

Department Of Psychiatry, BPKIHS And It's Contribution To Mental Health Literature Of Nepal

Shakya DR

Additional Prof. Department of psychiatry, BPKIHS, Dharan, Nepal

Email Corresponding Author: drdhanashakya@yahoo.com

Abstract

Mental health and Psychiatry are relatively new as a medical specialty in Nepal. Psychiatry and its issues are still the matter of stigma, mystery, ignorance and negligence not only in public but also in professional and policy-maker level. It is yet to receive its due space in health policy in terms of: program, priority and resource allocation. Despite of some achievements in mental health field (service, teaching and research), they are too far from satisfaction.

Along with other responsibilities in this pretext, a department of psychiatry of a teaching institute naturally bears on its shoulder a huge burden of spreading scientific information, adding to literature and destigmatizing mental health issues. The fact, data, information and awareness is a main means of changing present situation.

This article intends to briefly outline the milestones, major attempts, achievements and publications in this direction, of Department of Psychiatry of B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS), a prominent centre for the medical education, service and research in Nepal. The basis of this review are: Journals, Abstract-books, BPKIHS Annual Reports, Thesis, other research works, Internet search, books, papers and personal communication with both concerned faculty members and students coming into the knowledge of the author.

Keywords: BPKIHS, Department of Psychiatry, Mental health literature, Nepal

INTRODUCTION:

Looking back to its Inception:

B. P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) was established in 1993 as the biggest Nepal-India project, with the vision of upliftment of health status of eastern Nepal and production of quality health workforce.¹ Department of Psychiatry was established at BPKIHS in 1995 when psychiatry service was first provided in the institute by Dr. HP Jhingan from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS, India). It was only psychiatric service in the whole eastern region with about 22 lacs population. Initially, there were a psychiatrist and a house-officer under Department of Medicine. It began with OPD, indoor (4 beds allotted to Psychiatry on SOS basis) and 24-hour-emergency service.²

Formal functioning started as a department with the joining of Prof. SK Khandelwal (AIIMS) and other Indian faculty some time later in 1996. Since then, the department has been providing its services almost continuously. Subsequently, Nepalese professionals; psychologist (Mr. Binod K. Deo, in 1997), psychiatrist (Dr. Pramod M. Shyangwa, on a permanent basis in 1998) and a Nurse with mental health training (Dil Kumari Rai) joined the Department. A 20-bedded Psychiatry ward was inaugurated on February 5, 2000 (Magh 23, 2056 BS). Of these 20 beds, 7 were allotted to the De-addiction unit.³

Major milestones:

1. Hosting the First Annual Conference of Psychiatrists' Association of Nepal (PANCON-

- 1) in 13-14 November, 1998 with theme- 'Mental health in Nepal: Challenges in the New Millennium' under the leadership of Prof. SK Khandelwal
2. Start of MD-Psychiatry, a post graduate teaching in 2000
3. Best Presentation Award of the First World Congress (WCAP-1), India, Goa (2006) and Second World Congress of Asian Psychiatry (WCAP-2), Taipei, Taiwan (2009) awarded to Dr. Dhana Ratna Shakya for Research Presentation
4. Curriculum development Workshop for Master in Psychology (MPhil-Psychology) in 2006
5. Hosting the First National CME of the PAN in 29-30 November, 2007 with theme- 'Common Mental and Behavioral Problems in Medical Practice' under the leadership of Dr. PM Shyangwa
6. Start of MSc in Psychiatric Nursing in BPKIHS in 2008
7. Approval/ Recognition of Medical Council of India (MCI) in 2012
8. Completion of 'Community Mental Morbidity Survey' in 2012
9. Completion of Research about 'Depression Identification Instrument' (as focal centre for Nepal) in 2013
10. Best Medical Book (NMA Literacy) Award-2069 of Nepal Medical Association Trust for a book, 'Mental Health and Mental Illness: Our Responsibility' authored by Dr. Dhana Ratna Shakya (2014, March)

cum psychotherapy room and a separate treatment room for electro-convulsive therapy (ECT). This ward currently has 30 beds (inclusive of 3 female and 5 male De-addiction unit beds), making it the largest psychiatry in-patient facility in the country in a general hospital setting.

