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The Wellbeing of Mental Health in the Legal Profession: Influence of Multiculturalism and Interculturalism

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Abstract

The research study has focused on mental healthcare and mental well-being in the legal profession in India. The research study has specifically focused on the Indian cultural perspectives towards mental health and factors that are required to be acknowledged to reduce the rate of suicides in the legal profession. The problem is that the situation for legal professionals has changed with the advancement of technology. The legal profession is such that it is about fulfilling clients' needs regarding any legal matter. But, mental well-being in the legal profession has not been prioritized yet, and thousands of legal professionals are going through some type of physiological challenges. Mental health has a very significant role to play in the legal profession as it is necessary for an attorney to focus on the case in a well-mannered manner so that it is beneficial for the client. The research study has been conducted via a secondary research method, discussing necessary factors which led to such distress. Accordingly, literature gaps regarding a few significant issues have been addressed, to visualize new reforms in regulations related to mental health well-being in India.

Keywords: Mental healthcare, legal profession, India, multiculturalism, legislation, social development

INTRODUCTION: LEGAL INDUSTRY IN CRISIS

Introduction

According to scholar Allen Frances, "*There is no accurate definition of mental health disorder, and it is complete bullshit. I mean, it is hard to define it*."

Today most people who have been suffering from any mental health disorder fail to define what they are going through, also in general many people face certain difficulties to provide an example of mental health disorder. The cultural stigma or attitude towards mental health in India is very shocking. The country is in a serious mental health crisis and the same has only become more complicated due to people's perception of mental health illness, in high-profile law firms. Oftentimes, employees in workplaces do not like to speak with their employers regarding mental health disorders or problems due to *fear* of being judged.

According to Ogundare [1], Cultural differences develop different attitudes towards mental health, like, the ways people view mental health disorders or illnesses, treatment, and indulge issues of discrimination and racism. The research study has focused on highlighting the significance of mental health disorders particularly in the legal profession. This is because the rate of suicides among legal professionals has increased, and many lawyers are suffering from serious mental health illnesses.

The Supreme Court of India, in one of its recent judgments, mentioned that a team member suffering from mental health disorders has the right against

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workplace bias, as per an individual's suitability [2]. Mental health disorder is very complicated, and supposedly one significant factor (people do not want to solve). The research study has tried to do thorough research on the role of multiculturalism in mental health in legal firms in India.

Background of the Study

The culture in the legal profession is very complicated in the Indian scenario. The high-class international and national law firms do follow ethics and principles to keep their standards of business ongoing, but the role of lawyers undergoes a major metamorphosis. Such as helping the company to achieve [2]. According to Moro [3], commercial objectives as well as to comply with laws in an atmosphere which is complex and uncertain. No matter what kind of work is, a lawyer or an attorney is expected to be hands-on in every discipline.

Today Western countries like the USA, have been drawing their strength from cultural diversity. Ethnic and racial minorities have suffered in multiple areas of contemporary life. The role of cultural diversity is significant among nation-states in concern to international perspectives, as it leads to an open and vibrant society, with thousands of ideas, innovations, and perspectives. But the potentiality of a diverse, multicultural society is hard to be realised until all individuals, which also includes ethnic and racial minorities, gain access to quality health care that helps to meet their needs [4].

As defined by the "***World Health Organisation (WHO)***," good mental health is: "[…] when an individual realises his or her potential, who can cope with the normal stress of life, may work fruitfully and productively and can make an effective contribution to the community." In context to the objectives of the chapter, elimination of 'fear,' means the fear to speak regarding mental health because the stigma or culture that goes on with conversations to share the status of mental health is pervasive [5].

The study has highlighted the cultural factors that must be taken into consideration as the majority of lawyers, attorneys, and other legal practitioners fail to solve mental health problems, because of 'fear'. In present times, the legal profession in the world has begun to pay or increase attention to well-being. The previous literature reviews did raise questions regarding environmental factors within the legal profession, structures in workplaces, aspects, and cultures of legal education which may cause deleterious consequences for law students and attorneys' well-being.

The term '***well-being questions***,' in the legal profession, is concerned with various contemporary legal practices, and it is widely thought to have sufficient implications for both businesses and individuals [6]. However, in this chapter, the author has specifically focused on attitudes towards mental health in India, or among Indian culture, based on which perceptions towards mental illness have been discussed in brief.

According to WEISS [7], the term culture is complex and vague, yet the impact of culture on health outcomes is enormous, which makes it significant to understand the relationship between health and culture, mainly cultural factors that harm an individual's behaviour and physiological health. The research study has focused on the cultural perspective of mental health, which needs to be removed to stop the suppression of mental health and to build a new effective environment for everyone to start a collective conversation, as it is significantly necessary for the legal profession [2].

Research Rationale

Various literature reviews have focused on changes in the behaviour of lawyers while dealing with pressure in every sector, i.e., litigation, corporate, etc. [2]. Some medical practitioners, as well as practised psychologists, have mentioned '***uncomfortable silence***,' which may lead to serious psychological issues. The legal profession is a beacon of hope, often described as a "***knight in armour***", which has the most ambiguous position in society [8].

The concept of multiculturalism involves basic ideas, which are about celebrating and recognising everyone's diversity in cultures. That means an individual must feel comfortable within society and can

live freely with human dignity as per *Art. 21 of the Indian Constitution*. The connotation of Article 21 is very broad, which means, the meaning of Article 21 has extended beyond the maker's imagination [9]. According to ***Francis Coralie Mullin vs The Administrator (1981),*** Art. 21, includes the supreme constitutional value in a democratic society, where Life doesn't only refer to breathing (physical act) [10]. Art. 21 includes the '*right to health*', and it also includes that an individual who is going through mental health issues receives quality treatment and lives at home.

