



EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

GENERAL STUDIES 2: SOCIAL JUSTICE
TOPIC: HEALTH

DATE: 04.02.2025

UNION BUDGET 2025-26: FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

Key Budget Allocations

- ₹99,858.56 crore allocated to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW), underscoring the importance of mental health in national development.
- ₹79.6 crore allocated to the **National Tele Mental Health Programme (NTMHP)** to provide accessible mental health services.
- **National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS)** funding aimed at enhancing research and treatment for complex mental health challenges.

Understanding Mental Health

- **WHO Definition:** A state of well-being where individuals cope with life's stresses, work productively, and contribute to their community.
- **Mental Health Disorders:** Often caused by socio-economic factors like poverty, trauma, drug use, and lack of support systems.

Mental Health Disorder Statistics

- **Global:** 970 million people affected, with anxiety and depression being the most common.
- **India:** 15% of adults suffer from mental disorders, with urban areas facing higher rates.

Challenges in Mental Health Care

- **Socio-Economic Factors:** Poverty, unemployment, and social discrimination worsen mental health conditions.
- **Treatment Gap:** 70-92% gap, particularly affecting blue-collar workers in unsafe work environments.
- **Policy Gaps:** Existing laws don't fully address mental health, such as the lack of recognition of mental strain in worker safety regulations.

Steps Towards Inclusive Mental Health Care

- **Policy Reforms:** Revising laws to include mental health as part of occupational safety.



- **Awareness & Education:** Public campaigns to reduce stigma and encourage seeking help.
- **Community-Based Programs:** Early detection, treatment, and support for underserved populations.
- **Training Healthcare Workers:** Improving mental health service delivery by training general physicians and health workers.
- **Collaboration:** Partnerships between government, NGOs, and private entities to enhance mental health services.

Government Initiatives

- **National Mental Health Programme (NMHP):** Establishment of Centers of Excellence and District Mental Health Programs across 767 districts.
- **National Tele Mental Health Programme (NTMHP):** Providing quality mental health services via Tele MANAS Cells across 36 states and UTs.
- **Manodarpan Initiative:** Aimed at providing psycho-social support to students.
- **Kiran Helpline:** Suicide prevention and crisis support.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The **Union Budget 2025-26** has made significant strides in mental health care by increasing funding and introducing key programs like NTMHP and NIMHANS. However, continued efforts are needed to address socio-economic factors, improve transparency in funding, and expand community-based mental health services to ensure wider access and better outcomes.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/eliminating-elitism-in-mental-health/article69176622.ece>