Table:1. Statistical Review of its Annual Patient service data⁴

Representative / Recent 5 Yrs	OPD + Paying Patients (No.)	Ward Patients (No.)	Bed occupancy rate (%)	Average length of stay (days)
1994- 1995	418	11	22	10
1995- 1996	2601	61	53.7	12.8
1999- 2000	7062	211	69.47	10.58
2005- 2006	6159	340	90.09	18.51
2008- 2009	8879+106	327	72.64	17.84
2009- 2010	12866+258	405	68.95	17.94
2010- 2011	15060+406	415	68.96	17.93
2011- 2012	15371+504	359	66.5	17.03
2012- 2013	16750+854	361	67.14	21.82

Attempts in Mental health Service:

This Department has been providing Out-patient, In-patient, 24-hour Emergency and Consultation-liaison service since its inception. It caters not only the people of eastern Nepal, but also of other parts of Nepal and neighboring districts of India. The number of patients in these services is on the rise every year, making this once thought of a big facility inadequate currently.⁴ Psychology Unit of the department provides diagnostic and interventional services. In accordance with its community-oriented philosophy, it runs out-reach clinics in district hospitals of Dhankutta, Inaruwa and Rangeli (suspended) and supports mental/health camps.⁵

The psychiatry ward has separate units for male and female patients with facilities like: a recreation

Achievements in Mental health Education & Training:

The department started MD-Psychiatry program in 2000 AD with its modest beginning with the intake of 1 candidate and as of now 4 per year. Indian senior faculties were invited to guide these candidates in initial years⁶ and subsequently, Nepalese teachers began to take over this responsibility as they progressed professionally as faculties. By 2013, the department has produced 23 psychiatrists serving in different corners of the country. Two of them were Indian nationals. There are currently 10 junior residents under MD-Psychiatry training. Regular academic activities of the department includes: teaching through service (including: 2 grand rounds and

word rounds each/ week, OPD consultation and discussion), foundation tutorials for new residents, scheduled Academic programs (Seminar, Case conference, Journal clubs) for these candidates (Table.2). The MD-Psychiatry program has received the Medical Council of India (MCI) recognition.

Table.2: PG Programme in the department

Topics	Frequency
Case presentation	2/ week
Case conference	Every 2 weeks
Seminar	1/ week
Journal club	Every 2 weeks
Lecture	1/ week

There are: Structured interactive session (SIS), Seminar (SEM), Structured group discussion (SGD) and LABEX for undergraduates of various

programs including MBBS, BDS, BSc/ MSc nursing.⁷ It actively conducts CME programs, Clinical Grand Round (CGR), and other inter-departmental academic programs at institutional level.⁴ The faculty members contribute as resource person for PhD/ PG residents, regular training activities conducted by 'Clinical Epidemiological Unit', Research Committee, post graduate foundation course and other organizations working in mental health fields (I/NGOs, e.g. Mental hospital, CMC, Meriknoll, SAF-N, AMDA, PRIME etc.). Psychiatry posting is an important component for: MD-Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Forensic and Community Medicine; and BSc nursing and MSc Psychiatric nursing course.

Many eminent teachers/ faculties contributed for its growth in various ways (Table.3). The department has also guided the students from Switzerland, Australia and the US for their field project/ studies.²

Table.3: Faculties/ Teachers/ specialists who served in the department²

Name	Parent institute/ Country	Time	Particulars
Dr. H. P. Jhingan	All India Institute of Medical Sciences, India	1995/ 97	Started psychiatric service
Dr. S. K. Khandelwal	All India Institute of Medical Sciences, India	1995	Started with formal status
Dr. Avneet Sharma	Srinagar Medical College, India	1996	
Dr. R. K. Chadda	Lady Harding, India	1997	
Mr. Binod K. Deo	Nepal	1997	Nepalese psychologist
Dr. K. M. R. Prasad	NIMHANS, Bangalore	1997	
Dr. Pramod M. Shyangwa	Nepal	1998	Nepalese psychiatrist
Dr. Sudipta Das	India	2001	
Dr. Susmit Roy	India	2001	
Dr. Eddie Mukhim	India	2001	
Dr. Ramesh Kumar	India	2001	

