services and staff



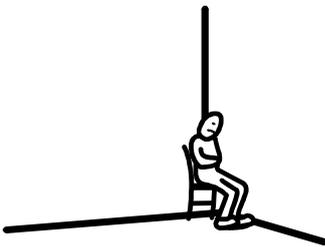
- people do not know what support they can get



Most women and girls have no choice about living in these hospitals or homes.



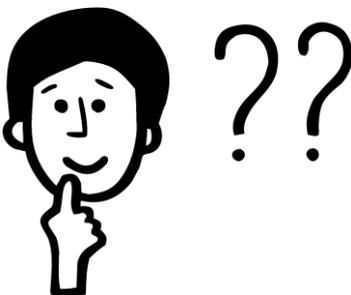
Other people such as their family or the courts decide they should live there.



Some people are forced to live in these places even if they don't want to or may not need to.

They may stay there for the rest of their lives.

## **What happens to women and girls in these hospitals and homes?**

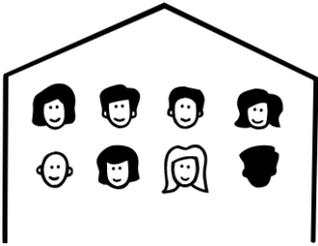


Women and girls living in these places are not allowed to make their own choices.



The law says it is better for other people to make choices for them.

The women and girls are often treated very badly in these places.

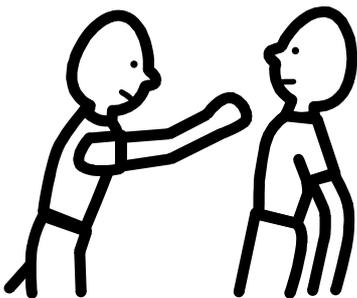


For example,

- The places are often dirty and have too many people living there.



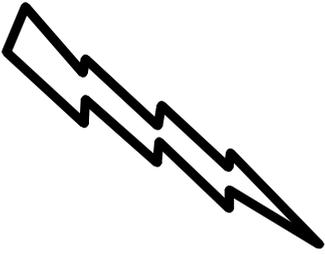
- There may not be enough toilets, baths or soap to keep clean.



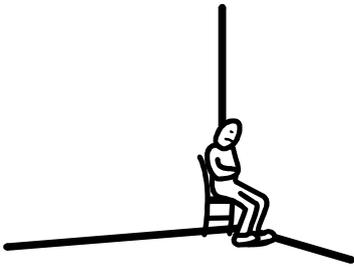
- People may be hurt or forced to do sexual things they do not want.



- People may be forced to have medicine or treatment. Sometimes they do not know this is happening.

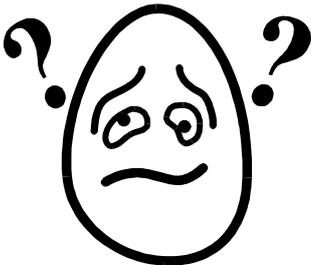


- People may be forced to have treatment where electricity is used on their body.



- There may be nothing for people to do apart from eat or sleep.

- People may be left without the care they need.

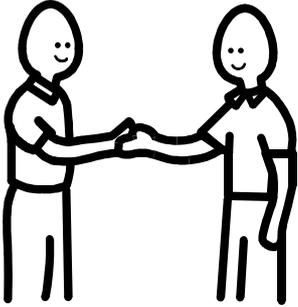


Most of the women and girls living there do not know what to do if they are treated badly.

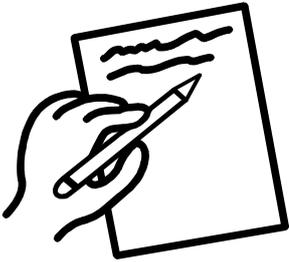


Many are too scared to speak up.

## What is the government in India doing about this?

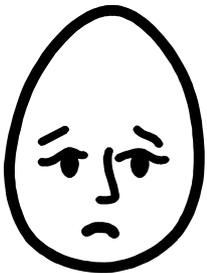


Lots of countries agreed to make sure people with disabilities are treated fairly and get their rights.



