



Anxiety Disorders

For Prelims: Anxiety, Anxiety disorders, [Mental Health](#)

For Mains: Mental Health in India, De-Stigmatizing Mental Health.

Why in News?

Recently, there has been a growing recognition of the **impact of anxiety disorders** on individuals' **daily lives and overall well-being**. These common mental health conditions affect a significant portion of the population and can lead to persistent distress and impairment.

- Anxiety is a normal emotion that **can become problematic** when it becomes **persistent and disruptive**. In such cases, it may **indicate an anxiety disorder** that requires attention and appropriate treatment.

What is Anxiety disorder?

- **About:**
 - Anxiety disorders are a **group of [mental health conditions](#)** that involve **excessive and irrational fear and worry** about various aspects of life.
 - Anxiety disorders can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, culture, or background.
- **Historical Context of Anxiety Disorders:**
 - Anxiety disorders were historically **classified within mood disorders** until the late 19th century. **Sigmund Freud** introduced the concept of "**anxiety neurosis**" to differentiate anxiety symptoms from depression.
 - Freud's original anxiety neurosis included people with phobias and panic attacks.
 - Anxiety neurosis is further categorized into **anxiety neurosis** (people with mainly psychological symptoms of anxiety) **and anxiety hysteria** (people with phobias and physical symptoms of anxiety).
- **Prevalence:**
 - According to India's **National Mental Health Survey**, neurosis and stress-related disorders have a **prevalence of 3.5% in India**.
 - These disorders are more commonly observed in women and are often overlooked or misdiagnosed in primary care settings. Childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood are considered high-risk periods for the onset of anxiety disorders.
- **Clinical Features of Common Anxiety Disorders:**
 - **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD):**
 - **Excessive worrying** lasting over six months, not restricted to specific circumstances, and often accompanied by physical symptoms and distress.
 - **Panic Disorder:**
 - Recurrent, unexpected panic attacks characterized by intense physical symptoms and fear of catastrophic outcomes.
 - **Social Anxiety Disorder:**
 - Intense fear of **negative evaluation by others**, resulting in avoidance of social situations and significant distress.

- **Separation Anxiety Disorder:**
 - Fear and distress concerning **separation from attachment figures**, accompanied by excessive worry about potential harm.
- **Specific Phobias:**
 - **Irrational fear of specific objects, animals, or situations.**
- **Causes For Anxiety Disorders:**
 - **Genetics:**
 - An increased likelihood of anxiety disorders can be observed in individuals with a **family history of anxiety**, suggesting a genetic predisposition.
 - **Brain Chemistry:**
 - **Imbalances in neurotransmitters**, which are responsible for regulating mood and emotions, may play a role in the development of anxiety disorders.
 - **Personality Traits:**
 - Certain personality traits, such as being **shy, perfectionistic, or prone to stress**, can make individuals more susceptible to developing an anxiety disorder.
 - **Life Events:**
 - **Traumatic or stressful experiences, such as abuse, violence, loss, or illness**, can trigger or exacerbate anxiety disorders. Conversely, even positive life events like marriage, having a baby, or starting a new job can induce anxiety in some individuals.
 - **Medical Conditions:**
 - Underlying **physical health issues**, including diabetes, heart disease, thyroid problems, or hormonal imbalances, can contribute to the onset or manifestation of anxiety symptoms.
- **Treating Anxiety Disorders:**
 - Treatment decisions are based on the severity, persistence, and impact of symptoms, as well as patient preferences.
 - **Evidence-based interventions** include selective **serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)** and **cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)**.
 - Co-occurring depression requires separate consideration and specific treatment.
 - Treatment is usually continued for 9-12 months after symptom remission, gradually phased out as recommended.

What Initiatives has the Government of India taken to Address Mental Health?

- **National Mental Health Program (NMHP):** The [National Mental Health Program \(NMHP\)](#) was adopted by the government in **1982** in response to the large number of mental disorders and shortage of mental health professionals.
 - **District Mental Health Programme (DMHP), 1996** was also launched to provide community mental health services at the primary health care level.
- **Mental Health Act:** As part of the [Mental Health Care Act 2017](#), every affected person has **access to mental healthcare and treatment from government institutions**.
 - It has significantly reduced the significance of [Section 309 IPC](#) and **attempts to commit suicide are punishable only as exceptions**.
- **Kiran Helpline:**
 - In 2020, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched a **24/7 toll-free helpline 'Kiran'** to provide mental health support.
- **Manodarpan Initiative:**
 - It aimed at providing **psychosocial support** to students, teachers, and family members during the [Covid-19 pandemic](#).
- **MANAS Mobile App:**
 - To **promote mental well-being across age groups**, the Government of India launched [MANAS \(Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System\)](#) in **2021**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. What does this quotation mean to you - "We can never obtain peace in the outer world until and unless we obtain peace within ourselves." - Dalai Lama (2021)

[Source: TH](#)

Mesolithic Rock Paintings Unearthed in Andhra Pradesh

Why in News?