Everyone sees the face of a successful lawyer, but only a few see the midnight oil burn which has caused wrinkled brows and developed professional skills over decades [11]. The International Bar Association conducted a survey, the result showed that 41% of legal practitioners do not discuss mental illness with their employers due to fear of harming their careers. Approx. 32.1% of employees or attorneys who have been working in high-profile legal firms' fear disclosing their mental conditions because of judgemental views or being treated differently. Approx. 24.1% of employers don't bother to recognize mental well-being, approx. 17.2% of employees fear not disclosing their problems as employers do not take these things seriously [8]. Today mental health illnesses among legal practitioners are serious issues.

The situation due to COVID-19 or the global pandemic was disheartening for law graduates as well as for law practitioners, which indicates the research that needs to be carried out on cultural stigmas which lead to myriad consequences. In this study, reviews by experts have been discussed briefly, which has helped to understand or analyse the issues, and gaps, but the question is, where is the future headed? The study has highlighted specifically Indian Culture [12]. The rationale of the study is to focus on how cultural expression has been changing in India in the context of mental health illness in the legal profession.

According to researchers from *Johns Hopkins University*, the rate of critical depression lawyers has increased, by approx. 15% of legal practitioners are suffering from some kind of clinical depression, which are due to personality characteristics like competitiveness and perfectionism (mainly combined which leads to severe depression that leads to a high rate of suicide). The fact is a study from 1997 by the *Canadian Bar Insurance Association*, the rate of suicide is increasing with the change in social stigma (which is mainly influenced by culture). Most judges or attorneys are between the ages of 48 to 65 [2].

It is known to everyone that, 1 out of 6 adults in the world are experiencing some kind of mental health issues, but the increased rate of suicide is between the ages of 28-65 years. Let's look at an example from India, a young female lawyer, who committed suicide in 2020, and who started her legal professional career at a very reputable law firm. The next is a male leading lawyer also from a reputed law firm, who committed suicide by jumping into the river. As per the reports, he was also a former presider of a reputed organisation [13]. The problem of mental illness or chronic health difficulties has always been considered by society as unnatural or an embarrassing phenomenon, which leads to fear among patients sharing their inner problems. Today, the increased rate of suicides in such a prestigious profession is serious a concern. As discussed by Goddard et al. [14], India has the highest rate of suicides, and one leading cause of the same is the lack of mental healthcare practitioners or specialists.

In terms of discussion of the impact of stress, quarantine and disruptions in normal life activities, the matter of concern is that most young lawyers have developed chronic disorders like depression, low mood or anxiety, and the disorders are increasing [15]. However present cultural norms are biased towards discussions of the aforementioned issues. Because culture shapes and models social behaviour among individuals as well as in groups. This refers to the fact that culture and mental health well-being are directly related to each other. There are so many existing questions that are still unanswered, but India is looking forward to sustainability and better opportunities.

This research study wants to focus on collaborative communication and honesty to remove the fear which divulges individuals into isolation. The study wants future researchers to know why it is

necessary to increase more mental health specialists, to decrease the rate of suicides and what steps may government take to bring positive changes in society which lead to a new perspective of culture in the legal profession.

Research Aim

The research aims to focus on the role of multiculturalism through the perception of mental health difficulties in the legal profession, in persistence to Indian Culture.

Research Questions

- Where is India leaning towards in terms of the expression of the right to physical and mental health?
- Why is it necessary to change attitudes towards mental health disorders in India? Why now?
- Is cultural diversity negatively impacting mental health disorders, particularly in the legal profession in India?
- Is the government of India taking new measures to tackle the situation? Where does India lag behind to control the rate of suicide in the legal profession?

Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study are as follows:

- Firstly, to understand the role of multiculturalism on incompatible aspects of mental health in the context of the legal profession in India.
- Secondly, to analyse the significance of mental health well-being in the legal profession under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution and other laws and regulations.
- Thirdly, to analyse policies which have been taken into account in the context of Indian socio-cultural changes, concerning mental health disorders in the legal profession by the Judiciary.
- Fourthly, to analyse the future of the legal profession, the techniques and procedures which need to be changed (or amended by the law and policymakers) to change society's attitudes towards mental health disorders in India.

Summary

The research study has focused on the lives of law graduates and law practitioners in India, concerning cultural diversity. Considering existing issues, the rate of suicides, depression, bipolar disorder or other types of mental health illness (or disorders) is not just practical, it is also timely. The problems are not being addressed properly in India, even though recent judgements by HC and SC of India, are increasing hope among people suffering from such difficulties. Even though the judiciary has been planning to change the mind and attitudes of people toward mental health illness, it is seen that this attitude is still irrational.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The research study has highlighted the increased rate of mental health issues in the legal profession. But the culture is becoming more complicated to understand as it highly impacts our lives or living. In this research study, the researcher has focused on various factors which are necessary to be acknowledged concerning mental health illness from the perspective of Indian culture. After the serious outbreak of COVID-19, the rate of suicide has increased, but it is hard to know the cause of such a decision taken by young people or an individual, who seems to go well with life (below 44 years). A majority of individuals in India under the age of 44 years, commit suicide or goes through some type of serious mental disorder (but they do not disclose it). Disclosing mental health problems is considered an embarrassing incident and many are pushed into darkness by their people because of social stigma. The research study has highlighted the issues which are necessary to be acknowledged as an increased rate of suicide is a matter of concern.