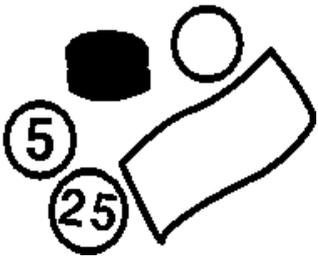
They signed a document about this.

India agreed to this too.



But India is not making this happen for women and girls with an intellectual disability or mental health needs.

For example,



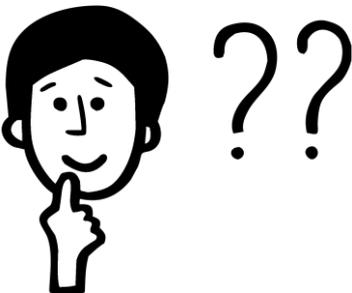
- The government is not spending enough money on care and support.



- The laws do not give people their rights.



- There are not really checking if the care people get is OK.

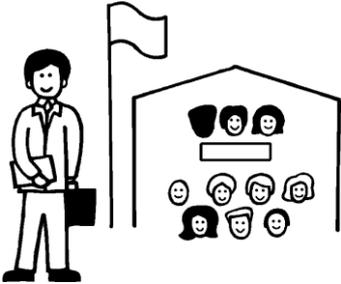


- People are not allowed to make their own choices.

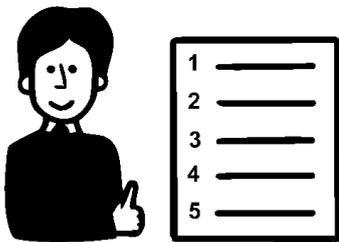


- People do not get the same education, healthcare or chances to do things as other people.

# What should the Indian government do for women and girls with these disabilities



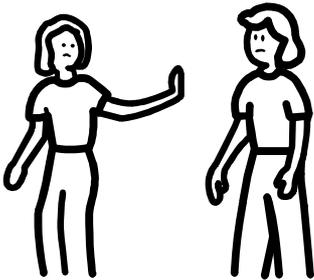
The main government or the governments in each part of India should:



**1.** Make some new rules about the care places people live in. For example, to make sure:



- they are clean, safe and good to live in



- people are not forced to stay in these places or forced to have medical treatment



- forms about medical treatment are easy to understand
- there are easy ways to complain about bad care

## What the government in India should do



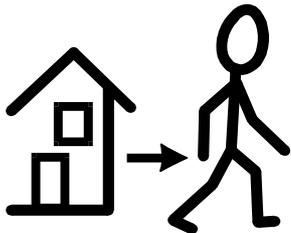
2. Make sure there is enough money and staff for health care and services.



3. Make sure there are more checks of care places to see if they are good and safe.

Other groups should also check these places.

For example, groups who work to make sure people get their rights.



4. Make a plan for moving people to better places.



Making sure people with disabilities and others can have a say in this plan.

## What the government in India should do



**5.** Make sure people can get all the care and support they need near where they live.

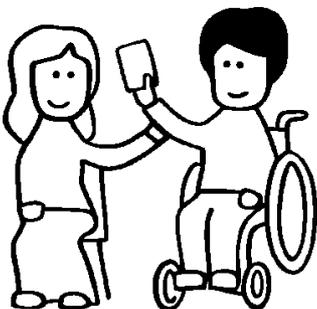
This means they will not have to live in the hospitals or homes any more.

**6.** Change the new laws about disability and mental health.

For example, to make sure:



- the laws give women and girls with an intellectual disability or mental health needs their rights



- people can make their own choices, with support if they need it

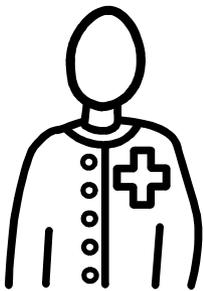


- people are not forced to have medical treatment they do not agree to

## What the government in India should do



7. Make sure people with mental health needs can have a say in the new mental health law.



## Other things

Other countries should help make sure India does what it agreed to.

They can also give money and training to help make sure people get their rights.

