

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

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3480  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01<sup>ST</sup> APRIL, 2025**

**SMARTPHONE USAGE AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

**3480. SMT. RENUKA CHOWDHURY:**

Will the **Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has conducted any studies on the correlation between smartphone usage among school students and mental health issues, particularly in adolescents, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the steps taken to address the growing mental health concerns linked to early smartphone usage among school children, especially with the rise of aggression, anger, and irritability; and
- (c) whether there is any plan to launch any mental health awareness campaigns targeted for young people and their families to raise awareness about the effects of excessive smartphone usage, if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND  
FAMILY WELFARE  
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a) to (c) The Government has not conducted any study on the correlation between smartphone usage among school students and mental health issues, particularly in adolescents.

To address the burden of mental health issues, 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 major 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.

Under the tertiary care component of NMHP, 25 Centres of Excellence have been sanctioned to increase the intake of students in PG departments in mental health specialities as well as to provide tertiary level treatment facilities. Further, the Government has also supported 19

Government medical colleges/institutions to strengthen 47 PG Departments in mental health specialties.

The Government is also taking steps to strengthen mental healthcare services at primary healthcare level. The Government has upgraded more than 1.75 lakh Sub Health Centres (SHCs) and Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. Mental health services have been added in the packages of services under Comprehensive Primary Health Care provided at these Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. Operational guidelines and training manuals for various cadres on Mental, Neurological, and Substance Use Disorders (MNS) at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have been released under the ambit of Ayushman Bharat.

There are 47 Government run mental hospitals in the country, including 3 Central Mental Health Institutions, viz. National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bengaluru, Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health, Tezpur, Assam and Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi. Mental Health Services are also provisioned in all AIIMS.

Ayushman Bharat School Health & Wellness Programme incorporates “Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health” as a dedicated module. Health and Wellness Ambassadors (Teachers) are trained on mental health along with other thematic areas of the programme to support and provide awareness to school children on mental health and well-being.

In order to ensure holistic development of adolescent population, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare implements the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) since 2014. RKSK covers both school going and non-school going adolescents. It is a paradigm shift from the clinic-based services to promotion and prevention and reaching adolescents in their own environment, such as in schools, families and communities. Mental Health is one of the key thematic areas of RKSK apart from Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), nutrition, injuries and violence (including gender-based violence), non-communicable diseases and substance misuse.

The Ministry of Education, has been actively working towards improving the mental health and wellbeing of students across the country. An initiative of Ministry, MANODARPAN, covers a wide range of activities to provide psychological support to students, teachers and families for mental and emotional well-being during the COVID outbreak and beyond.

UGC has issued Guidelines for Promotion of Physical Fitness, Sports, Student's Health, Welfare, Psychological and Emotional Well-being at HEIs which provides for promoting physical fitness and sports activities for students; creating safeguards against academic pressure, peer pressure, behavioural issues, stress, career concerns, depression and other issues on the mental health of students; to teach positive thinking & emotions in the student community; and to promote a positive and supportive network for students

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has issued guidelines for safe and effective use of internet and digital technologies in schools and school buses. Pragyatah is a set of guidelines developed by the Ministry of Education to help schools use digital technology.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has also issued guidelines for limiting screen time and online safety.

Besides the above, the Government has launched a “National Tele Mental Health Programme” on 10th October, 2022, to further improve access to quality mental health counselling and care services in the country. As on 19.03.2025, 36 States/ UTs have set up 53 Tele MANAS Cells and have started tele mental health services. More than 19,67,000 calls have been handled on the helpline number.

The Government has also launched Tele MANAS Mobile Application on the occasion of World Mental Health Day - October 10, 2024. Tele-MANAS Mobile Application is a comprehensive mobile platform that has been developed to provide support for mental health issues ranging from well being to mental disorders.

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