Mental Health Issues in the Legal Profession

According to Vijayakumar et al. [16], over the past years, the rate of suicide in India has increased by 43%, and many of them are under 44 years. According to Sarveswar and Thomas [17] individuals below the age of 25- are approx. 53.7% of the Indian population. As per the records from the National Crime Record Bureau, 2020 a student committed suicide every 42 minutes; at least 34 of them dies and their deaths are being taken as a fun fact or families were being judged for not providing them with proper guidance.

According to Thieme et al. [18], it is hard to estimate how many people are affected by suicide or any type of mental disorder that includes people who attempted suicide and people who are affected by such uncertain death. According to Daniel and Treece [19], it is estimated that more than one lakh individual attempts suicide every year in India, and it is estimated that, in 2020, more people (under 44 years) lost their lives because of suicide than COVID-19.

As per the records of NCB, 2020 over the last 10 years, the rate of increased suicide is a serious concern and there are multiple factors which have not been acknowledged yet. According to Ahmad [5], young people or youth are the most important human resource for a developing country like India. The scholar also mentioned how young law graduates from India have the potential to build a better future. The fact is law graduates or students taking admissions to law schools mostly suffer from health-impacting conditions or behaviours which require urgent attention from health professionals or policymakers, but many cases are not taken into consideration.

The health of young people is vital, which is why many people believe that they are doing well or fine. But, according to the estimation of WHO, approx. 2.6 million (individuals) aged between 10-25 years die every year. It is not known how many of them suffer from complicated illness behaviour that hinders the ability and self-confidence to develop or fails to grow to the fullest potential. As discussed by Sunitha and Gururaj [20], behavioural patterns that develop in law schools, develop their health status or risk of developing chronic diseases in the later stage of the profession.

As referred to by Mishra and Galhotra [21], in the legal profession thousands of people are suffering from mental health disorders, and rarely get appropriate treatment, as the main reason is the family members try to hide such conditions out of a sense of shame. Approx. 300 million people are suffering from depression, which is approx. 4.4% of the Global population. According to India's context, only 7.6% report these issues, but the public stigma has always been unknown [22]. But the fact is way more complicated as many people may know the reason for many problems, but do not approach to take them to appropriate practitioners or help them in any such way.

The Constitution of India

Today suicide is becoming one of the leading causes of death in India, as said by the former President of the Country, Ram Nath Govind, in 2017. He said, "India has been facing a possible mental health epidemic." According to Sagar et al. [22], in 2017, approx. 14% of youth in India have been suffering from mental health ailments that includes 45.7 million suffering from depression and approx. 49 million suffer from bipolar or anxiety disorder [23].

The fact is with the legal profession, the environment is very demanding, which makes sense why the rate of suicides is increasing. According to Robinson [23], the depression rate among law students has increased from 10% to 40% and increased over the course, as published by Dave Nee Foundation. According to Article 21, every citizen has the fundamental right to life and personal liberty, except according to certain procedures established by laws. Over years, the article has undergone multiple interpretations through various cases and discussions that have expanded the scope of the article. It also included various dimensions and aspects to it. However, the constitution of India does not include the Fundamental right of health to the citizens.

Part IV of the Constitution of India includes "***Directive Principles of State policy***," which has developed a very strong sense of "***Right to Public Health.***" According to Art. 39(E), it is the liability of the state government to secure the health of workers. Also, in Art. 47, directs that it is a moral duty of the State to exceed the nutrition level and change the living standards which must include improvement in public health care [24, 25].

In the case of *Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India &Ors* AIR (1997) 10 SCC 549, the Supreme Court of India, discussed that, Right to Health needs to be included within the ambit of the right to life and personal liberty, (Art. 21 of the Constitution of India). Also, in the case of *State of Punjab & Ors v. Mohinder Singh Chawla* AIR (1997) SC 1225, the Apex court reaffirmed as follows: Right to health is ambit under Art. 21 of the constitution. It is necessary to legally put on record that the government has a constitutional obligation to aid and provide appropriate healthcare services to the country's citizens. Also, in the case of the *State of Punjab & Ors v. Ram LubhayaBagga* AIR (1998) 1 SCR 1120, it is the responsibility of the state to maintain adequate healthcare facilities and infrastructure [26].

According to, the ***Persons with disability (equal opportunities, protection of rights, full participation) Act, 1995 (PDA-95),*** the main purpose of the act was to stop any kind of discrimination regarding sharing developmental benefits for disabled persons and to stop any kind of abuse or exploitation of these people who are under the category of PWD. This act aims to provide for a barrier-free society and spelt out the government to implement new strategies for the improvement of development programmes, for people who are under the category of PWD.

Next, in December 2006, the UNCRPD (***United Nations convention for rights of persons with disabilities***) was adopted. In 2008, it was rectified by the Indian parliament. This adaptation brought new changes in every disability law, and it was based on dignity, equality and legal capacity. As per Art. 2 of the convention, PWD has the right to enjoy legal capacity, and Art. 4 is to prevent abuses or discrimination, which helps them to live peacefully [27].

Regulations on Attempted Suicide under Indian Penal code

According to Krug [28], Suicide attempts are described as non-fatal self-directed potentially injurious behaviour with an intent to die. According to sec. 309 of IPC, "***Whoever attempts to commit suicide and does any act towards the commission of a such offence, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine or both*** [29]."

