

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT. DROUPADI MURMU
ON THE OCCASION OF COMMEMORATION OF THE GOLDEN
JUBILEE OF NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND
NEURO SCIENCES (NIMHANS)**

Bengaluru, January 3, 2025

I am happy to be here among you on today's historic occasion. The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, that is, NIMHANS, is celebrating the Golden Jubilee. It is a milestone not only for this prestigious institute but also for the nation. I congratulate the faculty members, administrators and students, past and present, on this occasion. Your dedication to the noble cause of mental health has helped NIMHANS play an exemplary role in our society. The innovative research and rigorous academic programme with exceptional patient care has made it an undisputed leader in the field of mental health and neurosciences.

I understand the history of this institute dates back to the 19th century and thus its evolution reflects the evolution of mental healthcare in modern India. Today's occasion is also a commemoration of 70 years of our first national mental health institute, the All India Institute of Mental Health, which was a precursor to NIMHANS, as well as the completion of a decade as an Institute of National Importance.

Since its establishment, NIMHANS has also been innovative in addressing the complex challenges of this field. The Bellary model of community-based mental healthcare has made history. Now, the Tele MANAS platform uses technology to reach out to those in need. It is heartening to note that the 53 Tele MANAS cells across the country have served nearly 17 lakh people in their chosen language during the last two years. NIMHANS must be commended for this service. I would also like to congratulate the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for supporting this platform.

This tradition of innovation has now been recognised at the global level. This year, NIMHANS made the nation proud when the World Health Organisation honoured it with the Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the past, issues and concerns of mental health had not received enough attention in some societies. In recent times, however, awareness about mental health has been rising. The unscientific beliefs and stigma associated with mental illnesses are a matter of the past, making it easier for those suffering from various ailments to seek help.

This has been a welcome development especially at this juncture, because a variety of mental health issues are taking epidemic proportions around the world. The Covid-19 pandemic, in particular, led to a spike in such concerns. Many global trends are also contributing to the phenomenon. Every age group is facing problems peculiar to it. Teenagers and youngsters face more uncertainty in their studies today due to social pressures and comparisons. Working professionals face more stress and a large number of the elderly people suffer from loneliness due to social changes. Women, bearing the burden of domestic responsibilities and care-giving for the family, are prone to a range of mental illnesses that usually go unnoticed.

However, it is truly heartening to note that the rising awareness has made it possible for patients to open up and share their problems. Organisations have started putting mechanisms in place to respond to such issues. Initiatives like Tele MANAS facilitate counselling anywhere anytime.

NIMHANS has also taken many other initiatives to address some of these concerns. The SAMVAAD platform addresses child and adolescent mental health problems. There have been collaborations in the area of geriatric mental health including care for persons with

dementia. There are services and care for concerns of mental health problems of vulnerable women.

I understand that NIMHANS has shown that modern systems of healthcare can successfully incorporate traditional methods such as Yoga to alleviate both mental and physical distress. The integrative medicine services at NIMHANS have been a model for all to examine the application of Yoga and Ayurveda in the promotion of mental health and well-being and in the treatment of psychiatric and neurological disorders.

Different kinds of meditation are also useful in countering negative mental forces, and I am sure they are being integrated in the mental healthcare models. What is noteworthy about these traditional approaches is that they are beneficial for all. The wisdom and life lessons from our ancient sages and seers can help us all develop a spiritual framework within which we can make sense of the ups and downs of life that strain the balance of the mind. Our scriptures tell us that the mind is at the root of everything we perceive in the world.

A healthy mind is the foundation of a healthy society. I hope compassion and kindness along with knowledge and wisdom will guide you and other mental healthcare experts in providing the highest quality of care at all times, in all situations.

As caring for the mind and the brain becomes more and more relevant around the world, a greater focus on mental health promotion will become even more important in the years ahead.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad to note that the gender ratio at NIMHANS is positive at different levels. I understand that 79.7 percent of the undergraduate students and 61.4 percent of post-graduates students are women. I believe women can add a unique perspective in mental healthcare – in care-giving as well as in research.

I am delighted to have inaugurated the psychiatry sub-speciality block, the central laboratory complex and the Bhima hostel today.

I once again congratulate you all on the completion of fifty years in the service of the nation, and I extend my best wishes to you for years to come.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!