Name	Parent institute/ Country	Time	Particulars
Dr. Gurpreet Singh	India	2001	
Dr. Prachi	India		
Dr. Hem Raj Pal	India		
Dr. Renuka Jena	India		
Dr. Saibal Nandy	India		
Prof. Biswojit Sen	India	2002	
Dr. Anupam Pokharel	Nepal	2002	
Dr. Rabi Shakya	Nepal	2003	
Dr. Baikuntha R. Adhikary	Nepal	2005	
Dr. Dhana Ratna Shakya	Nepal	2006	
Dr. Arun K. Pandey	India	2006	
Dr. Nidesh Sapkota	Nepal	2009	
Dr. Rinku Gautam Joshi	Nepal	2012	
Dr. Rajesh Kumar	India	2013	Clinical psychologist
Visiting Faculties			
Dr. B. M. Tripathi	AIIMS, India		
Dr. Rakesh Lal	AIIMS, India		
Dr. Jeffrey Erickson	the US		
Prof. Indira Sharma	India		
Prof. Andrews Sims	England		
Dr. Sandra Connell	the US		
Dr. Brendan S.	Australia		
Dr. Lawrence G. Wilson	the US		

RESEARCH AND LITERATURE CONTRIBUTION:

As a pioneer post-graduate medical institute of Nepal, research has been one of the important activities of this department since its initiation. Thesis research is an integral part of Post-graduate and PhD; and important component

also of under-graduate programs of various specialties. This department is actively involved in those of not only itself but also of other departments when related with mental health issues (Box.1). Effort has been put to study, research and investigate into a wide range of topics of: Mental health, Psychiatry and other related issues in various levels (student, resident

and faculty) in the department. Many of them have been published in local, regional, national and international journals.

Consultation-liaison,^{8,9} Psychiatric emergency,¹⁰⁻¹¹ referral,¹² deliberate self harm attempts¹³⁻¹⁶ have been the study areas of this department throughout its past. Though there have been frequent attempts to generate psychiatric prevalence data including community survey of psychiatric morbidity,⁴ only few of the completed projects have been published in various forms so far.^{5,17-21} Attempts have been made since its inception to study various issues of its local context, i.e. challenges;²² awareness;²³ knowledge, attitude about mental illness,²⁴ its treatment/ECT,²⁵ ragging,²⁶ country profile²⁷ and care pathway²⁸.

Psychiatric co-morbidity has been investigated in different times by different investigators of this department among the patients of various medical disorders and settings, i.e. physical/medical diseases,^{29,30} post Myocardial infarction,³¹ diabetes mellitus³²⁻³⁴ and seizure disorder³⁵. Seizure disorder has been reported and reviewed with various issues, i.e. laughter,³⁶ self injurious behavior,³⁷ bipolar mood,³⁸ depression,³⁹ pseudo-seizure⁴⁰ and hallucination as adverse drug event of Levetiracetam⁴¹. Tourette Disorder,⁴² migraine headache⁴³ and acromegaly⁴⁴ have also been reported by this department with some psychiatric aspects.

Substance is among the most extensively researched topics in this department. Alcohol is the most common and its disorder is most prevalent one here. There is a recent review on the studies carried out about alcohol ab/use in eastern Nepal⁴⁵; majority of the reviewed works were naturally the studies of this department. It enumerates the studies in various aspects this substance, i.e.: community prevalence,⁴⁶⁻⁴⁸ clinical profile and prevalence,⁴⁹ medical personnel studies,⁵⁰ causative factor, co-morbidity,⁵¹⁻⁵³ help seeking,⁵⁴ gender comparison, knowledge, attitude and practice, management⁵⁵ and others⁵⁶⁻⁶⁰. Besides alcohol, opiate is the other substance

being addressed in its publication⁶¹ so far, along with the substance in general.⁶²⁻⁶⁴

Whereas schizophrenia is less studied and published topic,⁶⁵ different forms of mood disorders are the issues in relatively more publications from this department, including: thyroid abnormality,⁶⁶ pregnancy,⁶⁷ risk factors⁶⁸ and empty nest⁶⁹ in depressions; and neurological complication,⁷⁰ pathway⁷¹ and magico-religious beliefs⁷² about bipolar mood/ mania. Similarly, anxiety^{73,74} and other neurotic disorders^{75,76} were addressed and psychiatric illness studied in various major stress contexts of Nepal, i.e. decade long armed conflict,⁷⁷ abroad work⁷⁸ and status of HIV positive⁷⁹. This department has publications about child^{80,81} and geriatric psychiatry⁸² as well.