There are multiple questions which have been raised in both Apex and lower courts in India, about section 309 of IPC. In 1981, a constable suffered a serious head injury that led to schizophrenia. He tried to kill himself on account of a mental disorder. But he was charged under sec. 309 of IPC. in 1987, Honourable HC of Bombay, in the case of *Maruti Shripati Dubal v. the State of Maharashtra,1987 (1) Bom CR 499, 88 BOMLR 589*., passed that he is not guilty. As observed by J. Sawant, people who are attempting suicide on account of mental disorders must take psychiatric treatment and are not supposed to be behind bars because it will worsen the situation. Suicide is often described as a monstrous act, if the individual fails to die, the infliction of torture and punishment are totally unreasonable and unjust.

As discussed in the case, *State v. Sanjay Kumar Bhatia [1986 (10) DRJ 31]* [30], Jahangir SJ. Observed that perpetuation of sec. 309, is defined as *an anachronism* not worthy of a civilised society like the ones we live in. Therefore, provisions like sec.309 are invalid and have no justification, which is why they should be removed from the statute book. According to MHCA, 2017 [sec. 115], attempt to commit suicide has been decriminalised, which supersedes sec. 309 of IPC. But this does not reduce the rate of suicide, which factors that are increasing the rate of suicides are not being exposed to the people in general [31].

The two important cruces are as follows:

1. According to people's attitudes, Suicide is associated with, "mental illness," for every individual who dies by suicide or attempts to die by suicide.

2. Existence of other sections of IPC like sec. 306, section 109 and sec. 116, the word mental illness has been changed to severe stress.

The fact is stigma is one of the factors, regarding treatment-seeking, as it is referred to as, a "mark of shame, disapproval, disgrace, discriminated against and excluded from participation in various areas of the society." According to Vadlamani and Gowda [31], the rate of increase in suicides during COVID-19 was because of sociocultural realities, increased unemployment and economic fluctuations.

Culture and Mental Health Following the Indian Perspective

As discussed by Bhugra et al. [32], mental illness may occur in every society or culture, but it is very often that the symptoms are presented to the world. Culture has always influenced individuals to manifest symptoms, communicate symptoms, tackle psychological challenges and seek ways to get effective treatment i.e., willingness.

In former times, culture was defined as Ethno-psychiatry, transcultural psychiatry, migrant psychiatry and anthropology psychiatry, but because of various reasons, these terms are not being used now. As discussed by Jones and Graffin [2], the term culture is very complicated and includes learned behaviours, lifestyle, beliefs, customs and ethical values which shape certain behaviours of humans. But such behaviours might change due to cultural conflicts.

According to Goddard et al. [14] culture impacts the life of an individual, which is also referred to as Central to the aetiology of mental health illness. This is because it provides normality and abnormality standards. Berardi et al. [33], discussed that culture determines different types of normalcy in behaviour; even though cultures are helpful to tolerate higher levels of deviant attitudes, others are mostly dependable on conformity. Such differences affect rates of mental disorders, such as ***attention deficit hyperactivity disorder***. According to Gopalkrishnan [27], cultural diversity has a very significant impact on various aspects of mental health, that range from ways in which health and illness are perceived, to attitudes, and health-seeking behaviours of individuals as well as health practitioners, and the system. As discussed by Mehrara et al. [34], culture influences people in a certain way to solve the problem, and how such solutions are to be acceptable.

As suggested by Gopalkrishnan [27], there are five different components of diversified culture, which have certain implications for mental health professionals.

The very first is ***emotional expression***, i.e., lack of balance to express the disease or talking regarding painful issues might lead to more painful feelings. The next element is ***shame***. As argued by Hechanova and Waelde [35], shame is such an element that puts barriers to an individual seeking medical help or getting check-ups from professional therapists. And it is often seen in the Asian region, (mostly an individual's decisions are based on family members' perceptions). The third element is ***Power distance***, which mostly exists in Asian countries among therapists, and causes serious implications regarding autonomy or lack of therapeutic relationships. The fourth element is, "***collectivism***," and its impact is known as a supportive factor for coping and resilience. The final element is ***spirituality and religion*** from a perspective of attribution, including methods or stages to cope with a certain type of disease. According to Mehrara et al. [34], culture helps to form an attitude to solve real consequences, which means it helps to understand people's attitudes and behaviour toward menstrual health, like the attitude of family members, where they help the individual with appreciative care or traditional health.

The fact is the attitude of Indians toward the cure of mental health is not helpful. According to Thomas [36], at least 47% of Indians from metropolitan cities are highly judgemental of individuals having any type of mental illness, as per the reports of ***The Live Love Laugh Foundation (TLLLF)*** [a non-profit organisation]. Many respondents spread rumours that one must stay or keep a safe distance from people who are depressed, as it may cause barriers in their lives. Next is approx. 26% of people

fear mentally ill people, as these people could be worse for society. According to this 26% of respondents they should not be part of any community.

Another analysis discussed a surprising twist: the surveys conducted by other scholars regarding mental health issues in India show that many judgemental respondents belong to high socioeconomic backgrounds and are highly educated. And even concerned regarding mental health disorders but are more likely to be stigmatized. But, according to research by Thomas [36], 27% of respondents are supportive and are aged between (18-24 years). The education level of this 27% of respondents is low and a majority belongs to low socioeconomic backgrounds. According to the research study conducted by TLLLF, 47% of the respondents, used the term "***retard***." Accordingly, 60% of respondents believed that people who are going through some kind of mental health disorder must not be given responsibilities, as those individuals lack willpower.

