



World Mental Health Day

For Prelims: [World Mental Health Day](#), National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences, [National Mental Health Programme](#), [Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres](#), [National Tele Mental Health Programme](#)

For Mains: Status of Mental Healthcare in India, Government Initiatives Related to Mental Health, Population and associated issues

Source: TH

Why in News?

10th October marks [World Mental Health Day](#), a global initiative aimed at raising awareness about [mental health issues](#) and rallying support for mental health care worldwide.

- In the context of India, this day **serves as a crucial reminder of the urgent need to address the mental health challenges** faced by the country's burgeoning [adolescent population](#) (aged 10-19 years) which plays a pivotal role in its future prosperity and development.
- **Theme for World Mental Health Day 2023:** Mental health is a universal human right.

Note: World Mental Health Day was established on **10th October, 1992** by the **World Federation for Mental Health**. Since then, it has been observed every year.

What is the Status of Mental Healthcare in India?

- **About:**
 - Mental health refers to a **person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being**, encompassing their overall mental and emotional state.
 - It involves a person's ability to cope with **stress, manage their emotions**, maintain healthy relationships, work productively, and make rational decisions.
 - Mental health is an integral part of overall health and well-being, **just as important as physical health**.
- **Status in India:**
 - In India, according to [National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences](#) data, more than **80% of people do not access care services** for a multitude of reasons, ranging from **lack of knowledge, stigma and high cost of care**.
 - The economic loss due to mental health conditions, between 2012-2030, is estimated at **USD 1.03 trillion (WHO)**.
- **Government Initiatives Related to Mental Health:**
 - [National Mental Health Programme \(NMHP\)](#)
 - [Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres \(AB-HWC\)](#)

- [National Tele Mental Health Programme](#)
- [Kiran Helpline](#)
- [Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram](#)
- [Yuva Spandana Yojana \(Karnataka\)](#)

▪ **Issues Surrounding Mental Health in India:**

- **Limited Accessibility to Mental Healthcare:** There is a shortage of mental health professionals in India, particularly in rural areas.
 - This scarcity results in **unequal access to mental health services**, with urban areas having more resources than rural ones.
- **Stigma and Lack of Awareness:** Mental health issues in India are often stigmatized and misunderstood.
 - Many individuals and families **hesitate to seek help due to fear of [societal discrimination](#)** and lack of awareness about mental health conditions.
- **Vulnerability of Adolescents to Mental Health Challenges:** Adolescence marks the **transition from childhood to adulthood**, laden with unique challenges, including **body image issues and societal expectations**.
 - **Academic pressure, peer influence, and concerns** about the future can significantly affect mental health during adolescence.
 - In India, adolescents with a reported prevalence of severe mental illness stands at 7.3%.
- **Gender Disparities:** Gender plays a significant role in mental health disparities.
 - **[Women in India](#)** may face higher rates of **depression, anxiety, and domestic violence**, and they often have limited autonomy in seeking help.
 - According to recent report of NCRB, **housewives constituted 50% of total suicides** in India in 2021.
- **Economic Factors: Poverty and economic inequality** can exacerbate mental health issues.
 - The stress of financial instability and limited educational opportunities can contribute to mental health problems.
- **Online and Social Media Influences:** The influence of social media and online content on mental health is a growing concern.
 - **[Cyberbullying](#), social comparison, and the spread of misinformation** can negatively impact mental well-being.
- **Aging Population and Geriatric Mental Health:** India's **aging population** is growing, and there is a need for better **mental health support for the elderly**.
 - **Loneliness, depression, and dementia** are common concerns among older adults.
- **Disaster and Trauma:** Natural disasters and other traumatic events can have lasting effects on mental health.
 - India is prone to disasters like **[floods](#) and [earthquakes](#)**, which can lead to trauma and **post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**.

Way Forward

- **Shift to Convergent Model of Mental Health:** Policymakers should move from the **medical model to a convergent model of mental health** that considers various factors influencing well-being throughout an individual's life.
 - For example, the successful implementation of the **'Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child'** model in the US, which embraces a holistic approach to children's well-being by considering factors such as nutrition, physical activity, and emotional health within the school environment.
- **Increased Mental Healthcare Infrastructure:** Invest in building more mental health clinics and facilities, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
 - Train and recruit more mental health professionals, including **psychiatrists, psychologists, and counselors**.
 - Promote telemedicine and online mental health services to bridge the gap between urban and rural areas and increase accessibility.
- **Integration with Primary Healthcare:** There is a need to integrate mental health services into

the existing primary healthcare system to ensure early detection and treatment.

- Also, **training primary care providers** to identify and manage common mental health issues is equally important.

- **Inclusion of Mental Health in Education:** There is a need to incorporate mental health education into school curricula to promote **early awareness and destigmatization.**
- **Mental Health Insurance Coverage:** There is a need to expand mental health coverage under health insurance policies in a phase wise manner to make **treatment more affordable and accessible.**
 - Also, there is a need to implement policies that ensure insurance parity for mental health services.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

Mains

Q. Why suicide among young women is increasing in Indian society? (2023)

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