

Confronting Mental Healthcare with Meditation

02 October 2025 | Features

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India confronts a substantial mental health burden that warrants urgent attention. The prevalence of mental health disorders in India has risen steadily in recent years, contributing to the escalating public health concern. Estimates suggest that nearly 15% of the Indian population grapples with some form of mental health issues including anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, substance use disorders, neurodevelopmental disorders etc.

As the country moves ahead with the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision, which outlines a future where development is inclusive and people-centered, it is important to ask ourselves, why are we still not prioritising the mental health of our 1.41 billion citizens.

Once we start reflecting upon this need to address the mental health burden, we realise that doctors play an indispensable role in addressing mental health concerns, from early detection and treatment to advocating for mental health awareness. However, healthcare providers often face significant challenges as a result of rapidly evolving technologies and increasing patient expectations. And it is not surprising to know that sometimes the healthcare providers themselves need help or assistance in attending to their own mental health.

This is where the ancient tool called 'meditation' can bring a lot of difference. Studies have shown patients on antidepressants that combine yoga and meditation with medication experience a significant reduction in depression severity. Reports have also revealed that meditation can be linked to reduced inflammation by modulating stress responses and inducing relaxation.

According to Ma Dharm Jyoti, one of OSHO's earliest disciples, meditation improves concentration, thereby allowing for better decision-making. "Clarity in thoughts can lead to clarity in action, helping individuals tackle their daily tasks with a sharper focus and overcoming stress and related mental health conditions."

During an exclusive chat with BioSpectrum, Ma Dharm Jyoti highlighted that one must observe thoughts, emotions, and sensations without judgment, fostering a clearer understanding of oneself, in order to step away from tumultuous patterns that often lead to stress.

"Techniques such as Dynamic Meditation, Kundalini Meditation, Nadabrahma Meditation, Vipassana Meditation, to name a few, can help people to focus on great awareness, experience inner journey and become mindful. Constant flow of thoughts

can be released during meditation and we are able to feel the silence within. This is extremely important for physical and emotional well-being”, she said.

She also added that our brains are often fed with information which is needed to manage our work and daily tasks but too much of it can damage the mind. “It negatively impacts our mental and physical health. It eventually takes the form of an addiction which needs to be dealt with. Meditation & yoga are thus easy tools that can be implemented to deal with modern minds which are busy thinking all the time, especially in this technological era where it is difficult to take our eyes off our gadgets and social media platforms.”

Only if each one of us is able to weave meditation into our daily routine, we could eventually unlock the ability to heal our minds and bodies, directly fight out stress and diseases in times to come, and empower ourselves and others around us with love, positivity and peace!