

# Issue of Mental health

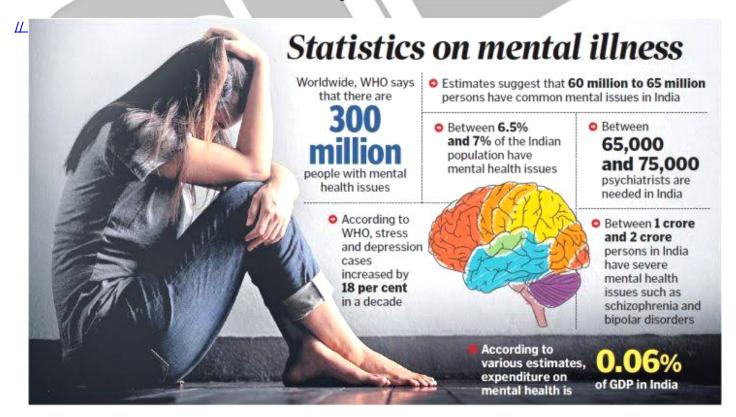
### Why in News

Recently, the <u>Supreme Court</u> has said the judiciary should not treat the mental health of a person with a **one-size-fits-all approach**, upholding the need for judges to be sensitive to the gravity of mental health issues.

- SC noted that an individual copes with a threat both physical and emotional, expressing (or refraining to express) love, loss, sorrow and happiness, varies greatly in view of the multi-faceted nature of the human mind and emotions.
- World Mental Health Day is observed on 10<sup>th</sup> October every year

## **Key Points**

- About:
  - According to the <u>World Health Organization (WHO)</u>, 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.



#### Challenges:

- 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.
- Steps Taken by the Government:
  - 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-strategize 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.
  - <u>Kiran Helpline</u>: 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.

# **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 **Swach Mansikta Abhiyan.**

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