According to Gautam and Jain [37], culture is defined as an '***abstraction***,' which reflects the way of life of a society. Concerning the Indian perspective, *'rapid urbanization,*' causes a serious impact on mental health. This is a serious factor, which is affecting the whole gamut of civilization, particularly the vallecular parts of society. It is often seen that in India it is very difficult to encounter such patients because cultural patterns change personality development in an individual and communication with society (interactions).

As discussed in an article by Taniparti [38], "*what will people say?*" is an age-old social perception that is very relevant for everyone. According to a study by WHO, in 2011 36% of Indian students were suffering from MDE (Major Depressive Episode). There is a serious pressure to pretend "NORMAL," developing an unhealthy stigma that indulges barriers to getting the required help. The situation is going worse in the legal profession as people are either ending their lives or a majority of people are suffering in silence.

Final thoughts on Legal Profession Mental Health Statistics

According to a research study by Americanbar.org [39], lawyers or legal professionals put into new strategies to improve the well-being and health of the legal profession. Therefore, in present times the legal profession is very respected in Indian society. But the bad news is that the majority of attorneys or advocates, and paralegals are struggling with depression, alcoholism, and other mental health illnesses. J. Dy Chandrachud, while he was addressing the Harvard Law School centre, regarding the impact of the legal system on the corporate world, in the context of the Indian Scenario, stated in his speech that, jobs in the legal profession are often complicated or stressful, that led them to addiction or serious issues on mental health, and rates are higher than in general population.

According to Taniparti [38], law students are mostly scared of cultures, and students never ask for help as a majority of them are terrified of remaining unemployed or they will not be allowed to register in bars. More than 13,000 practising lawyers are going through a traumatizing workload, approx. 28% suffer from depression, 19% of them go through anxiety and approx... 114% of lawyers get suicidal thoughts (as instead of asking for help, it's better to end life). This incidence proves that half of the legal professionals are affected due to mental illness (MI), and it is increasing over years. As stated by when students are suicidal, thinking gets paralysed, and opinions appear to be non-existent or spare which despair moods that make them feel hopeless. The problem is, there is a stigma attached, that forces people to not disclose it [40].

This is because, society upheld the legal profession as a very prestigious profession, fast-paced and highly intensified, which leads to an imbalanced Work-Life in the life of legal professionals in the world. Unfortunately, it is hard to believe how many of them are going through such difficulties. As discussed by different scholars, students in law schools often commit suicide, but there are very few known cases, regarding the same. One of the reasons is, the lack of stress management in law schools,

and even the majority of law students become alcoholics to remove such stress (deadline to submit projects, marks, registration in bars, huge debt, and getting a job) [41]. However, today, new factors are social media, a shift in societal values, a stressful career, making more money, etc. are being more prioritized rather than becoming good members or good lawyers. According to the research study by Irglobal.com [41], approx. 96.7% of law students suffer from severe stress compared to other professions. Inside the legal profession, oftentimes lawyers are being discriminated against based on a diagnosis.

In India, there have been no such experimental studies done by any organizations in the context of mental health in the legal profession. According to Gupta and Agrawal [24], it is because the thinking of people in India is quite common, which is to look down on individuals who are suffering from mental illness in silence. Even after the outbreak of COVID-19, no such incentives have been taken by any organizations to help associates who are going through such problems. Even when the Judicial system did start court digitization, the anxiety level of associates is increasing, which developed new havoc in the legal profession in India [24].

Summary

This section of the research study has highlighted the factors and other problems faced by legal professionals, which are often unheard of. The rate of suicides is increasing among lawyers in India, but the problem is not been taken seriously yet. Even if the judicial system of the country is taking steps, the societal stigma and existing culture in the Indian scenario makes things more complicated for lawyers. In this section of the research study, the research has pointed out how plays a significant role in the lives of people and their attitude to seek help or be kind to those who are suffering.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The section, ‘methodology’, in this research study has elaborated the procedure the researcher has taken to discuss the causes of issues and gather information to justify the research contribution to society. In this research study, a qualitative method has been used, as it plays a vital role in mental health well-being because it helps the researcher to explore the phenomenology of mental-health illness as well as sociocultural dimensions. But there is limited evidence regarding the well-being of mental health in the legal profession in the perception of Indian culture. Based on the context of the research study, further discussion has been done under justified headings.

Research Method

Narrative research is also known as a ***qualitative research method***, in this assignment ***qualitative thematic analysis*** has been done which has enabled the researcher to better understand the perception of human experience and attitude towards mental health disorders. In this study’s research method, there is also an application of phenomenology, which is mainly applied in social science studies like analysis of issues related to mental health illness or disorders in India. According to Elkatawneh [42], this method usually focuses on an individual's sense of an existing practice of a notion of a phenomenal. The research has taken this method because this method is helpful to focus on research questions; like the experiences of attorneys or legal students, or individuals related to the legal profession regarding their mental health issues.

Research Approach

There are three different types of research approaches which are divided into three different categories which are as follows: inductive approach, abductive approach and deductive approach. The present research study is based on an ***inductive approach***, which is also referred to as inductive reasoning that mostly deals with theories and observations that help in the development of new explanations based on existing theories. The research study is based on exploratory research that has helped the researcher to use open-ended questions and a particular focus on existing issues, which have not been given enough importance, in prior literature reviews.

Research philosophy

The research philosophy is a scientific system that helps to focus on a researcher's thoughts, which helps the researcher to develop reliable knowledge, based on research objectives. According to Žukauskas et al. [43], it is referred to as a research basis, that includes the choice to formulate problems, research strategy, data collection, data processing, and analysis. There are four types of research philosophy, i.e., pragmatism, realism, interpretivism, and positivism. In this research study, realism philosophy has been focused on in-depth.

