World Mental Health Report: WHO

For Prelims: WHO, Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan, Manodarpan

For Mains: Issue of Mental Health

Why in News?

Recently the **World Health Organization (WHO)** released the **World Mental Health Report.**

What are the highlights of the report?

- WHO has called for more action on addressing mental health issues worldwide, especially now that the 'Covid-19' **pandemic** has been cited as contributing to **worsening mental health.**
- Almost a billion people, 14% of whom were adolescents, were living with some form of mental health issues in 2019. For some, this resulted in dying by suicide which accounted for one in 100 deaths, with more than half of them happening before the age of 50.
- Depression and anxiety spiked 25 % in the first year of the pandemic (2020).
- All 194 WHO member states have adopted the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan **2013–2030** but progress has been slow.
- Other **structural threats** to mental well-being besides the pandemic include social and economic inequalities, public health emergencies, war and the climate crisis.
- Those living with mental health issues **live some two decades less than the general population.**
- Access to mental health services remains poor. Globally, **71% of psychosis patients don't receive treatment.** High-income countries provide treatment to 70% psychosis patients and low-income countries manage the same for just 12%.
- The WHO's report **lists three key 'paths to transformation**' to quicken progress on the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2030.
  - These include more focussed investment in **mental health, reshaping environments** such as homes, communities, schools, workplaces and health care services that influence mental health and **strengthening the quality of mental health care** by diversifying it.

What is Mental health?

- According to the **World Health Organization (WHO),** mental health is a **state of well-being** in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.'
- **Like Physical health, Mental health is also important** at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

What are the Challenges related to Mental Health?

- **High Public Health Burden**: An estimated **150 million people across India** are in need of mental health care interventions, according to India's latest **National Mental Health Survey**

2015-16.

- **Lack of Resources: Low proportion of the mental health workforce** in India (per 100,000 population) include psychiatrists (0.3), nurses (0.12), psychologists (0.07) and social workers (0.07).
  - **Low financial resource allocation** of just over a percent of **Gross Domestic Product** on healthcare has created impediments in public access to affordable mental healthcare.
- **Other Challenges: Poor awareness about the symptoms of mental illness**, social stigma and abandonment of mentally ill, especially old and destitute, leads to social isolation and reluctance on part of family members to seek treatment for the patient.
  - This has resulted in a massive **treatment gap**, which further worsens the present mental illness of a person.
- **Post-Treatment gap:** There is **need for proper rehabilitation** of the mentally ill persons post his/her treatment which is currently not present.
- **Rise in Severity**: Mental health problems tend to **increase during economic downturns**, therefore special attention is needed during times of economic distress.

What are the Steps Taken by the Government for Promoting Mental Health?

- **Constitutional Provision:** SC has held healthcare to be a fundamental right under **Article 21** of the Constitution.
- **National Mental Health Program (NMHP)**: To address the huge burden of mental disorders and shortage of qualified professionals in the field of mental health, the government has been implementing the **National Mental Health Program (NMHP) since 1982.**
  - The Program was **re-strategized in 2003** to include two schemes, viz. Modernization of State Mental Hospitals and Up-gradation of Psychiatric Wings of Medical Colleges/General Hospitals.
- **Mental HealthCare Act 2017:** It guarantees **every affected person access to mental healthcare** and treatment from services run or funded by the government.
  - It has significantly reduced the scope for the use of Section 309 IPC and made the attempt to commit suicide punishable only as an exception.
- **Kiran Helpline:** In 2020, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched a **24/7 toll-free helpline 'Kiran'** to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns.
- **Manodarpan:** The Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) launched it under **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**. It is aimed to provide **psychosocial support to students, family members and teachers** for their mental health and well-being during the times of **Covid-19.**

Way Forward

- **Mental health situation in India** demands active policy interventions and resource allocation by the government.
- To reduce the **stigma around mental health**, we need measures to train and sensitize the community/society.
- When it **comes to providing the right care to patients** with mental illness, we need mental health care intervention to the patients, we need innovative models to deepen the penetration of services and staff.
  - One such model is **Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)** by the ministry of health and family welfare.
- India needs a **constant stream of funds for educating and creating awareness** about mental health and chronic issues around it.
- The need of the hour is to provoke masses to learn about mental health through campaigns like **Swachh Mansikta Abhiyan.**

Source: DTE