

THE STATEMENT OUTLINING HOW I FULFIL THE REQUIREMENT

Dr. Vaishnav Mrugesh

In a rapidly changing world driven by the digital revolution, we are entering an era where artificial intelligence is transforming many aspects of life. However, stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness remain highly prevalent not only in developing countries but also in developed nations. Therefore, education in psychiatry must address the fundamental human rights of persons living with mental illnesses.

Two major events of this decade have highlighted the importance of mental health worldwide: the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing war in Middle-East. These challenging times have created an opportunity for mental health professionals across the world to spread awareness and fight the stigma associated with mental illness. Psychiatric association's therefore have a moral responsibility to incorporate these global challenges while upgrading and strengthening education in psychiatry.

Mission Statement

My career in psychiatry over the last four decades has been dedicated to educational, academic, and awareness activities at national, regional, and international levels. I currently serve as National President of the Indian Association of Private Psychiatry and previously served as National President of the Indian Psychiatric Society (2019–2020). I have also served as Chairman of the WPA Asian Task Force on Stigma (2022–2023), Advisor to the SAARC Psychiatry Federation (2020–2022), Editor of *Archives of Indian Psychiatry* (2002–2006), Chairman of the Publication Committee (2022–2023), and Member of the Education and Research Board of the Indian Psychiatric Society (2017–2024). I also served as Special Editor of the *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* COVID-19 issue (2020), which published research from 38 countries on the mental health impact of the pandemic.

These experiences have given me the expertise and leadership capacity to contribute to national and international organizations. With this experience, I aspire to contribute to the work of the World Psychiatric Association for the benefit of people living with mental illnesses.

During my tenure as National President of the Indian Psychiatric Society in 2019–20, we established 70 subcommittees that organized 89 CMEs to promote mental health awareness, develop networks of experts, reduce stigma, and share best practices among psychiatrists. Certain models of education developed during this period can be replicated in an advanced manner.

I aim to leverage emerging technologies and research to foster an inclusive learning environment for mental health professionals across developing countries such as India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Myanmar (WPA Zone-15). Continuous medical exchange through online webinars, workshops, certificate courses, research collaborations, publications, and psycho-education activities can strengthen regional cooperation. As stigma

remains prevalent in this region, a coordinated anti-stigma program can be designed and implemented.

Vision Statement

In a world divided by borders, colour, religion, orientation, or preferences, mental health disorders are becoming increasingly prevalent and the role of mental health professionals has never been more critical. My vision is a future where the stigma surrounding mental health is eradicated and everyone, regardless of socio-economic background, can access quality mental health services through the use of technology.

To actualize this vision, I propose three main pillars of action:

Inclusivity: Ensuring equitable access to educational resources and encouraging research and publication from low- and middle-income countries where academic contributions have historically been limited.

Innovation: Expanding the use of tele-psychiatry to reach remote communities where access to qualified professionals and awareness about mental illness remain limited.

Collaboration: Encouraging psychiatrists to learn from one another and from the broader scientific community, building bridges across countries.

If elected as WPA Zonal Representative for Zone-15, I will focus on programs addressing certification of skilled mental health professionals, reduction of stigma, the addiction epidemic, promotion of sex education, equality for the LGBTQ community, mental health of adolescents and teenagers, and promotion of mental hygiene.

As WPA Zonal Representative, Zone-15, I am ready to work tirelessly toward strengthening psychiatric education, collaboration, and awareness, contributing to a global community where knowledge improves mental health for all.

Dr. Vaishnav Mrugesh