The researcher has followed the ***Pragmatist research philosophy***, to enable the researcher to understand and rely on factual data to conclude the present state of mental healthcare in India. The reason to select the ***Pragmatist research philosophy*** is to understand the factual data on the role of gender (sociocultural influence) on mental health disorders.

According to Bergin et al. [13], biomedical and social domains are linked via interdisciplinary research strategies which clarify terms such as 'gender', 'sex', and 'gender differences.' The concept of mental health is based on a '***gender-sensitive approach***,' which is related to ontology, i.e., '***theory of knowledge.***' As suggested by Palinkas [44], a realistic approach plays an important role in understanding cultural aspects to help individuals suffering from any type of mental health disorder. Meanwhile, the standards may not be evident, even though the same has been trained in different methods.

According to Cody et al. [45,46], a majority of researchers focus on mixed methods i.e., cross-sectional surveys. Such methods help to understand the prevalence of depression, anxiety as well as suicidal ideation, as these components put legal students at risk (a majority of them are suffering from severe mental health illnesses).

Research Design

The research design provides a great framework for the research study, as it helps the researcher to focus on new dimensions with the application of a systematic approach. There are five types of research design which are explanatory, diagnostic, descriptive, correlational, and experimental research design. In the present research study, the researcher has focused on ***diagnostic research design***, to determine and examine the cause of various conditions related to cultural perspective concerning mental health illness in Indian society. According to Levitt et al. [20], the chosen research design has helped the researcher to focus on the necessary objectives of the research study.

Data Source

The data has been sourced from Google scholar, PubMed, university e-library, business magazines, and other authentic journals. A majority of these data are pre-existing, but all data has been scrutinised according to the requirements of the research study. The information has been sourced from government websites, journals, websites, peer-reviewed articles, and internal records [16]. Data has been collected to build empirical knowledge, and also to gain understanding regarding the importance of considering mental health disorders to help people who are silently suffering due to fear [47]. In this research study, a secondary method has been chosen by the researcher, to address existing issues and literature gaps that need to be addressed or analyse the historical roots of a particular issue that are still impinging upon the current phenomenon.

Data Collection

In this research study, ***secondary data*** has been collected which are also referred to as pre-existing data. The data has been collected from government sites, business magazines, and published interviews by various scholars, Google Scholar, PubMed, and ProQuest to focus on flexible philosophical perspectives. The collected data has been included after the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria, which has helped to develop standard research protocols.

The inclusion criteria are as follows:

- Peer-reviewed journals from the last 10 years
- English Language
- Focus on mental health disorders in the legal profession (worldwide)
- Focus on cultural perspective on mental health in India
- Articles related to mental health issues in the legal profession
- New legislation in India on mental health
- Mental health issues in India in the legal profession
- Role of multiculturalism to address mental health problems in the legal profession.

The exclusion criteria are as follows:

- Journals not written in the English language
- Studies that are only available in the form of abstracts.
- Data not related to mental health in the legal profession.
- Workshop summaries
- Research that did not focus on the role of culture in the treatment of mental health
- Lack of information regarding the Indian context.
- Lack of information on culture and mental health disorders from the global perspective
- Articles that did not deal with the legal profession in both India and other countries.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research has been used in this research study to understand people's experiences, to understand multicultural patterns, structure, and themes to analyse human experiences. The reason why the qualitative research approach has been used to increase the credibility of the research is to understand the issues more reproducibly and transparently. In this research study, the researcher focused on '***thematic analysis***,' to choose common themes, patterns, and ideas that are necessary to be considered.

This research approach provides a depth understanding or ***"thick description",*** to analyse the existing issues which have not been addressed or are being ignored. According to Corley et al. [48], with the help of thematic analysis, new multicultural issues have been examined in depth, in context to mental health issues in the legal profession. Also, doctrinal analysis has been included to analyse existing issues in the Indian context. Therefore, this method has helped to focus on social conflicts, which helped in the analysis of people's feelings, experiences, and perceptions of mental health. Qualitative Research has been used in this project to analyse people's experiences in the context of the well-being of mental health in the legal profession.

In this research study, an ***inductive method*** has been followed. This method allows the researcher to categorise, collect, compare and synthesise qualitative data [49, 50]. The qualitative approach in any research study is very flexible and helps the researcher to focus on retaining rich meaning while interpreting data. In this research study, phenomenological research has been used, which is known as a philosophical perspective that has helped to focus on the landscape of Indian culture on the well-being of mental health. The study is usually based on secondary data analysis- where an individual's subjective experiences have been interpreted in depth.

Ethical Consideration

The term ethics is defined as the "study of morals." Ethical considerations in any research study are defined as various principles which guide the researcher to complete the research study with ethical practice. The data collected for this research study has not been used for other means, and regulations of data protection have also been followed by the researcher. However, ethical factors have been taken into consideration, and all data collected has been used for the study, no data has been implemented in

any other ways. The researcher has not disrespected any work of any scholars whose work has been included in this research study.

Summary

The researcher for this research study has used descriptive, explanatory, and inductive studies with the help of multiple cases to analyse the interpretation of mental health laws in India. This research study is non-doctrinal in nature with the use of an induction method of research. To conclude, the analysis of the data collected has been scrutinized or reviewed in such a way that only relevant data is included that deliberates effectively. The findings have been discussed briefly in Part 4 through various theories, graphs, and other necessary legislative discussions.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Introduction

The research study has highlighted the role of multiculturalism in curing mental health illnesses or disorders in the legal profession in the Indian scenario. As said by Nick Bloy (founder of WELLBEING REPUBLIC), is that it is necessary for people to recognize there is a mental health crisis within the law [51]. Today suicide has become a global problem, and a majority of deaths are occurring mostly in lower-middle-income and middle-income families, but other scholars have highlighted that it is mainly due to the societal stigma in Asian countries such as China and India. But, in comparison to other professions, the death of legal professionals by suicide has been ranked 4th by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [52]. In this section, the researcher has focused on the findings from the previous literature reviews, and based on thematic analysis further discussion has been conducted.

