

FICCI organises 'Speak Up'- National Mental Health Movement

NEW DELHI, 30 October 2018: The neglect of mental health is evident from a World Health Organization report which estimated that 50 million Indians suffered from depression. Almost 20 % of children and adolescents suffer from some form of mental illness, but a very small proportion of them are able to access mental health services that results in a huge treatment gap. There could be several possible reasons for this gap ranging from stigma associated with mental illnesses, lack of resources for mental health and apathy on part of policy makers to counter this problem.

With an aim to bring together all stakeholders of mental health (service providers: medical and nonmedical professionals, Government bodies, national associations, corporates, media, influencers, academicians) and discuss serious concerns around Mental Health in India, FICCI Aditya Birla CSR Centre for Excellence in partnership with **Mpower organised a National Conference: 'Speak Up'** -today on October 30, 2018 at FICCI, Federation House, New Delhi.



Dignitaries from all walks of life including top government officials, medical doctors and corporates shed light on the progress made & concerns around Mental Health in India;

Inaugurating the event, **Ms Neerja Birla, Founder & Chairperson, Mpower** said "The response at the conference was overwhelming & it's great to see like-minded individuals coming together for the cause. Focusing on traditional healthcare methods for mental health in India is simply not enough, given the large number of people who need help NOW. We are a nation of young people with 65% of the population under the age of 35. Between our presence in the global diaspora, to our country having the world's largest English speaking population, and the world third largest in terms of real GDP, we are a nation on the rise. In order to work towards a bright future for mental health in India, all stakeholders must act immediately."

Ms. Jyoti Vij, DSG, FICCI shared that one cannot overlook the initiatives of progressive companies to address mental health at the work place. Companies - like Aditya Birla Group, Tata, Marico, Coca Cola, SAP, and Panasonic etc. that are addressing the issue of mental health at the workplace. More and more companies need to look at the mental health of its employees and provide a conducive environment to work which directly also affects the productivity of the company and industry at large.

During the conference, the Speak up Award for noble work and contribution in the field of mental health was awarded to the Indian Psychiatric Society.

The conference had a holistic discussion on various subject matter areas such as Government panel on MHCA 2017 implementation, and concurrent views on contrasting ideology of POCSO and Disability Act; importance of interacting with the youth; the need for making provision for community mental



health services at the primary health care level by regular dialogue between partnership between psychiatrists, local healers (especially religious healers), psychiatric social workers, anthropologists, NGOs, and local volunteers ; how companies are opening to the idea of accommodating to address mental health within the working place and sharing of best practices etc.

Some of the key speakers were **Dr. Prabodh Seth**-IRS, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Dept. of Empowerment & Disabilities , **Dr. Rajesh Sagar**, Secretary, Central Mental Health Authority, Govt. of India and Professor Psychiatry, AIIMS; **Javier Aguilar**, Chief, Child Protection Section, UNICEF; **Tanmoy Goswami**, Journalist, ET Prime; **Gayathri Ramamurthy**, Lead-Diversity and Inclusion, India, Capgemini ; **Priti Sridhar**, COO, Mariwala Health Initiative; **Pratyush Panda**, Head CSR, ACC Limited; **Nilay Ranjan**, CSR Head Vodafone, **Dr. Sunil Mittal**, Cosmos Institute of Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences; **Dr. Nimesh Desai**, Director, IHBAS -The Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences , **Prof. R. Chadda**, HOD, Department of Psychiatry, AIIMS; **Dr. Samir Parikh**, Director, Fortis National Mental Health Program, Fortis Healthcare ; **Nina Kler**, Editorial Lead, Business World; **Dr. Sanjay Chugh**, Senior Consultant Psychiatrist ; **Dr. Ajit Bhide**, President, Indian Psychiatric Society ; **Dr. John Naslund**, PhD, Research Fellow in Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School; **Chris Parson**, Director MQ Mental Health, UK; **Sanjana Bhardwaj**, Associate Director, Child Safety & Development, Social Emotional Development Institute, UK ; **Parul Parshar**, Director, SANJIVINI Society for Mental Health; **Pattie Gonsalves**, Project Director, Sangath