

# Understanding Importance of Mental Health and Therapy in India

Fatin Tirmizi

BBA LLB 4<sup>th</sup> Year student, United World School of Law, Karnavati University, Ahmedabad, India.

\*Corresponding Author Email: tirmizifatin@gmail.com

## Abstract

The research article has focused on understanding the importance of Mental Health and Therapy in India from the aspect of laws and regulations such as Mental Health Policy 2014 (MHP 2014) and The Mental Healthcare Act 2017 (MHCA 2017) regarding psychological aspects. Primary reason for working on this aspect is that mental health is an integral part of the health of people that goes beyond providing therapy for mental illness by encouraging people for effective functioning and well-being through rehabilitation, treatment, and prevention of mental disorders. The themes that have helped in working on this aspect include Paradigm Shift in The Medical Model Of Disability, Cost of Estimation of Mental Healthcare Act of 2017 in India, Mental Healthcare is a Justiciable right, and, Mental health of Child and Adolescent is a matter of Concern. This study has also discussed every aspect of the result collected from the journal articles in minute detail.

## Keywords

Awareness, Mental Health, Mental Health Therapy, Therapy, India, Mental healthcare in India, Mental Healthcare Act and psychological law

## INTRODUCTION

Mental health reflects the emotional, social, and psychological well-being of people affecting the thinking, action, and feeling of every individual. Determining the procedure of handling stress and making healthy choices by relating to others. Primary reason for such a fact is that whether it is childhood, adulthood, or adolescence mental health is essential for every stage of life, and it is no different in the case of India when it comes to protecting the society and nation from unemployment, poverty, broken families, and drug abuse and related crime. Hence, this article focuses on understanding the importance of Mental Health and Therapy in India from the aspect of laws and regulations such as MHCA 2017 and MHP 2014 regarding psychological aspects.

## Research Background

Mental health is an integral part of the health of people that goes beyond curing mental illness by encouraging people for effective functioning and well-being through rehabilitation, treatment, and prevention of mental disorders. As per the estimation of World Health Organization (WHO), In India, the burden of mental health problems is quite high with the average 2443 disability-adjusted life per 1000 population every year. At the same time, the rate of suicide per 100000 population is 21.1 as per age-adjusted perspective. However, the country has focused on providing quality service provision for right-based and participatory approach in the form of Mental Health Policy 2014 (MHP 2014) and The Mental Healthcare Act 2017 (MHCA 2017) [1].

## Rationale

Individual attributes are important in the determination of the issue and the health problem among the participants in

India in the context of Rights of People with Disabilities of United Nations Convention that is UNCRPD. Hence, the issue of the article revolves around mental health and its importance in India along with the therapy relevant in this country in the line of the existing system to fight for mental health awareness [2]. It is an issue as mental health affects the social, economical, and psychological aspects of human life. In this case, it is an issue as the country faces issues regarding suicide, drug abuse, and the number of cases regarding mental health is increasing in this nation. Hence, this article focuses on developing a better understanding of the situation based on mental health that are important in this context.

## Aim and Objectives

Aim of the research article is to develop a better understanding and gain knowledge regarding the importance of mental health and mental health therapy in India from the context of laws and legislations.

Objectives of the research article are:

- To explore different dimensions of mental health
- To understand importance of mental health
- To analyse importance of mental health in India
- To understand most suitable ways to resolve the issues regarding mental health in India

## Research Questions

- What are the different dimensions of mental health?
- How important is mental health?
- What is the importance of mental health in India?
- Which are the most suitable ways to resolve the issues regarding mental health in India?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Paradigm

Research philosophy is the base of any research article that helps in the development of knowledge along with specifying the nature and source of the collected data for the establishment of the study. Primarily, socially constructive philosophy and positivism philosophy are the most popular research philosophies that help in developing a research article most efficiently [3]. In this case, selected philosophy is Interpretivism Philosophy that is socially constructed to gain the advantages of subjectivity of scientific approach from the concern of human interest. Observation of multiple perspectives and socially constructed approaches is the most important aspect of this philosophy that is balanced through the inductive approach of the study.

