

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1233
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09TH FEBRUARY, 2024**

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1233. KUMARI AGATHA K. SANGMA:

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether initiatives taken by the Union Government for sake of mental health patients in the State of Meghalaya giving an overview of the current status of mental healthcare facilities and services in Meghalaya and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether it is a fact that after Covid-19 pandemic mental health has also become major issue in the country and if so, the details thereof, State/ UT-wise;
- (c) whether there is shortage of mental health experts in North Eastern Region and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details and current status of the mental health service in Jowai Meghalaya;
- (e) the details of the number of patients being registered from the year 2021 till current year; and
- (f) whether the Government has any plans/ initiatives to take steps to address such issues in the country and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(PROF. S. P. SINGH BAGHEL)**

(a) to (f) The Government is implementing the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) in the country. The District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) component of the NMHP has been sanctioned for implementation in 738 districts for which support is provided to States/UTs through the National Health Mission. In the State of Meghalaya, DMHP has been sanctioned and functional in all the 11 districts. The Mental Health Services are also available in MIMHANS, Shillong and NEIGHRIMS, Shillong.

Facilities made available under DMHP at the Community Health Centre(CHC) and Primary Health Centre(PHC) levels, include outpatient services, assessment, counselling/ psycho-social interventions, continuing care and support to persons with severe mental disorders, drugs, outreach services, ambulance services etc. In addition to above services there is a provision of 10 bedded in-patient facility at the District level.

Realizing the impact that COVID-19 may have on the mental health of the people, the Government has taken a number of initiatives, including -

- i. Setting up of a 24/7 helpline to provide psychosocial support, by mental health professionals, to the entire affected population, divided into different target groups viz children, adult, elderly, women and healthcare workers.
- ii. Issuance of guidelines/ advisories on management of mental health issues, catering to different segments of the society.
- iii. Advocacy through various media platforms in the form of creative and audio-visual materials on managing stress and anxiety, and promoting an environment of support and care for all.
- iv. Issuance and dissemination of detailed guidelines by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru- "Mental Health in the times of COVID-19 Pandemic - Guidance for General Medical and Specialized Mental Health Care Settings".
- v. All the guidelines, advisories and advocacy material can be accessed on Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website under "Behavioural Health – Psychosocial helpline" (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>).
- vi. Online capacity building of health workers by NIMHANS in providing psychosocial support and training through (iGOT)-Diksha platform.

The number of Mental Health Professionals working under the DMHP in the North-Eastern States may kindly be seen at Annexure.

As per information provided by State of Meghalaya, in Jowai, Mental Health Services has been provided to 572 patients (548-OPD and 24-IPD) and Counselling services are provided to 551 persons through District Counselling Centres between April, 2023 to December, 2023. The Human Resources available at DMHP Unit in the Civil Hospital, Jowai are 01 Psychiatrist (working as Medical Superintendent), 01 Psychologist, 01 Social Worker, 01 Community Nurse and 01 Psychiatric Nurse.

In the State of Meghalaya, the mental health services have been provided to 72,544 cases (New Patients-23429, Follow-up Cases-48966 & Referred Cases-149) from 2020-21 to December, 2023.

Under the tertiary care component of NMHP, 25 Centres of Excellence have been sanctioned to increase the intake of students in PG departments in mental health specialities as well as to provide tertiary level treatment facilities. Further, the Government has also supported 19 Government medical colleges/institutions to strengthen 47 PG Departments in mental health specialities. Mental Health Services are also provisioned for 22 AIIMS. These services are also available under PMJAY.

In addition to the above, the Government is also taking steps to strengthen mental healthcare services at primary healthcare level. The Government has upgraded more than 1.6 lakh SHCs, PHCs, UPHCs and UHWCs to Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. Mental health services have been added in the package of services under Comprehensive Primary Health Care provided at these Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. Operational guidelines on Mental, Neurological, and Substance Use Disorders (MNS) at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have been released under the ambit of Ayushman Bharat.

The Government has released the National Suicide Prevention Strategy in November, 2022. The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention provides a framework for multiple stakeholders to

implement activities for prevention of suicides in India. This national strategy aims to reduce suicide mortality by 10% in the country by 2030. The national strategy includes an action framework with proposed actions with key stakeholders, implementation framework and mechanism, thus providing a path forward for preventing suicides.

Besides the above, the Government has launched a “National Tele Mental Health Programme” (NTMHP) on 10th October, 2022, to improve access to quality mental health counselling and care services in the country. As on 30.01.2024, 34 States/ UTs have set up 47 Tele MANAS Cells and have started tele mental health services. More than 6,28,000 calls have been handled on the helpline number.

Annexure

Number of Mental Health Professionals working under the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) in the North-eastern States:

Human Resource	Meghalaya	Manipur	Mizoram	Nagaland	Sikkim	Arunachal Pradesh	Tripura	Assam
Psychiatrist/Trained Medical officer	11	31	6	6	4	8	17	53
Clinical Psychologist/Trained Psychologist	7	10	9	9	4	4	1	19
Psychiatric social worker/Social Worker	10	11	9	8	3	6	3	17
Psychiatric nurse/Trained Nurse	8	23	9	4	0	7	176	1
Community Nurse	9	8	5	5	0	5	2	2