

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 272
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02ND DECEMBER, 2025**

RIISING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AMONG YOUTH

272. SMT. REKHA SHARMA:

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

- (a) whether Government has assessed the growing mental health challenges, particularly among youth;
- (b) the measures taken to strengthen mental health infrastructure under the National Mental Health Programme; and
- (c) whether Government has taken note of the increasing and unregulated use of mental health chatbots, and if so, the steps being taken to ensure their ethical, effective, and safe deployment for public well-being?

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

- (a) The Government conducted the National Mental Health Survey (NMHS), 2016 of India through the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru in 12 States of the country, as per which the prevalence of Neurotic and Stress related disorders is 3% to 4.65% for the age group of 18-49 years and the prevalence of diagnosable mental disorders in the age group of 18-29 yr at 7.5 per cent.
- (b) The Government has taken the following steps in order to strengthen mental health infrastructure under the National Mental Health Programme:
 - i. The National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) has been implemented in the country since 1982 to ensure the availability and accessibility of minimum mental healthcare for all in the foreseeable future, particularly to the most vulnerable and underprivileged sections of the population.
 - ii. The District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) was introduced as component of the

NMHP in 1996, The DMHP has been sanctioned for implementation in 767 districts for which support is provided to States/UTs through the National Health Mission. Facilities made available under DMHP at the Community Health Centre(CHC) and Primary Health Centre(PHC) levels, inter- alia, include outpatient services, assessment, counselling/ psycho-social interventions, continuing care and support to persons with severe mental disorders, drugs, outreach services, ambulance services etc. In addition to above services there is a provision of 10 bedded in-patient facility at the District level.

- iii. Under the tertiary care component of NMHP, under Manpower Development Scheme-A, 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 under Manpower Development Scheme-B. The number of Mental Health OPD services including teleconsultations provided by COE's / Dept. of Psychiatry under NMHP in the FY 2024-25 are 25,24,758.
 - iv. The Government has launched a “National Tele Mental Health Programme” (NTMHP) on 10th October, 2022, that functions as the digital arm of the District Mental Health Programme to provide universal access to equitable, accessible, affordable and quality mental health care through 24 x 7 tele-mental health counselling services. For this, a toll-free number (14416) has been set up across the country.
 - v. As on 27.11.2025, 36 States/ UTs have set up 53 Tele MANAS Cells. Tele-MANAS services are available in 20 languages based on language opted by States. More than 29,82,000 calls have been handled on the helpline number.
 - vi. 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.
 - vii. The Government has also launched the video consultation facility under Tele-MANAS, as another upgrade to the already existing audio calling facility.
- (c) The Indian Council of Medical Research has rolled out the Ethical Guidelines for use of artificial intelligence (AI) in research and healthcare which provides a framework for the ethical development, deployment, and governance of AI-based solutions not only for health research but also for healthcare (Ethical guidelines for application of artificial intelligence in biomedical research and healthcare. ICMR. 2023. https://www.icmr.gov.in/icmrobject/custom_data/pdf/Ethical-guidelines/Ethical_Guidelines_AI_Healthcare_2023.pdf).

The purpose of the Guideline is to provide an ethics framework which can assist in the

development, deployment, and adoption of AI-based solutions for biomedical research and healthcare delivery. The guidelines are intended to guide the stakeholders in ethical conduct of research that provides AI solutions in healthcare and to help in identifying and negotiating emerging ethical challenges and concerns.