Inductive approach is one of the most popular research approaches among inductive, deductive, and abductive approaches of research that helps in generating theory from the supports and context of the research area through a flexible approach. This approach has helped in this article to establish the possibility that will be encountered in future in the field of mental health and therapy in India. A descriptive design has been selected to complement the research philosophy and approach to reach the aim and objectives of this article that is descriptive of the population, situation, and the phenomenon of research in a systematic way. Primary reason for selecting this design is to get the answer of how, where, and what questions related to the research problem rather than the why question of the study.

### Data Collection Method

Method of collecting the data and establishing it efficiently is the most important aspect in developing a research article that creates differences regarding involvement of the data. In this article, the source of the data is a secondary source that represents the already existing data set in the form of reports, research articles, and journal articles from the previous works of researchers. Most importantly, the collected data from the secondary sources are qualitative that are non-numeric in nature [4]. The tools that have been used to collect data from secondary sources include journal articles, books, and websites articles written on the selected research area in English within the last five years. No article or report older than that has not been used to develop this study. Hence, the observation of the secondary qualitative data has helped in completing the task of reaching the aim and objectives.

### Data Analysis Technique

Qualitative technique of analysing the secondary qualitative data has been used to develop themes that has helped in conducting thematic analysis of data to reach the aim of the article [5]. This article has got the more accessible form of analysis that is not supervised in nature and that does not need any previous setup for the categories.

### Reliability and Validity

The reliability of the research article is based on the reliability of the peer-reviewed and full-text research articles that have helped in collecting genuine non-numeric data from the work of previous researchers. Along with that, the selection of the research articles only from the last five years have helped in maintaining the validity of the data.

### Ethical Consideration

Collection of the secondary data comes with the ethical concerns such as not violating the data collected from the different secondary sources. Due to this reason, this article has only collected data from reliable and reputable online sites to collect full-text and peer-reviewed articles for the data [5]. At the same time, no bias has been applied while collecting or representing the information. It has also influenced the ethical consideration of acknowledging the sources through proper references and in-text citation.

## RESULTS

### Theme 1: Paradigm Shift in The Medical Model of Disability

As per the convention of the United Nations regarding Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is the time to shift the paradigm by going beyond the equality barriers regarding political, economic, social, laws, attitudes of people, and government policies. Social models have already started to recognise the importance of consent and decision-making process of people with disability regarding treatment by equal recognition of law [6]. Hence, implementing the convention regarding Rights of Persons with Disabilities has also started to gain structure in countries such as India through Indian Mental Health Act of 2017.

### Theme 2: Mental HealthCare Act of 2017

Primarily, the administration of medication and mental health services requires informed consent as per the MCHA 2017. However, it has also allowed substitute decision-making only in the situations that an individual "ceased" to possess the ability or capacity to make decisions for themselves regarding any medication [7]. Basic need and aspect of the Act is to protect the right of the individuals to report any deficiency or violation by mental health services along with the admission to hospital that is a subject to the consent from the individual.

### Theme 3: Cost of Estimation of Mental Healthcare Act of 2017 in India

In India, the mental health budget is <1% of India's total health budget while annual health expenditure is 1.15% of gross domestic product (GDP). Most importantly, the cost of implementing MHCA 2017 from the end of the Indian government would be 94, 073 crore rupees in total, and the estimated return of investment yield 6.5 times of the investment from the analysis of the benefits [8]. It is worth noting that in 2007, the Government of India has ratified the

UNCRPD by obligating and mandating the laws of the country regarding mental health and awareness and therapy with the Convention.

#### **Theme 4: Mental Healthcare and Therapy is much more important than it seems in India**

MCHA 2017 is aimed at providing proper healthcare and services to the persons with Mental Illness by protecting the rights through proper promotion and fulfilment of the services to such people. Hence, it is important for the healthcare services to provide the right based, patient-centric, and progressive support to the people with need for mental health services by applying Section 18 for all and sections 19-28 for PMI only [8]. Most importantly, the vision of the government regarding MHCA 2017 revolves around appropriate articulation of the Act will all the welfare responsibilities. Most importantly, every individual has the right to access mental health care in India as per Section 18 of the MCHA Act. In cases of failure of the government to take the responsibilities of the PMI it is essential to reimbursement of the Government for the costs of treatment as per section 18, 5(f) of the Act [9].

