

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA  
STARRED QUESTION NO. 82  
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER, 2024**

**PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE TO ARMED FORCES  
BENEFICIARIES**

**82 DR. SIKANDER KUMAR:**

Will the Minister of Health and Family Welfare be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has made any policy to provide mental health assistance for all Armed Forces beneficiaries, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of mental hospitals and medical colleges upgraded and provided with financial assistance during the current year under National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) in Himachal Pradesh;
- (c) whether Government has framed any strategy to conduct educational programmes to improve mental health and well-being among adolescents; and
- (d) whether any recommendations have been given by National Task Force to improve mental health and prevent suicide among medical students across the country?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
(SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)**

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO RAJYA SABHA  
STARRED QUESTION NO. 82 \* FOR 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER, 2024**

(a) “National Tele Mental Health Programme” (NTMHP) was launched on 10th October, 2022, to improve access to quality mental health counselling and care services in the country. As on 22.11.2024, 36 States/ UTs have set up 53 Tele MANAS Cells and have started tele mental health services. More than 15,95,000 calls have been handled on the helpline number.

The Government has established a dedicated Tele-MANAS Cell at the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune to extend tele-mental health assistance and support to all Armed Forces service personnel and their dependents. Armed Forces personnel on dialing the Tele-MANAS toll-free helpline number (14416) from any part of the country would be connected to the State Tele-MANAS Cell, from where their call would be re-directed to the dedicated Tele-MANAS Cell at AFMC, Pune which is handled by trained counsellors and Mental Health Professionals (MHPs) stationed at AFMC, who are equipped to address the specific mental health challenges faced by Armed Forces personnel.

Further, Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) has one of the largest system for providing organized mental healthcare in the country delivering services through Psychiatry Centres which are an integral part of large Armed Forces hospitals at Zonal or Command levels.

(b) A Centre of Excellence (CoE) of mental health has been approved under Manpower Development Scheme (Scheme – A) of National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) in Dr. Rajendra Prasad Govt. Medical College (RPGMC), Tanda, Distt. Kangra, Himachal Pradesh in the year 2016-17. Support has been provided for construction, procurement of technical & non-technical equipments, library and salary for faculty. An amount of Rs. 27,63,30,000/- has been released to the Institute till date including Rs. 2,80,30,000/- which was released in March, 2024.

(c) To improve mental health and well-being among adolescents, the following steps have been taken:

- i. The District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) is implemented under the National Mental Health Programme in 767 districts of the country to detect, manage and treat mental illness with the components of counselling in schools and colleges, work place stress management, life skills training, suicide prevention services and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities for generation of awareness and removal of stigma associated with Mental Illness.

ii. “Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health” is incorporated as a dedicated module under Ayushman Bharat School Health & Wellness Programme. Health and Wellness Ambassadors (Teachers) are trained on mental health along with other thematic areas of the programme, take interactive sessions with the students and percolate the messages through weekly sessions promoting joyful learning.

iii. The Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare through its interventions viz. Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHC), Peer Education Programme and Adolescent Health and Wellness Days (AH&WD) creates awareness on mental health issues and provides counselling services. Peer Educators form groups of 15-20 boys and girls in the community and conduct weekly one to two hour participatory sessions on adolescent health including mental health and wellbeing.

iv. Ministry of Education (MoE), has launched an initiative, Manodarpan, with the aim to provide psychosocial support to students, their families and teachers across the country, for mental health and well-being . All activities undertaken under the Manodarpan initiative are aimed towards supporting the mental health and well-being of students from schools, colleges and universities, including those students who are preparing for competitive examinations.

v. University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued Guidelines for Promotion of Physical Fitness, Sports, Student’s Health, Welfare, Psychological and Emotional Well-being at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on 13.04.2023, which provides for promotion of physical fitness and sports activities for students; creation of safeguards against academic pressure, peer pressure, behavioral issues, stress, career concerns, depression and other issues on the mental health of students; to teach positive thinking and emotions in the student community; and to promote a positive and supportive network for students.

(d) A 15-Member National Task Force constituted by the Anti-Ragging committee of the National Medical Commission (NMC) in February 2024 on Mental Health and Well-being of Medical Students, recommended establishment of Centralized Reporting Systems, promoting supportive environment, addressing systemic issues, implementation of regular training programs, among others to address mental health issues in medical students.

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