



Mental illness in India

Description

Theme :-

- According to 'World Health Organisation' (WHO) report of 2017, approximately 5 crore people in India are going through depression. And if we include the statistics of people suffering from other mental disorders, approximately 10 crore people in India are suffering from some sort of mental disorder. So, mental health is a big issue.

Steps taken by Indian government :-

- Indian government brought Mental Health Care Act in 2017, which replaced the Mental health Act of 1987.
 - This act brought a lot of positive changes such as decriminalising attempt to suicide, which repealed section 309 of Indian Penal Code. People who have certain mental illnesses attempt suicide sometimes. But what they need is support and not police enquiry. Till 2017, attempt to suicide was a punishable offence. Mental Health care Act of 2017 repealed it.
 - It laid out steps to safeguard the rights of people who are suffering from mental illnesses, like treating them with dignity instead of tying them with chains, and explaining them about the treatment options etc.
 - This act also brought programs to tackle with the stigma of mental illnesses.



What more needs to be done :-

- Even though mental health care act of 2017 rolled out programs to raise awareness on mental illnesses, still there is so much stigma associated with mental illnesses. Even today, some people misinterpret the mental illnesses as being possessed by spirits or ghosts. And many people are tying up the patients with chains. Illiteracy and ignorance are the main

reasons for this.

And the shocking thing is that a survey by The Live Love Laugh Foundation, founded by Deepika Padukone revealed that many educated people want to stay away from the people with mental illnesses. And some of them feel that they catch mental illness if they communicate with people who have mental illnesses. And 60% of the people who are participated in the survey opined that mental illnesses are a result of lack of willpower. Though they are educated, they have some wrong notions on mental health.

And another problem is that many people do not even seek help of health professionals, if they are facing mental health issues like depression and anxiety issues. People fear about being judged and labelled. And many people still think that only weak people get mental illnesses.

So, more and more awareness programs should be conducted to educate people about mental health and to encourage them from seeking help.

- There is a dearth of Health care professionals in India, and the situation is even worse when it comes to mental health care professionals. So, more and more people should be trained to treat the people with mental illnesses.
- Many rural areas do not have access to mental health care facilities as much as urban areas. This gap should be filled. Proper distribution of counsellors and other health care professionals is needed.
- At present Indian government spends less than 1% of GDP on Mental health care, but it requires more funding to invest in infrastructure and also to recruit more professionals etc.
- Many students are going through a lot of stress because of the competition and the method of education. And hence Central Board of Secondary Education – CBSE made it mandatory for all schools to have counsellors on board. But only a few schools are following this rule. So, to tackle this issue, Union Health Ministry launched a program in 2018 to train school teachers as counsellors. But that can only serve as a basic support. So, there is a need to appoint counsellors in all schools.

And according to many surveys, most of the employees of all levels are going through so much stress. Now, jobs which do not have stress are scarce. As a result of this, many people are slipping into depression. So, there is a need to hire counsellors to help employees in coping up with stress.

Conclusion :-

Situations have improved a lot in dealing with mental health issues, but still we have a long way to go. There is so much to be done.

Your Turn...

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