#### **Theme 5: Mental Healthcare is a Justiciable right**

Amenability of an issue revolves around the justiciability of any condition that has also been noticed in the case of paradigm shift of the Act that has considered mental healthcare as "justiciable" rights. Moreover, ensuring the good quality, affordable, and accessible services for the PMI is the most important factor in this Act along with every individual. Provision of mental health services is mandatory for every district of this nation as every State is legally bound to provide the right to every citizen as per MCHA, 2017 [9]. This aspect ensures accountability of the government from the aspect of socio-economic right that is the right to access mental healthcare for everyone.

#### **Theme 6: Mental health of Child and Adolescent is a matter of Concern**

As mentioned by Hossain and Purohit (2019), around 50 million Indian children suffer from mental disorders at any given point of time that could be increased with the adolescent population that creates serious concern in this country. Even after serious concern regarding this issue, there is no comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) Policy in India. However, the history of the earlier efforts to address problems for CAMH in India shows establishment of the child guidance clinic for the first time in 1937, and in 1940, Indian Council for Mental Hygiene was established. In 1980, the number of child guidance clinics in the country increased to 120, and it was operated by 400 caregivers [9]. There are a number of policies and Acts regarding child development in the form of national Policy for Children in 1974, Policy on labour in 1987 and Policy on Education in 1986 while in 1987 the Mental Health Act was introduced that provided rights to mental health services to everyone. However, the paradigm of the mental health

services regarding these policies shifted as per the convention of the United Nation.

#### **Theme 7: Workplace Mental Health Interventions in India is no less important**

A large working population belongs to the age group between 15 and 64 years of age in India, and the mental health problems in this population is a growing concern of public health. Anxiety, depression, and stress are some Non-Communicable Diseases among working populations that creates issues such as absenteeism and reduced work performance. Due to this reason, the implication of mental health programmes, policies, and better services regarding mental health therapy are important aspects for the working population. Unemployment and disability also come with the issues regarding mental disorders in working populations. As per the report of WHO, the estimated economic loss in India from 2012 to 2013 is USD 1.03 trillion [10]. Therefore, most of the NCDs happen among people below 60 years of age, that is the working-age population.

#### **Theme 8: Awareness of mental health is helpful in understanding the importance of limiting mental illness**

Stress and anxiety have become quite common with the workplace environment and mental illness in India, and it is essential to work on the awareness among the people to fight the situation related to the perception regarding this problem. Social stigma is one of the most crucial barriers in providing the best services and care for creating difference in the entire procedure of increasing knowledge pertaining to treatment, disorders, and mental health methods [10]. Primary reason for the importance of awareness is that most people do not know that they need psychological help from a professional as they do not recognise the signs of mental illness. Sleeping and low motivation are the symptoms of depression, and it is not known by most of the individuals in India as family members misattribute this sign as laziness.

### **DISCUSSION**

As per the report of Sample Registration System of India in 2018, the demographic dividend of the nation continues to grow from Census 2011 that showed 474 million working population in the country. Even when the pace of development of the mental healthcare services in India is quite slow, the improvement in the procedure of implying mental health conditions among children and adolescents in school and among the working population in workplaces are quite impressive [11]. The inter-play between other health disorders and mental health is not adequately appreciated and discussed in this country, and due to this reason, the burden of mental disorders has already increased and the factor has affected the entire procedure of mental health condition.

Mental health awareness is one of the most crucial aspects that has come with the positive outcomes for the strategies undertaken to go beyond the social stigma regarding mental illness. The participation of the family and social inclusion regarding improvement of the healthcare system for PMI

always helps in improving the condition of the care delivery system. Most importantly, the role of community-based systems has also affected the impact of the issue on the participants [11]. Health literacy and awareness are the most crucial aspects in eliminating discrimination and stigma when it comes to establishing a society free of misinformation and ignorance. Shift of the paradigm from the improvement of the health condition of every person from the psychological aspect has also helped in the condition of implying MCHA 2017 to every aspect of the recognition of the law [12]. At the same time, the importance of awareness needs to be understood by the society at large along with the family members to help the patients to improve their condition.