Recently, a former archaeologist of [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) has discovered a [Mesolithic period](#) rock painting depicting a person tilling a piece of land in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh.

- It was found while surveying the **lower River Krishna Valley** to ascertain the architectural features of shrines.
- Earlier, in 2018, archaeologists had uncovered prehistoric rock art estimated to be from the **Neolithic era, circa 1500-2000 BC**, on natural limestone formations near Dachepalli in Guntur district.



What are the Key Findings?

- **Natural Rock Shelters:**
 - The rock paintings were found **on the walls and ceilings of naturally formed caves** on a hillock in Orvakallu.
 - These caves served as **shelters for the prehistoric humans** who inhabited the area during that time.
- **Mesolithic Rock Paintings:**
 - Among the five caves explored, two stood out with **distinguished depictions of rock**

paintings.

- Executed by people of the Mesolithic Age, these paintings offer a **glimpse into the artistic abilities** and practices of that era.

▪ **Artistic Materials:**

- The rock paintings were created **using natural white kaolin and red ochre pigments.**
 - **Ochre** is a **pigment composed of clay**, sand, and ferric oxide.
 - **Kaolinite** is a **soft, earthy, and usually white mineral** produced by the chemical weathering of aluminium silicate minerals like feldspar.
- Over time, exposure to air and wind has **resulted in significant damage** to the paintings. However, some **sketches and outlines remain intact.**

▪ **Depicted Scenes:**

- The rock paintings depict various scenes from the daily life of the **prehistoric communities.**
- One painting portrays a man skillfully **catching a wild goat with his left hand while using a hook-like** implement to control it.
- Another painting captures two couples with raised hands, while a child stands behind them, **possibly indicating communal activities** or rituals.

▪ **Agricultural Practices:**

- A significant painting showcases a **man holding a plough and appearing to till the land.** This depiction suggests a semi-settled life pattern where community members engaged in domesticating animals and cultivating crops, reflecting early agricultural practices.

Stone Ages

▪ **Palaeolithic (Old Stone) Age:**

- Basically, a hunting and food gathering culture.
- Palaeolithic tools include **sharpened stone, chopper, hand axe, scraper, spear,** bow and arrow, etc. and were generally made up of hard rock quartzite.
- Rock paintings and **carvings found at Bhimbetka, Madhya Pradesh** reflect upon hunting as the main subsistence activity.
- Palaeolithic age in India is divided **into three phases:**
 - **Early or Lower Palaeolithic** (500,000 - 100,000 BC)
 - **Middle Palaeolithic** (100,000 - 40,000 BC)
 - **Upper Palaeolithic** (40,000 - 10,000 BC).

▪ **Mesolithic (Middle Stone) Age (10,000 BCE - 8000 BCE):**

- The age is marked by transition from **Pleistocene period to Holocene period** and favorable changes in the climate.
- The early period of Mesolithic age marks the **hunting, fishing and food gathering.**
- Domestication of the animals **began** in this age.
- The tools called **Microliths were smaller** and had **improved geometry** than the Palaeolithic age.

▪ **Neolithic (New Stone) Age (8000 BCE - 1000 BCE):**

- Referred to as the **concluding phase of the Stone Age**, the age heralded the beginning of food production.
- Sedentism (living in one place for a long time), use of pottery, and invention of crafts are characteristic features of the neolithic age.
- The neolithic tools were **composed of heavy ground tools like pestles,** grinders, pounders and also axes and sickles.

▪ **Megalithic Culture:**

- Megaliths refer to **large stone structures that were constructed** either as burial sites or as commemorative sites.
- In India, archaeologists trace the majority of the megaliths to the **Iron Age (1500 BC to 500 BC)**, though some sites precede the Iron Age, extending up to 2000 BC.
- Megaliths are spread across the Indian subcontinent. Majority of them are found in peninsular India, concentrated in the states of Maharashtra (mainly in Vidarbha), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Source: TH

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