



Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
Government of India

Tele MANAS: Revolutionizing Mental Health Care in India

Over 14.7 Lakh Calls Served in Two Years, Transforming Mental Healthcare Accessibility

(Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

October 13, 2024

Introduction

The National Tele Mental Health Programme (NTMHP), launched by the Government of India on October 10, 2022, marks two years of significant contributions to the nation's mental healthcare system. As part of this initiative, Tele MANAS (Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States) was introduced as a toll-free helpline (14416) available nationwide, offering a wide range of mental health services. Through this digital platform, individuals can access telephone-based counselling, psychotherapy, psychiatric consultations, and referral services, including urgent care, without the barriers of distance or cost.

The poster features a yellow background with a silhouette of a human head in profile, facing left. Inside the head, a glowing white brain is depicted with a white line extending from the back of the head. At the bottom, there is a faint line-art illustration of a city skyline. The text is in various colors and fonts, including red, black, and white. Logos for the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, and Digital India are in the top left. A URL is in the top right. The main headline is in large, bold, dark red letters. Below it, the text 'India's comprehensive mental health care service' is in black. Two icons (a person on a phone and a medical cross) are on the left, followed by the helpline number and the text 'Talk to Trained & Accredited Counsellors'. At the bottom, three red boxes contain white text.

MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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Visit <https://telemanas.mohfw.gov.in/>

Feeling Alone?
Trust Tele MANAS

India's comprehensive
mental health care service

Dial **14416 OR 1800 8914416**

Talk to **Trained & Accredited Counsellors**

For specialised care, you will be connected with Mental Health Specialists

Tele MANAS has made mental healthcare more accessible to millions across India, ensuring that people, especially in remote areas, receive timely support. The program's ability to deliver mental health services on such a broad scale has drawn praise from global health authorities. The World Health Organization (WHO) hailed Tele MANAS as an innovative and effective model for delivering mental health care.

Dr. Roderico H. Ofrin, WHO Representative to India, congratulated the Ministry of Health for the program's success over the past two years, noting that the WHO's review of Tele MANAS highlighted its potential to significantly improve mental health outcomes. He also emphasized the vital role of primary healthcare centers, particularly Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, in supporting mental well-being through this initiative, making it a cornerstone of India's public health framework.

As Tele MANAS enters its third year, its achievements reflect a strong commitment to addressing mental health challenges, ensuring that care is available to everyone, no matter where they are in the country.

Need for Tele MANAS

India, home to 18% of the global population, faces a significant mental health crisis, with mental disorders being the second leading cause of years lived with disability (YLDs) and suicide ranking as the third leading cause of death in many states. National studies reveal that 15% of India's adult population experiences mental health issues requiring intervention, yet the treatment gap ranges from 70-92%, leaving millions without access to care.

Although the Mental Healthcare Act of 2017 enshrines access to mental health as a statutory right, over 11 crore people in India still suffer from mental health disorders, with 80% not seeking help. Each year, more than 1 lakh people die by suicide, while countless others attempt to end their lives, underscoring the urgent need for intervention.

Tele MANAS was established to bridge this gap and make mental healthcare accessible to all. By offering counseling, psychotherapy, and referral services via telephone, the program provides a lifeline to individuals who might otherwise be unable to seek help. Most mental health issues do not require specialized care but can be managed effectively by trained healthcare providers, ensuring that no individual faces discrimination or neglect due to mental illness. Access to mental healthcare is a fundamental human right, and Tele MANAS is a vital step toward realizing that right for millions of people across India.

Aim & Objectives

The primary aim of Tele MANAS is to provide universal access to equitable, affordable, and quality mental health care through a 24x7 tele-mental health service, forming a key digital component of the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP). This service is available across all Indian States and Union Territories, with assured linkages to ensure seamless care.

Key objectives include:

❖ **Expanding Access:** Scaling up the reach of mental health services nationwide, ensuring that anyone across India can access support at any time through dedicated 24x7 tele-mental health facilities in every State and Union Territory.