It is an undeniable fact that it is the right of the people suffering from NCDs to make decisions regarding the treatment. However, the suggestive approach of the decision for the family is no less important when it comes to making it easier for the healthcare services providers to select the most suitable strategies to help any person cease to make decisions as per their health condition. Mental hygiene and the intervention of the schools, colleges, and university to help the children and adolescence to stay healthier along with the adults play the most important role in developing a healthier society [12]. This approach has the ability to boost the quality and skill of the next generation to go beyond the mental issues and stress to create a more productive world. In this case, the support from the workplaces is no less important to manage the stress of the working population to maintain the productivity of workers along with reducing absenteeism. Lack of knowledge regarding the mental system cannot help the mental health care providers to deliver the best out of the system. Hence, community-based systems are required to create awareness and public participation to improve the condition.

In this age of digitalization and high-speed internet the government programme and the intervention of the law has become easier with the awareness contribution by using different platforms. For example, the conventional media is no less important even in this age of advanced technology to provide essential information to remote areas. On the other hand, the internet and social media play the most important part in creating awareness among the large number of people.

Government programmes are also evident in the case of the Government of India as through Ayushman Bharat, for the first time in this country, the Government has started to cover mental illness with 5 lakhs of insurance [13]. This scheme has 17 packages for mental health disorders that include the use of psychoactive substances. In India, there is the availability of Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and many blood tests along with Repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) to improve mental health therapy. From this concern, it is clear that the improvement of the system in the case of India has been started with the involvement of the mental health treatment therapies that are also covered in the health insurance.

It is an undeniable fact that it is only the public sector hospitals that provide the insurance facilities and not the private hospitals are liable to provide the insurance facilities for the treatment. At the same time, some of the State Governments in India have opted out from the Ayushman Bharat Scheme with their own health schemes. For example, in the State of West Bengal, there is a Health Insurance scheme from the government of West Bengal named SwasthyaSathi that provides 5 lakhs of cover up for a family annually. However, there is no cover for the mentally challenged and mental illness though it provides free treatment and medicines through government hospitals. It is quite the same in the case of Aarogyasri Health Scheme of Telangana State Government that covers post therapy for specified procedures and diseases for one year, and there is no cover for mental illness [13]. There is no difference in the case of Delhi Government's "Quality Health for All" scheme that provides health covers in many areas except mental disorders. However, the case is different in Odisha as Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojna from this state government has covered the cost of psychiatric disorders related treatment in government hospitals along with other areas of diseases. Hence, there is a need for some of the State Governments to imply MHCA 2017 for all without any discrimination by following up for mental disorders alongwith cost of OPD treatment [13].

Despite all the efforts from the Indian Government there is a lack of awareness and promotions in mental health aspects. Most importantly, the inclusion of every individual and awareness among the family members is the crucial factor to gain success in this case. Primary health care level requires to provide more cost-effective treatment as per the schemes and programmes from the end of the government intervention. However, intervention from the government is not enough as it requires the similar support and interest among the people to talk about the issue through mobilised efforts [14]. Simultaneously, it is not only the case of creating a different sense regarding mental health, it is also about encouraging people to understand the importance of mental health, equity, and equality in healthcare. The infrastructure needs to be strengthened more efficiently to provide the best quality services to the people with the need for therapies that are costly in the consequences of mental illness.

Determinants of mental health are also an important factor in the case of creating differences regarding interactions with others along with the behaviours, emotions, and thoughts [15]. The management of the thoughts efficiently on the basis of the environmental, economic, cultural, and social factors are the parts of personality and psychological aspects in India. As a diverse country, in India, the cultural aspects are quite different from one place to another, and this aspect has made it more difficult for the State Governments and Central Government of India to promote mental health awareness [16].

## CONCLUSION

Mental health is an integral part of healthy society and country, and this aspect has been explored and understood in concern to the importance of mental health and therapy in India. In India, the Government Schemes in some States are lacking in the procedure of meeting mental health awareness even in this period that is against the equality of MHCA 2017. Hence, even after the paradigm shift of Government of India regarding implying United Nation Convention in right for mental disability, State Governments have not implied the cover up for mental illness in OPD and post treatment in health insurance schemes. Therefore, there is a large scope for the country to understand the importance of mental health along with the awareness for people from every area of society.