Published literature are available from this department on diverse topics like: factitious disorder,⁸³ quality of life,⁸⁴ attributes of medical students⁸⁵ and compliance to treatment.⁸⁶ The contribution of this department's faculties also includes those for 'mental health and psychosocial support guidelines'⁸⁷ and dementia assessment and management protocol⁸⁸. Abstract books cum Souvenirs of both the First Conference⁸⁹ and First National CME³ of the Psychiatrists' Association of Nepal are among the remembered conference publications in Nepal. The presence of mental health issues in the Souvenir of the All Nepal Medical Conferences (ANEMECON) of the NMA has been maintained by the articles from this department in last decade.⁹⁰⁻⁹³ The write-up of this department has embraced the issues of not only national meet⁹⁴ but also the World Congress.⁹⁵

The faculties of this department have put much of their efforts in raising awareness in various mental health issues by publications of booklets,^{96,97} leaflets⁹⁸ and books.⁹⁹⁻¹⁰¹ Two books, one on suicide⁹⁹ and the other on mental illness¹⁰¹, have been published as reference books for non-psychiatrist medical professionals, mental health professionals, medical students, and as resource books for patients, their family and other literate readers. They have been evaluated as invaluable mental health resources¹⁰²⁻⁴, so much that the later was awarded in the ANEMECON-26 by the

Box.1: Thesis carried out, ongoing and proposed in the Department of Psychiatry, BPKIHS

