

PRESS RELEASE

LLL Expands Rural Mental Health Program to Thiruvallur as Part of Mission to Serve 40,000 Direct Beneficiaries in Rural Communities by 2027

LLL's rural community mental health program, which has operated in Karnataka since 2017 and Odisha since 2019, has now expanded to Tamil Nadu. The organization plans to expand its impact over the next five years, aiming to serve the urgent need for better mental healthcare in India's rural communities.

Thiruvallur, India, 8 October 2022: LiveLoveLaugh (LLL) has launched its rural mental health program in Tamil Nadu's Thiruvallur district, expanding its reach to a third state after Karnataka and Odisha. The program began in 2017 and is designed to address the urgent mental healthcare needs of India's rural communities.

A delegation from LLL, including founder Deepika Padukone, trustees Anna Chandy and Ananth Narayanan, and CEO Anisha Padukone, visited Thiruvallur on 8th October to launch the program, reinforcing the nonprofit's commitment to serving the local community.

Deepika Padukone said at the launch, "Since our inception, we have been relentless in our efforts to improve the lives of those experiencing mental illness, as well as the lives of their caregivers. Expanding our rural outreach program to Tamil Nadu is one more important step towards making mental health care accessible and affordable for all".

With over 68.84% of India's population living in rural areas, these communities remain underrepresented and struggle to receive support in a country already short on mental health resources, including professionals and infrastructure. As part of a plan to reach over 40,000 direct beneficiaries by 2027 from 6,296 beneficiaries currently, LLL's rural mental health program provides free psychiatric treatment to persons with mental illness (PWMI) and rehabilitation for PWMI and their carers. Alongside the primary goal of creating a sustainable model of prevention and treatment of mental illness, the program aims to build awareness about mental health and normalize mental illness.

In addition to the rural program, LLL runs other targeted initiatives addressing India's critical need for mental health interventions in areas such as adolescent mental health, capacity-building, and free tele-counseling support.

Dr. Shyam Bhat, Chairperson of LiveLoveLaugh, spoke about the importance of the community mental health model, stating, "Nearly 200 million people in India, that's 1 in 7, suffer from mental disorders. When you combine the shortage of care workers with this staggering volume of cases, it is easy to see that we are facing a worsening crisis. The community mental health model takes on this specific challenge by recognizing and empowering carers and the community. It also strengthens the resilience of participating communities through better awareness and access to informed care."

India's diversity, low awareness of mental health issues, and stigma toward mental illness, present a unique problem that LLL's rural program is specifically designed to address.

Anisha Padukone, CEO of LLL, talked about the organization's drive to expand the program's impact, saying, "With equitable access to free psychiatric care, rehabilitation support group camps, vocational training, and access to government-aided schemes not just for PWMIs but also for their caregivers, our program addresses key issues through targeted interventions. We started our rural community mental health program in Davengere (Karnataka) in 2017, and added two additional locations - Gulbarga, in Karnataka, and Laxmipur Block in Odisha, in 2019. Program interventions were started in Mysore earlier this year. The expansion of our program is a testament to the impact achieved. We will work in close partnership with our donors, partners, the government, PWMIs, and their carers to serve the people of Thiruvallur."

To learn more about LLL's rural mental health program click on <https://www.thelivelovelaughfoundation.org/initiatives/rural-program>.

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About LiveLoveLaugh:

The Live Love Laugh Foundation (LiveLoveLaugh) is a charitable trust founded by Deepika Padukone in 2015. The organization aims to give hope to every person experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression. LiveLoveLaugh works on three core impact areas: Mental Health Education for Adolescents; Capacity Building for Doctors; and Enabling Mental Healthcare Access in Rural Communities. For more information about LiveLoveLaugh, visit <https://www.thelivelovelaughfoundation.org/>.

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