Intervention of the schools, colleges, and university for mental hygiene will always help in improving the condition regarding improvement of the next generation. The responsibility for a better society lies on everyone including, the families, government, and the social leaders to help the people suffering from mental illness. Promotional activities play the most important role in the case of increasing awareness among the family members and the individuals suffering from the issue. However, there is a lack of promotional activities regarding mental illness in India that can prevent many people from ending their lives by themselves. Support and therapy for mental health issues are always helpful to go beyond the problems by considering the importance of the issue. Therefore, it is the most important factor to understand the need for mental health awareness and therapy in this country of diversity and multiple socio-cultural aspects.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Math, S. B., Gowda, G. S., Basavaraju, V., Manjunatha, N., Kumar, C. N., Enara, A., ... & Thirthalli, J. (2019). Cost estimation for the implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act 2017. Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 61(Suppl 4), S650.
- [2] Barnett, P., Mackay, E., Matthews, H., Gate, R., Greenwood, H., Ariyo, K., ... & Smith, S. (2019). Ethnic variations in compulsory detention under the Mental Health Act: a systematic review and meta-analysis of international data. The Lancet Psychiatry, 6(4), 305-317.
- [3] Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People, 7(1), 23-48.
- [4] Pandey, P., & Pandey, M. M. (2021). Research methodology tools and techniques. Bridge Center.
- [5] Zangirolami-Raimundo, J., Echeimberg, J. D. O., & Leone, C. (2018). Research methodology topics: Cross-sectional studies. Journal of Human Growth and Development, 28(3), 356-360.
- [6] Sugiura, K., Mahomed, F., Saxena, S., & Patel, V. (2020). An end to coercion: rights and decision-making in mental health care. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 98(1), 52.
- [7] Math, S. B., Gowda, G. S., Basavaraju, V., Manjunatha, N., Kumar, C. N., Enara, A., ... & Thirthalli, J. (2019). Cost estimation for the implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act 2017. Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 61(Suppl 4), S650.
- [8] Amudhan, S., Gururaj, G., Varghese, M., Benegal, V., Rao, G. N., Sheehan, D. V., ... & Shibukumar, T. M. (2020). A population-based analysis of suicidality and its correlates: findings from the National Mental Health Survey of India, 2015–16. The Lancet Psychiatry, 7(1), 41-51.
- [9] Gautham, M. S., Gururaj, G., Varghese, M., Benegal, V., Rao, G. N., Kokane, A., ... & Shibukumar, T. M. (2020). The National Mental Health Survey of India (2016): Prevalence, socio-demographic correlates and treatment gap of mental morbidity. International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 66(4), 361-372.
- [10] Duffy, R. M., & Kelly, B. D. (2019). India's Mental Healthcare Act, 2017: content, context, controversy. International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, 62, 169-178.
- [11] Swaminath, G., Enara, A., Rao, R., Kumar, K. V. K., & Kumar, C. N. (2019). Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 and homeless persons with mental illness in India. Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 61(Suppl 4), S768.
- [12] Singh, O. P. (2019). Insurance for mental illness: government schemes must show the way. Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 61(2), 113.
- [13] Gaiba, S. M., Taylor Salisbury, T., Koschorke, M., Raman, U., & Petticrew, M. (2020). Stigma associated with mental health problems among young people in India: a systematic review of magnitude, manifestations and recommendations. BMC psychiatry, 20(1), 1-24.
- [14] Hossain, M. M., & Purohit, N. (2019). Improving child and adolescent mental health in India: Status, services, policies, and way forward. Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 61(4), 415.
- [15] Das, S. (2020). Mental health and psychosocial aspects of COVID-19 in India: The challenges and responses. Journal of Health Management, 22(2), 197-205.
- [16] Roy, D., Tripathy, S., Kar, S. K., Sharma, N., Verma, S. K., & Kaushal, V. (2020). Study of knowledge, attitude, anxiety & perceived mental healthcare need in Indian population during COVID-19 pandemic. Asian journal of psychiatry, 51, 102083.