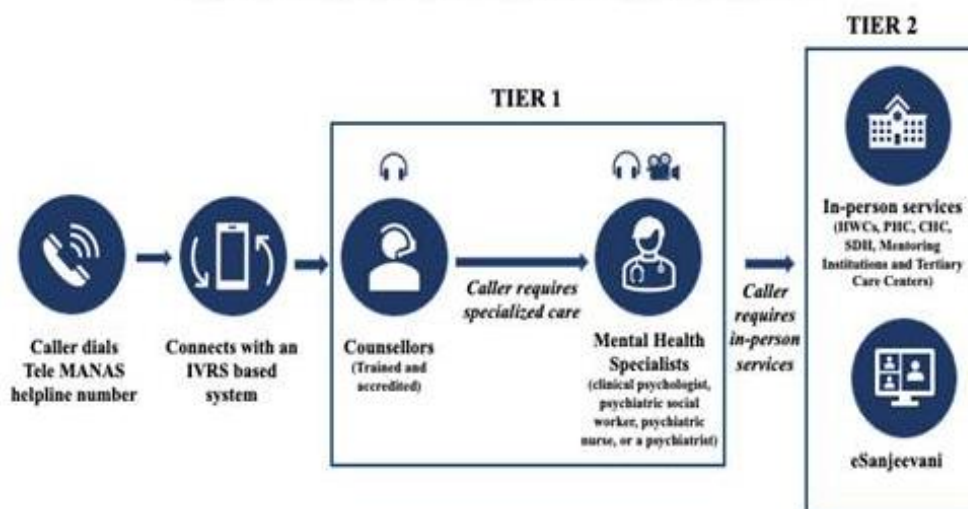
❖ **Building a Comprehensive Mental Health Network:** Establishing an integrated system that goes beyond counseling by offering medical and psychosocial interventions, video consultations with specialists, e-prescriptions, follow-up care, and connections to in-person services.

❖ **Reaching Vulnerable Populations:** Prioritizing mental health services for vulnerable and difficult-to-reach groups, ensuring no one is left without essential care.

Tele MANAS Services

Tele MANAS offers 24/7, free mental health support through phone-based services, ensuring that individuals across India can easily access the help they need. The service is structured in a two-tier system to optimize care delivery and enhance support.

Tele MANAS: CALLING MECHANISM

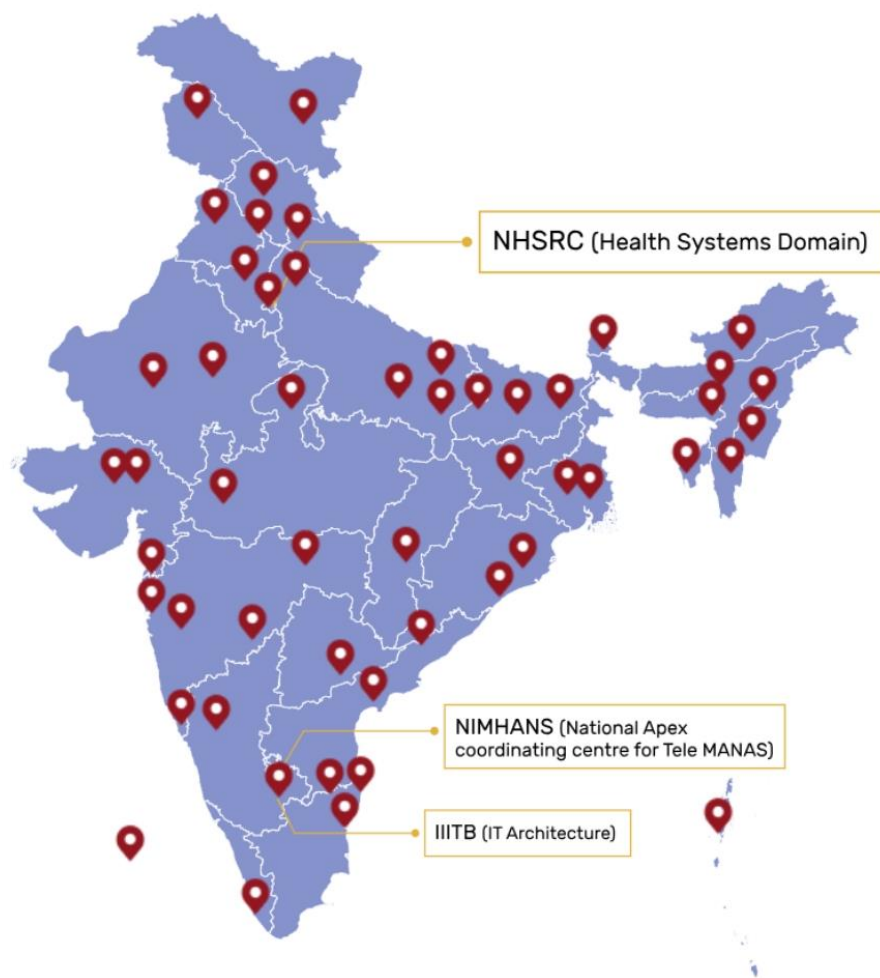


Tier 1 comprises state Tele MANAS cells staffed with trained counsellors and mental health specialists. These professionals provide immediate support through:

