

# Inadequacy of India's Approach to Mental Illness

Harsh Arnab Karpatne

**Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of, it is a medical problem just like heart disease or diabetes**

Mental illness are health conditions involving changes in emotions, thinking or behaviour or combination of all these. It can be associated with distress and or problem functioning in social work or family activities. Many people who have mental illness don't want to talk about it. It is just like the other disease that is curable with treatment. We are expanding our understanding of how human brain works and treatments are available to help people successfully manage mental health conditions. Mental illness can occur at any stage as three-fourth of all mental illness begins by age of 24. It may be caused by reaction to environmental stresses, genetic factors biochemical imbalances or combination of these. These are wide range of mental illness condition thinking and behaviour. Some of most common types are clinical, depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, attention deficit, schizophrenia. Many people believe that mental health condition are rare and 'happen to someone else'. In fact mental health condition is common and widespread. An estimated 9.7crore people of India that is roughly 7.5% of population are affected with this illness with availability of less than 7000 experts. Most families are not prepared to cope up with learning their loved one has a mental health illness. It can be physically and emotionally trying and can make feel vulnerable to opinions and judgements of others. Since we all have brains having mental health problem during our life is really common. For people who is suffering from mental illness, their brain have changed in a way that they are unable to think, feel or act in ways they want to. There are many phenomenon of this like, experiencing extreme and unexpected changes in mood- like feeling normal and suddenly feeling more sad or worried than normal. For some it is like not able to think clearly, not being able to communicate with someone who is talking to them, or having bizarre thoughts to help explain weird feeling they are having. There are more than 200 classified forms of mental illness. Symptoms may include changes in mood, personality, personal habits and social withdrawal. It can also be related to excessive stress due to particular situation or series of events. Mental illness may be caused by reaction to environmental stresses, genetic factors, biochemical imbalances. Serious mental illness (SMI) is a term used by health professional to describe most severe mental health condition. Two most common SMI are bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. A mental health problem also interferes with how a person thinks, feels and behaves but to a lesser extent than mental illness, but may develop into mental illness if they are not effectively dealt with. Mental illness causes a great deal of suffering to those experiencing them as well as their families and friends, furthermore, there problems appears to be increasing. According to WHO, depression will be one of the biggest health problem worldwide by the year 2020.

Mental illness is like integral part of our overall health, it is not just the absence of illness, physical pain is more apparent so we can figure it out easily, but mental health is less dramatic and enter slowly, and it is much more common than and much more hard to bear, and also it is major contributing factor of our physical illness. According to says, 'mann prasan toh hi tann prasan', you can have headache because of mental illness, you can have stomach ache due to mental illness. Brain is main control of all our body system, if that is not in good position, then how can we expect or system to work in balanced position. Mental health problems are rising issue among the have-nots as well. Many research finding have highlighted the financial hardship, lack of education, lack of basic resources and inability to provide for one's family to be major factor of mental illness to those of underprivileged. Mental illness is spreading like pandemic, but still our approach towards it is not so much serious, not even of government and its officials as despite according to the mental health care survey (2016) 70% to 90% of those in need of mental health care failed to receive any treatment, one of the reason behind this is we don't have number of professionals to deal with it. According to WHO in India, for every 10 lakh people there is only 3 psychiatrist which is a matter of worry, and also 0.7 psychologists and 0.7 social workers. This is not because we are poor country of poor society, this is because mental health doesn't hold place of importance that other things do, in our country, the number of people who require mental health, whose number is even though it is so high but mental health is forever been neglected. India spends only 0.16% of its total union budget on mental health, which is less than that of Bangladesh which spends 0.44% and that budget should be of 4% at least. As we look into another fact, that in our country union health budget itself is just 2.2% of the total overall budget due to which actual budget of mental health comes down to be just 0.0036% of overall budget. As this issue is spreading like an epidemic but its root cause is its stigma, taboos and myths behind it. The fear that is spread inside us of being stated 'MAD', we scared of that. If we say that this person suffers from tension, or is anxious or not able to perform, show them to psychologist or if that person is not able to sleep at night, and could not able to work at day time, then meet to a psychiatrist, maybe needed with medicine, people approach changes just after listening words like psychiatrist or psychologist, that need to be changed. If someone is suffering from any kind of mental illness, they or their family try to hide it or they do extreme late to seek out for help. Society and even science (in earlier days) identifies mental health or illness as 'madness', 'insanity' or 'lunacy', and when illness is seen like this, negativity is obvious thing, and society is saving themselves from myths of violence that happens from lunacy, and ill people were sent to mental hospital to save society and never thought about ill suffering people and their needs. Another effect that is bad is that people living in society doesn't even recognize that they are suffering or dealing with depression nor people around them identifies. This approach needs to be changed; as we get

Volume 9 Issue 7, July 2020

[www.ijsr.net](http://www.ijsr.net)

