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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3098
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13TH DECEMBER, 2024

MENACE OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

3098. SHRI S JAGATHRATCHAKAN:

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

(a) whether the Government agree with the view that one of the ways to curb the menace of mental health issues is to foster robust academic research and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the initiatives formulated in this regard keep in mind that the issue of mental health is vital for human wellbeing; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

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

(a) to (c): The Government recognizes that mental health is vital for human well-being. It acknowledges the importance of fostering robust academic research to address mental health issues and has taken several initiatives in this regard.

NIMHANS has contributed to the Bellary District Mental Health Program (DMHP), which set a precedent for integrating mental health services into primary healthcare, serving as the prototype for the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP). It demonstrated how mental health services could be integrated into primary healthcare through structured training and systematic implementation. Now, the DMHP is made operational in the majority districts across India.

25 Centres of Excellence have been funded under the tertiary care component of NMHP. These centers focus on enhancing postgraduate education and conducting cutting-edge research in mental health specialties. Furthermore, the Digital Academies established at premier institutions such as NIMHANS, Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health (LGBRIMH), and Central Institute of Psychiatry (CIP) offer online training programs to healthcare professionals, integrating research and practice to address gaps in mental healthcare delivery.

Government has encouraged the implementation research in the area of Mental Health using evidence based interventions in partnership with various academic institutes, state governments and other partner agencies.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has informed that it has undertaken National Health Research Priority Projects in the area of mental health. It also funds extramural and intramural research on areas like

early detection, prevention, and management of mental illnesses. Additional collaborations undertaken by ICMR in mental health research are:

1) The ICMR Centre for Advanced Research on Digital Interventions for Mental Health Care has been established at NIMHANS, fostering research on digital mental health solutions.

2) ICMR has funded Centre for Advanced Research and Excellence in Neuromodulation in Mental Health at AIIMS Delhi, fostering research on cognitive functions of mental health issues.

Studies supported by ICMR have provided valuable insights into risk factors, psychosocial interventions, and community-based approaches to mental health care, in addition to paving ways to understand the biological underpinnings of mental illnesses.

Further, the Government's initiatives demonstrate a comprehensive approach to mental health:

1. The outcomes of research initiatives have paved way for the inclusion of mental health in the Mental, Neurological, and Substance Use Disorders (MNS) package under the Ayushman Arogya Mandir initiative. This integration ensures that primary healthcare systems address mental health as part of comprehensive care.

2. National Mental Health Policy in 2014 was launched that gives a comprehensive roadmap incorporating a life course and rights-based approach for providing mental healthcare. The Government has implemented a rights based Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 that guarantees basic mental health services to all citizens of the country.

3. To improve awareness, Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities are integrated into National Mental Health Programme, focusing on community engagement through mediums such as local newspapers, radio, street plays, and wall paintings. These efforts ensure that mental health literacy reaches grassroots levels.

4. In the education sector, programs like Mano Darpan and the Ayushman Bharat School Health and Wellness Programme embed emotional wellbeing into school curricula. Mano Darpan provides psychosocial support through a national helpline and online resources, while Ayushman Bharat trains teachers as Health and Wellness Ambassadors to address mental health concerns in school children.

5. Among other initiatives, Government has established a 24/7 helpline Tele MANAS offering psychosocial support. By setting up 53 Tele MANAS cells, the program ensures that individuals across the country, especially in remote areas, can access mental health services through telecommunication. Till date, about 16.4 lakh calls have been serviced through Tele MANAS. Recently, an android version Tele MANAS App was released.

Such multi-faceted approach combines research, service delivery, and capacity building to create a comprehensive mental health care system in India.

*****