- ❖ **Tele-Counseling:** Counsellors assist individuals dealing with psychological distress, addressing day-to-day challenges such as relationship conflicts, financial stress, workplace pressure, and exam anxiety. This service is available in 20 Indian languages, catering to the diverse cultural and regional needs of the population.
- ❖ **Tele-Consultation:** When necessary, mental health professionals, including psychiatrists and psychologists, provide consultations. They help diagnose and manage conditions such as depression, anxiety, psychosis, addiction, and dementia. This tier also addresses emergency situations requiring immediate intervention, such as individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts or drastic changes in behaviour.

Tier 2 comprises specialists from District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) facilities and medical colleges, offering additional resources for physical consultations and audiovisual consultations via e-Sanjeevani. This tier also facilitates in-person services provided by mental health professionals at public health facilities, including DMHP and mentoring institutes. In cases where advanced treatment is needed, Tele MANAS refers individuals to appropriate mental health establishments for further evaluation and care.

Current Coverage of Tele-MANAS Cells



In addition to supporting individuals with psychiatric disorders, Tele MANAS focuses on enhancing mental well-being for those facing everyday stressors. It offers guidance on issues like sleep disturbances, technology overuse, substance misuse, and more. Furthermore, it extends support to parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with developmental disorders such as intellectual disabilities, autism, and ADHD.

By offering promotive, preventive, and curative mental health services, Tele MANAS strives to empower individuals to take control of their mental health and break through the barriers of stigma. It ensures that everyone has the right to access affordable, high-quality mental health care, wherever they may be.

App and Video Consultations

On World Mental Health Day, October 10, Tele MANAS launched its mobile app and video consultation services to enhance access to mental health support. The Tele MANAS app serves as a comprehensive platform offering mental health resources, including self-care tips, stress management strategies, and tools to recognize early distress signals. It engages users through interactive activities like mind challenges, games, and mindfulness practices, ensuring a user-friendly experience. The app provides free, confidential counseling 24/7, connecting users to trained mental health professionals across India.

Video consultations add another layer to the existing audio call services, allowing mental health professionals to conduct more thorough assessments by observing the caller directly. This feature supports history taking, clarifying concerns, and enables brief physical or Mental State Examinations (MSE) when necessary. Initially, this service is available in Karnataka, Jammu & Kashmir, and Tamil Nadu, with plans for expansion across the country.

Key Achievements

Tele MANAS has reached a significant milestone by effectively handling over **14.7 lakh calls** since its launch, demonstrating its vital role in providing mental health support across India.



Key achievements of the program include:

- ❖ Establishment of **52 Tele MANAS Cells** across various states, ensuring local access to mental health services.
- ❖ Collaboration with **23 Mentoring Institutes** that enhance the program's capacity and outreach through expert guidance and support.
- ❖ Creation of **5 Regional Coordinating Centers** to streamline operations and facilitate coordination among Tele MANAS Cells, ensuring efficient service delivery.

These accomplishments highlight the program's commitment to improving mental health care access and its effectiveness in addressing the needs of individuals seeking support.

Conclusion

The National Tele Mental Health Programme, through its initiative Tele MANAS, has made remarkable strides in enhancing mental health care accessibility across India. By leveraging technology and a structured support system, the program has effectively addressed the pressing mental health needs of the population, particularly in underserved areas. The wide array of services offered, including tele-counseling, tele-consultation, and referral services, has enabled millions to seek help without barriers of distance or cost. As Tele MANAS continues to evolve with the introduction of the mobile app and video consultations, it is poised to further enrich the mental health landscape in India. The recognition from global health authorities underscores its innovative approach and impact on mental health outcomes. The journey of Tele MANAS exemplifies a commitment to ensuring that mental health care is not just a privilege for some but a fundamental right for all, fostering a healthier and more supportive society. As it enters its third year, the program stands as a testament to the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing mental health challenges and promoting well-being across the nation.

References:

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