Licensed Under Creative Commons Attribution CC BY

symptoms of physical illness and start taking precaution just like that we need to address this illness as well. If any illness related to mental health happens, our approach is to neglect them and not even thinking that it could happen because of chemical reaction in mind. Adverse attitude to mental illness are found in all societies in India and world. The belief that mental health is incurable or self-inflicted can also be damaging, leading to patients not being referred for appropriate mental health care. Psychiatrists are being judged as to be emotionally unstable and 'woolly' thinkers. As a study was conducted to assess beliefs and attitudes of professionals towards mental health. Attitudes assessed in their survey reflects primarily a subjective value system and cannot objectively be deemed accurate or inaccurate. However, some of this attitude reflects incomplete knowledge and it's their negative attitude that can be cured by medical education.

Since we saw mental illness and its approaches in our society as how it is treated. Reason behind that mental illness is not declining in numbers are the way society treats this, first of all mental illness should be treated as normal physical illness and not to create myth, taboos towards it. Solution towards mental illness has to be come at multiple levels. First government should come up with the policies where they actually on practical basis create awareness through media, as we see mental health situation in the country is very poor, there is lack of awareness along with few healthcare workers and low infrastructure to treat mentally ill. Government has launched 'India's first mental health policy' and district mental health programme has been rolled out., but if we came to awareness implementation or policy implementation at ground level not half of the policy is properly implemented. Any of philosophy of community oriented psychosocial core is not happening in any districts of the country. Government should encourage all this policy and awareness as they encouraged awareness about polio, TB and many other physical illness programmes. A separate committee should be established with having ward in each and every hospital in each district with the presence of psychiatrist and psychologists just like any other medical facility. Also mental illness is not seen as 'curse' as it is like any other health problem, for this government with help of NGO's organise seminar and webinars to create awareness. In government schools as well as in private schools and institutions a counsellor should be made compulsory to detach myths and orthodox thinking about mental illness. With implementing all this awareness policies, so that people could get rid of that fear of being called 'mad' and they would be given required treatment. Another factor where we and government are lacking is technical skills to implement mental health programmes. Government approach is very constraint by medical model. As government is looking seriously towards TB and HIV programme, mental health should also be seen with that much seriousness. As mental health is far more complex set of health conditions, so one has to have right technical ability and knowledge to implement mental health programme. As government mental health programme are of capacity and visionary but, at district and block level there is lack of capacity to implement those programmes which should be addressed with full attention. One of most exciting

future of mental illness treatment programme is to de professionalize mental health care to take mental health directly to the population by creating much more awareness and literacy among general population by providing tools for ordinary citizen and young people who are unable to look at their mental health especially when they are unwell. To use community health model such as Asha health work example model to short care about mental health alongside with care of non-communicable diseases, so this can be most important future of mental health. One more point to add is that there is need to empower people with mental illness to become very important agent of change for their own well being, to strengthen the network of people affected by mental illness, will be more effective advocate as well as one of the most effective peer to support one another. In some way, impacts of climate change can also be have an effect on mental health, as it's a greatest threat on livelihood and economic on large section of population on agriculture and when economic security is threaten it directly affect the mental health as it causes suicide of farmers. So, policies can be and should be properly made as well as implemented to secure economic and financial security of people that will ultimately reduce mental illness problem among people of our society. Approach towards mental health and illness can be and surely be changing if policies are implemented and ideology changes towards mentally ill people. This problem can be uprooted from the base.

As we see that mental health illness is nothing but as same as physical health problems and there is nothing to be ashamed about to discuss or convey this problem. As mental illness is medical condition that deserve same respect, consideration and right to treatment as any other illness. As we discuss one fact that government should appoint counsellors for this, as counsellors are not responsible for long term diagnosis of mental health, but can be an important part of collaboration process. Mental illness has been around us since pre-historic time, and societal belief are different about illness as we see different cultures. Despite many medical advancement that have been made, many still believes that it happens by spiritual and religious reasons and that rituals are still used to cure individuals, these norms are need to be changed as it will only create negativity and nothing else with costing the life of mentally ill people. Society beliefs in myths and stigma a lot when it comes to mental health illness. It can lead people to fear disclosing that they have mental health problems which may prevent mental health recovery. It poses barriers for public health prevention efforts designed to minimize onset of mental illness and prevention or worsening of symptoms over time. Brief training in mental health delivered by mental health professionals to practise nurse has a positive impact on their self reported confidence and knowledge. The importance of prevention and early intervention cannot be overstated. The sooner the mental health or addictive disorder is diagnosed and treated; the better outcome is involved for all, just as is the case with diabetics, cancer and heart disease diagnosed early. So, mental health can be and surely be cured if all the measures and needs and implantation are done effectively with some changes of rigid thoughts and ideologies. We can surely remove this problem from our society, country as well as from this world.