The Relationship between Culturalism and Mental Health Issues is Positive, Which Led to Cultural Stigma that Impacts the Legal Profession in India

Today India is home to more than 1 billion citizens. As per the study conducted by WHO in 2015 [53], 1 in 5 Indians are suffering from depression or different types of mental disorder that is approx. 200 million people in the Indian population. The main three factors why people are unable to disclose their mental health illness are lack of support from families and friends or colleagues, judgement and fear. According to Al-Zam [54], the country has been witnessing "***constitutes a crisis***" in the legal profession. According to the research study by ***The Live Love Laugh Foundation***, 87% of respondents (survey results among 3556 respondents) are aware of mental health illness, but 71% are highly judgemental [55]. This elaborates that, awareness and stigma are two different issues, even though these terms are often interlinked [40]. But the COVID-19 outbreak and sudden suicidal deaths of lawyers and law students across the country are believed to have changed their attitudes toward mental health issues.

According to Hernández et al. [56], entrance to a reputed law university (competition to get into Havard school of law, Cambridge, etc.) signifies a period of transition among the youth. Students face multiple challenges, such as making independent decisions about studies, their livelihood, and new responsibilities, then adjusting to the academic demands of an ill-structured learning environment, and interacting with a diverse range of people [52]. A number of students for the very first time leave their native place and distance themselves from their support network [57]. This affects the mental health of students as well as their physical health, which leads to uncontrollable situations. Sometimes, there is no one to discuss such things with them, and more often students do not even talk about it. It has also been noticed that a majority of law students go through similar psychological problems, like serious stress, depression, and anxiety, and increase through adolescence and reach a peak in adulthood by 25, which makes aspiring law graduates a particularly vulnerable population [13]. According to *Sec. 2(s)* of the *Mental Healthcare Act, 2017*, mental illness is defined as, "a substantial disorder of thinking, perception, mood, orientation or memory which impairs a judgement of an individual, complicates the capability to focus on reality or meet necessary demands in life." Accordingly, it is such a condition which is beyond a certain specified limit. The problem is that a majority of people in India, do not know the exact meaning of mental health illness, and that also a lack of awareness regarding mental health problems among people. It also deteriorates the physical health of an individual [8].

However, according to Goddard et al. [14], it is a bit doubtful that culture affects the way an individual feels distressed and also regarding seeking help from specialists. Oftentimes, individuals seek help from their families and friends, but it often turns out to be exhausting. A majority of studies on suicide are based on socio-demographic factors and psychological problems of suicide attempters or those who have committed suicide [56]. But there is very little research on mental well-being in the legal profession, which is why the situations are more difficult for lawyers or attorneys.

Lives of Lawyers are Vulnerable Caused due of the Negative effect of Cultural Stigma

According to Jacob [58], one of the main factors is the thinking style of legal practitioners. There are certain skills that are necessary for a law graduate or law aspirant that defines him as a good lawyer. The strong element here is "***perfectionism, they have to be the best at everything***." But it could be damaging. The concept of 'no flaws and no errors' could be traumatizing for a legal aspirate who just completed law school and joined the profession. lawyers are focused on contributing their work on time, and drafting in a perfect manner.

High-profile law firms do not care about sleep, because they often need to deal with big transactions. A majority of lawyers, who work in highly reputed law firms, deny their struggles to their loved ones and close ones. According to Vadlamani [31], the first signs of depression are often avoided by high-skilled lawyers, as they cannot jeopardize the reputation of managers and clients. Oftentimes, HRs knowingly avoid having any conversation, as they believe that lawyers are perfect to deal with their own situations. In recent times, the Indian government has been taking new incentives by launching a New Mental Health Programme (NMHP), which first came into force in 1982. But after so many years, the documentary evidence is very reluctant and different from reality [59,60]. The only problem is the lack of infrastructure for mental healthcare, and there is a heavy burden as society is still not ready to address these issues openly. Neither are ready to come forward as a group or community to help people suffering silently [57]. The mainstream of the mental health system has increased to acknowledge the intersection of multiculturalism and diversity.

Recently, India has been taking new incentives to spread awareness regarding mental health illnesses. A new act has been passed known as "*Mental Healthcare Act, 2017*." The act came into force on 7th July 2018, replacing the Mental Health Act, of 1987. This is a huge change that hopes to bring new changes in society [48]. This is because the previous legislation was insufficient to protect the rights of individuals suffering from mental health illnesses in India, and it is believed to be a justified act. Today severe issues in the context of mental health are severe anxiety, stress, depressive symptoms, denial anger, insomnia, and fear globally [61, 62]. However, after the COVID-19 outbreak, a majority of people are trying to communicate and people are helping those who are seeking treatment for mental disorders, which is a significant cultural shift, in the Indian scenario [63].

The fact is even though the new law is great hope for India, there are a few other issues which need to be focused on more in-depth. According to sec. 124 of IPC, an individual may be exempt from punishment and not prosecution. This means, there is still a possibility that the police may remand the individual who attempts suicide in custody and produce them before the magistrate [64]. But, the rate of suicides in India is increasing with drug addiction. The global pandemic has led to unknown issues that are forcing lawmakers to think differently.

