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Clinical psychology and mental health in Nepal



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Nepal, a Federal Democratic Republic (2008), is a multilingual, multi-ethnic underdeveloped landlocked country with a population of about 28 million, sandwiched between China and India. Psychology academia is more than half century (1959) old and Master's in Clinical Psychology was introduced in 1980's and M Phil Clinical Psychology in 1998. There are about 150 Psychiatrists and 30 registered M Phil Clinical Psychologists. Mental health is a less privileged and less researched sector: 1-2% of health budget allocated annually to mental health; 25-30% of the population is estimated to be having some form of mental health related problems and about 90% treatment gap. Stigma, unawareness, lack of trained human resources and mental health services, rough terrain and less government priority are the main barriers for development of mental health sector. Traditional faith healing and pharmacotherapy is the prevalent treatment modality and psychosocial counseling, or psychotherapy is yet to be accepted as an effective mode of intervention. Psychosocial interventions for mental health wellbeing came to the forefront after the two huge disasters in the past two decades: (1) armed conflict between the Government and Communist Party, Maoist (1996-2006), in which more than 12,000 people were killed and 100,000 to 150,000 people were internally displaced; (2) Nepal earthquake (April 25, 2015), when more than 8844 lost their lives, 22,000 were injured, over 150 went missing and hundreds of thousands lost their homes and property. Though mental health sector in Nepal is still in its development stage, clinical psychology is also slowly advancing.

Biography

Mita Rana is currently working as Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, Institute of Medicine, Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal. She started working as Assistant Professor and Clinical Psychologist since March 2003 and co-ordinates the M Phil Clinical Psychology program. She has received her PhD in Psychology in 2012 and is the founding and immediate past President of the Nepalese Association of Clinical Psychologist (NACP). She was the Scientific Committee Coordinator and Member of the Organizing Committee of the International Mental Health Conference Nepal, 2018 held in Kathmandu, Nepal. She has more than 30 research articles published. Her aim is to develop the field of Clinical Psychology in Nepal.

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