Addressing Mental Health Stigma in contemporary Society

1- Introduction

Thesis Statement : Mental health stigma is prevailing in contemporary society. It hinders the way of people who are facing mental health issues. The collective awareness and responsible role of social institutions is needed to curb this stigma.

2- Mental Health Stigma in contemporary society

3- Consequences of Mental Health Stigma

a. Creates barriers to seek help

b. Social isolation ; sucide culture

c. Construction of societal taboos

   (i) Boys do not cry

   (ii) Mental health issues associated with mental disability

   (iii) Depression rate higher in females; His vs Hers

4- Addressing mental health stigma in contemporary society by different ways:

a. Strong role of family institution

b. Dismantlation of societal taboos

c. Responsible role of media to address this stigma

d. Affectionate role of friends can play its part

e. Leverage the influence of celebrities to raise awareness

f. Mental health issues treated as physical health issues

g. Community based initiatives to reduce stigma

h. Legislation or policy at government level to control this stigma

5- Conclusion

"Mental illness is nothing to
be ashamed of, but stigma
and bias shame us all"

Bill Clinton

It is true that mental illness is
compromised by man-made taboos. Mental
health stigma refers to negative attitudes,
beliefs, and stereotypes surrounding mental
health conditions. People mostly considered
mental health issues as abnormality of
mind and behaviour. They are been ignorant
of what the person feels, who is suffering
from mental issues; depression or anxiety.
The negative thoughts are the part of
human thoughts and brain, but sometimes
these thoughts prevail and results in
mental health issues. The core reasons
of this issue can be vary according to
the situation and status. People who are the
effectees of this issue do not talk about
this, due to the societal pressure and norms.
The taboos associated with the mental
health do not allow them to speak
or talk about their mental health.
Resultantly, those people isolate themselves

and fake masked their faces with fake smiles. The results of this silence and isolation are horrible. Suicide is most common product of mental health issues. It is very crucial to address this issue on time to avoid its horrible results. Family is immediate social institution that can help the person by listening to him. The societal taboos should be discouraged in society. Media can play its part here by engaging celebrities to raise awareness. Friends are the important factor in this chain, that can play their role while supporting their friends in that situation. The government can also play its role by legislating rules to stop this stigma. Mental health stigma is prevailing in contemporary society. It hinders the way of people who are facing mental health issues. The collective awareness and responsible role of social institutions is needed to curb this stigma.

The growing era of technology is changing lives of people. The

world become "global village". On one side, it has many benefits, on the other hand its disadvantages are more. The superficial connection has made life complex, moreover the comparasion and competition culture is aggravating the already tense situation. The results are mental health issues which are growing rapidly in this age of internet. However, people are not clearly accepting their mental issues due to societal stigma. The stigma which made this taboo to talk about mental health. People do not tell about their situation due to the fear of judgement. The consequencies of this tabooing are terrible; suicide, schizophrenia and bioplor disorder. [According to World Health Organization, Over 700,000 people take their own life each year — that is one person every 40 seconds] These alarming statistics show the horrible consequencies of the stigma related to mental health.

　　　　Mental health is not getting importance, people do not even think

about it. The reason is societal stigma that has created the barriers to seek help. People who are suffering from the mental issue can not get help due to these barriers of judgement and isolation. They remain silent and fight with their internal thoughts. According to a report of NHS Digital: One in Five people have suicidal thoughts. The data shows that there are many people around the circle who are facing this situation. The real connection has been shadowed by social media, and in reality there is no one to talk about mental health.

The barriers which hinder the way of seeking help during the mental stress are societal fears and judgements. The results of these situations are social anxiety and social isolation. People try to avoid the social gathering, and wants to remain alone. The isolation is further worsening the situation. Person go to the depths of distress and depression. The disturbing thoughts are

slowly poisoning mind and soul. Results of this isolation are most disturbing and hurtful. Due to lack of communication of thoughts, these internal thoughts became the reason of death. The suicide culture is now common in world, either from poor background or rich family. There is no discrimination of mental health issues and their consequences. According to a report of World Health Organization: "one in every eight people in the world live with the mental disorder". The social isolation causes severe consequences.

Furthermore, the famous societal taboos are deteriorating the society. Boys were brought up by saying that they should never cry. This ridiculous statement is negatively affecting the mental health of boys. Physical construction of men and women is same, both are human beings. So, there emotions should also be common, if girl can cry, why can not boy? This is due to taboo related to gender

discrimination. This need to be finished and boys should express their emotions and thoughts like girls to avoid the mental health issues.

Another major consequence of mental health stigma is associating mental health issues to wildmen or crazy and insane behaviour. People who are facing the mental issue have marginalized themselves to avoid the judgements of others. They do not want to go to psychiatric clinics, and do not consult with any psychology consellor. According to WHO, more than 40% of countries have no mental health policy and over 30% have no health programme. The report proves that people are not paying heed on this fourth main leading cause of dealth.

The mental health issue is affecting both male and female health, but in a gendered society where male and female are classified according to their roles, females

are in the front line who are affected by mental issues. The societal culture, traditions and norms have restricted their lives and their weakness and softness is using as a tool against them. The unequal ratio of rights and duties related to female, make them more vulnerable. Key findings in the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Data showed that; "women were almost twice as likely as were men to have depression" These reports shows the terrible consequences of mental health issues, which are aggravated due to societal stigma related to mental health. It is the need of hour to address these issues of mental health stigma, so that people can find their ways to get treatment.

The first and foremost way to address this stigma is by the help of family. Family is immediate effectee of the person who is suffering from mental issues. Family can play

its positive role in discussing the mental health issues and can encourage them to seek help from psychiatrist. The first barrier can be broken down by family members. Family is not an important thing. It is everything. So, family can play its role in breaking this social stigma related to mental health.

The role of family and the role of families collectively help to break the societal taboos, related to mental health. The societal taboos like restrictions or rituals or anociation of symbols are aggravating the metal health issues. People are bound in the circle of societal taboos, and they do not want to pass that circle's limit. In case of girl's mental health, girl and family both remain silent and do not seek help, because of the fear that what would society think? Societal taboos affects the future life of the person, so these shold be break down.

Media plays a crucial role in reshaping societal attitudes and behaviour towards individuals with mental illness. It contributes to improve rights of people living with mental health conditions, and access to care service. Umang: A mental Health Helpline is there to seek help during mental traumas. It is a good initiative and media can also engage celebrities to encourage people to talk about their mental issues and break this vicious cycle of social stigma.

A friend can be a better counsellor in a society. A friend can play its part by supporting his/her friend in tough situation. Friends prevent isolation and loneliness, so good for mental health. The society should encourage the role of friend in a person life to get out of that phase of mental illness.

The government and community should also play their part to reduce this societal stigma. Awareness should be raised among societies to get out of that track. Federals laws should be created and regulated through help of communities to curb this situation.

Mental health issues are continously evolving in the society but no one pay heed to them and results in higher ratio of sucide attempts and cases. This is due to stigma related to the mental health. Stigma is due to the societal taboos which is worsening the situation. It is the need of hour to address this issue holistically. The main and root role can be played by family and friends. Other social institutions can also help to sheek awarnen related to the issue.

Media can play positive role by advocating people about the mental health issues. Moreover, government level legislative is also needed to address this issue. In a nutshell, mental health issues can only be treated when society is free from stigma related to mental health.