This is because, the presumption of law is, that such a person has a kind of mental illness. Section 111 of the Mental Healthcare Bill, gives the power to the magistrate to see that if a person has a mental illness, conveyed to the Public Mental health Establishment for appropriate treatment for at least 10 days [65]. The person who attempts to commit suicide may hesitate to seek medical treatment, due to fear of institutionalization, as it may be against the will of the person [66]. There is a possibility these sections are being misused, which may lead to other complicated factors.

The Positive Approach of Integration of Mental Health into Social Development Theory

The problem is in various large law firms, antisocial behaviours are often appreciated, and people having such explanations offer rewards in form of promotions or bonuses that are available only to ones who are great to fulfil unreasonable expectations regarding commitment. A majority of legal professionals isolate themselves from society, which increases the level of stress, leading to depression or anxiety, or severe mood fluctuations [37]. Lawyers preferred to think and intellect abstractions, and a training or internship period disconnects individuals from a person's own subjective experience which may truncate their emotions [35]. The fact is law school is already tough, but students are not given appropriate opportunities, or they are not taught how to carry out any stressful situations in their profession. However, as discussed by Jacob [58], 'happiness' is one of the significant aims of social development towards capability approaches. As stated by Bentham, 'classical utility' is about the maximization of 'utility' or 'happiness'. Therefore, the main focus is on measures related to happiness which is an ultimate aim as it is self-evident. Development is positively related to mental well-being, but the field differs from economic and philosophical approaches, as rooted in different traditions of medical and health practice [58].

The issue of the danger of stigma in concern to mental illness is somewhat common. Often the prejudiced attitudes of others towards people suffering from mental health cause fragile issues and social deprivation. The issues related to mental health are still enduring, and the importance of mental health started with the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), and fortunately, people looked at gaps in the present approach to mental healthcare and the necessity to expand the ecosystem. As per the study conducted by Lancet and Global Health Data exchange, *one in seven* is suffering from a mental health disorder, with approx. 15% of global mental health causes.

Findings of Present Study

In this research study, the researcher has focused on the importance of mental health wellness in the legal profession from the perspective of Indian culturalism. The study has mapped out various issues which an individual generally goes through in the legal profession in India. However, the researcher has also focused on the lives of university students who plan to pursue law, and most importantly why they feel it's better to hide their physiological issues 65].

From the previous studies, it has been observed that a majority of them go through the same problems, and due to a lack of mental-health attention the rate of suicide is increasing across the nation, which is referred to as the *'constitution crises.'* This present study has focused on core journals that contribute most to the field of mental health, with the help of various case laws. The alignment of mental health well-being with social development theory requires practical as well as theoretical barriers to bring new changes. In the present study, the researcher does feel that mental health remains uncomfortable, narrow, or absent in the context of development practice and paradigms. However, the major finding is interdisciplinary, which is considered the most valuable approach for addressing multidimensionality and complexity of mental wellbeing, which is generally related to behavioural science.

Another thing in the law profession that the researcher has noticed is that even though employees are not expected to be available digitally, they are expected to check their emails on weekends. A majority of times legal trainees do share their experiences about leaving the office premises by 5:30 pm, which is uncomfortable. They feel shame or guilt, as the firm's high officials may not consider them as team players. Today thousands of junior lawyers in India feel unstable, fail to deal with stress, and even though the employer is aware of it, many do not talk about it. Also, the way a woman handles the situation differs from a man, for men it is often the '*culture of silence*. The major issue in existence is the lack of concern towards mental health, even though 'right to health', is the most important aspect under *Right to life and personal liberty,* as per Art. 21 of the Indian Constitution as referred in the case *Paschim Banga Khet Mazoor Samity v. State of West Bengal (1996) 4 SCC 37 [67].*

CONCLUSION

In this research study, the main findings are based on the cultural aspects of the legal profession in Indian society. In recent times, especially after the outbreak of COVID-19, the practice of law is getting back on track, focusing on new strategies to provide appropriate services to clients. But the stress level is increasing, due to certain factors like Great Resignation. Next with the advancement of technology, the rate of cybercrimes has increased, and large-scale law firms are the prime target. Client expectations are changing, which sometimes leads to unreasonable circumstances for lawyers (difficulty to maintain a work-life balance).

The services for mental health in India follow both institutional and biomedical approaches. But, due to a lack of infrastructure, the model fails to address the significance of sociocultural factors. Oftentimes, people are left in rehabilitation centres and psychiatric institutions and then neglected. Today, the gaps in the delivery of the mental healthcare system are huge, and it is believed to be overcome by the application of 'community-based care models. Even though the present mental health care legislation is not 'golden quality', it did recognize certain necessities that need to be added. The present research study has focused on a chunk of issues that are rooted in society, and according to scholars, it is not just one area of culture which leads to the constitutional crisis.

However, law firms in India are developing hybrid-friendly training environments for lawyers, which also leads to sustainability. Oftentimes lawyers who are going through mental health issues are discriminated against, as a majority of clients believe that mentally healthy lawyers always do better jobs. With changes in the business world, there is a requirement to change business models in law firms, where employment practices need to be involved, that help to maintain work-life balance, helping employees to go through stressful solutions or get appropriate treatment for mental illness. Nonetheless, interest in the well-being of mental health in the legal profession has improved over time and in a positive way within years. Still, the area is yet to get into the maturity period and fortunately cultural stigma in the society is breaking down. Hopefully, new changes are expected that save the lives of legal professionals.

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