1. *Krishna Bahadur Thapa*, Sen B, Shyangwa PM. Risk factors associated with delirium tremens and its treatment with benzodiazepines. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2002.
2. *Pradeep Man Singh*, Sen B, Das SK, Shyangwa PM. Panic Disorder: A study of clinical features and association with events and alcohol use in a tertiary hospital in eastern Nepal. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2003.
3. *Amar Kumar Jha*. A Comparison of Somatic Symptoms in Psychiatric outpatients and inpatients at BPKIHS, Dharan. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2004.
4. *Baikuntha Raj Adhikari*. Catatonia: A descriptive study of catatonia in inpatient cases in tertiary hospital in eastern part of Nepal. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2004.
5. *Devavrat Joshi*. Intentional Self Harm: A Study of the socio-demographic profile, associated morbidities, suicidal intent and its relationship with stressful life events and certain biochemical parameters. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2004.
6. *Dhana Ratna Shakya*, Shyangwa PM, Sen B. A study of socio-demographic profile, psychiatric co-morbidities and help seeking behavior in ADS attending BPKIHS, Nepal. MD thesis. 2005.
7. *Himansu Gupta*. Headache in Depressive Episode – A cross-sectional study. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2005.
8. *Ranjan Thapa*. Dissociative Disorders: A study of clinical manifestation and psychological factors. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2005.
9. *Nirmal Lamichhane*, Shyangwa PM. A comparative study of quality of life (QOC) and family burden (FB) in injectable and non-injectable substance dependent syndrome. MD thesis. 2006.
10. *Sanjeev Ranjan*, Shyangwa PM, Shakya R. Clinico-demographic profile and diagnostic stability in a patient with acute and transient psychotic disorder. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2006.
11. *Nidesh Sapkota*, Shyangwa PM, Shakya R. Influence of Magico-Religious belief on psychopathology and pathway to care among patients with manic episode, presenting in psychiatric services at BPKIHS. MD thesis. 2007.
12. *Dev Kumar Thapa*. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Family burden & coping mechanism. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2008.
13. *Mohan Belbase*. Resperidon Response in Naïve versus exposed schizophrenic with their pathway to care. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2008.
14. *Sandeep Subedi*. Study of knowledge, Attitude, Stigma and Pathway to care among patients with epilepsy and their primary caretaker. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2009.
15. *Deep Prakash Malla*, Shakya R. Clinico-demographic profile of children and adolescents attending psychiatric OPD in BPKIHS and pathways to help seeking. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2010.
16. *Rinku Gautam*, Shyangwa PM, Shakya DR, Smith S, Pradhan B. Female patients with alcohol related problems: Clinical Profile, Co-morbidity and their Attitude. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2010.
17. *Tanveer A. Khan*, Shakya R. Violent victimization in acute mentally disturbed patients: Prevalence, correlates and relation with knowledge and attitude of primary caretakers. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2010.
18. *Mausami Thapa*, Pandey AK, Adhikari B. Comparative study of Quality of life in patient with Schizophrenia and Bipolar Affective Disorder in Remission. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2011.
19. *Neena Rai*, Shyangwa PM, Shakya DR, Sapkota N. Clinico - Demographic profile of geriatric patient attending psychiatric service and relationship of memory status with psychiatric disorder. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2011.
20. *Rachana Sharma*, Shyangwa PM, Pandey AK. Short term outcome and factor contributing to relapse in patient with Alcohol Dependence. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2011.
21. *Ashish Dutta*, Shyangwa PM, Adhikari B. Lithium with Olanzapine versus lithium with Risperidon in treatment of acute phase (mania) in BPAD. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2012.
22. *Madhur Basnet*, Shakya DR, Deo BK, Sharma SK. Prevalence of psychiatric illness among diabetic patients in Dharan Municipality. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2012.
23. *Sulochana Joshi*, Pandey AK, Sapkota N. Amitriptyline versus Fluoxetine in treatment of patients with somatoform disorder. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2012.
24. *Lata Gautam*, Shakya DR, Deo BK, Maskey R. Gender Comparison of Factors associated with Depressive illness: a Descriptive study. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2013.
25. *Parashar Koirala*, Pandey AK, Sapkota N. Metabolic syndrome among psychiatric in-patients in BPKIHS. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2013.
26. *Sandeep Varma*, Pandey AK, Adhikari B, Mallick L. Socio-demographic and Clinical profile of Delirium in BPKIHS. Unpublished- MD thesis. 2013.
27. *Nikesh Mani Rajbhandari*, Shakya DR, Gautam RJ. Factors associated with Readmission for Alcohol dependence: a study of Clinical profiles, Motivation, Biochemical markers and Caregivers' knowledge and attitude. (ongoing)
28. *Sanjeev Kumar Mishra*, Pandey AK, Adhikari B. A Hospital based study to assess the Effects of admission in patients with Schizophrenia on Patients' Symptoms, Caregivers' Burden and Coping Strategies. (ongoing)
29. *Suraj Nepal*, Sapkota N, Deo BK, Kumar R, Pandey NK. Prevalence of Dementia in old age patients attending psychiatric clinic in a tertiary care centre over a period of one year. (ongoing)
30. *Aman Mehta*, Pandey AK, Adhikari B, Deo BK. Thyroid disorders function abnormality and depression. (proposed)
31. *Luna Paudel*, Sapkota N, Shakya DR. Prevalence and factors associated with Depression among Geriatric patients attending Psychiatric OPD. (proposed)
32. *Nikhil Gauri Shankar*, Pandey AK, Gautam RJ, Kumar R. Medical comorbidities and clinical co-relates in alcohol dependence syndrome inpatients in BPKIHS. (proposed)
33. *Suren Limbu*, Shakya DR, Sapkota N. Tobacco use; and its dependence and psychiatric co-morbidity among users: a prevalence study from Eastern Nepal. (proposed)
 - a. Das BKL, Lamsal M, **Shakya DR** (co-guide), Pradhan B, Bhattarai N, Baral N. Genetic Variation of Alcohol metabolism genes and Mineral status in Alcohol dependence among Nepalese population. PhD- Biochemistry thesis (on-going)
 - b. **Shakya DR** Doctoral Committee member for: Effect of medical education on brain electrical and cardiac vagal activity in medical students: an Analytical study. PhD- Physiology thesis (on-going)

Nepal Medical Association (NMA) Trust (offered by honorable President of Nepal Dr. Ram Baran Yadav) as the best medical book. A manual about assessment and management of Dementia contributed by a faculty of this department is available on the web.¹⁰⁵ In the print and electronic media, the articles of the authors from this department make a remarkable presence in various mental health issues for common people as well. Round the year, the authors of this department put efforts to address the mental health concerns in different fora, e.g. National dailies; media channels etc. and many of them have been well appreciated.

The Annual Reports of the Institute witness the completion of numerous research projects; many of them have been presented in local, national and even International conferences.⁴ It gives a sense of achievement that the research presentations of this department had been awarded as the best in the first (Goa, 2006) and the second World Congress (Taipei, 2009) of Asian Psychiatry⁹⁴ and this department could successfully contribute as a focal centre for Nepal to the WHO study about 'Depression Identification Instrument'. The publication of those completed research projects would add to the literature and the study into other areas would help further in-depth studies to keep up to the world trend.

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