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## REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56157

Title: Family Therapy in Mental Health Care: A Narrative Review with Indian Contextual and Psychiatric Social Work Perspectives

### Recommendation:

Accept as it is .....

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision .....YES.....

Do not accept (*Reasons below*) .....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		√		
Techn. Quality		√		
Clarity			√	
Significance		√		

Reviewer Name: Prof. Dr Dillip Kumar Mohapatra

## Detailed Reviewer's Report

### 1. Overall Evaluation

This manuscript presents a comprehensive narrative review of family therapy models, mechanisms, and evidence across psychiatric disorders, with special emphasis on the Indian sociocultural context and the role of psychiatric social workers (PSWs). The topic is timely and relevant, particularly in low- and middle-income country (LMIC) settings where families remain primary caregivers.

The manuscript is conceptually strong and clinically relevant. However, refinement in structure, methodological clarity, referencing consistency, and sharper articulation of novelty is required before acceptance in IJAR.

### 2. Strengths

#### 2.1 Conceptual Breadth and Integration

Excellent synthesis of classical schools (Structural, Strategic, Bowenian, Experiential, CBFT, FFT).

Clear linkage between theoretical mechanisms (e.g., expressed emotion, boundaries, communication) and clinical outcomes.

Strong integration of evidence across disorders (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, substance use, child disorders).

#### 2.2 Indian Contextualization

Thoughtful discussion of:

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Joint family systems

Stigma

Resource constraints

Cultural adaptations

Inclusion of Indian literature (NIMHANS, IAFT, DMHP, PSW practice examples) strengthens local relevance.

### 2.3 Highlighting Psychiatric Social Work

Unique contribution: Detailed section on PSWs in India.

Moves beyond theory to describe real-world implementation.

Policy-level and systems-level discussion adds depth.

### 2.4 Clinical Utility

Provides practical implications:

Stepped-care models

Telehealth

Multi-family groups

Community linkage

## 3. Weaknesses

### 3.1 Methodological Limitations (Major Issue)

Although labeled as a narrative review:

Search strategy lacks:

Timeframe specification

Search keywords

Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Study selection process

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No structured table summarizing evidence.

Some claims (e.g., relapse reduction percentages) are presented strongly without contextual critique.

**IJAR typically expects clearer methodological transparency even for narrative reviews.**

### 3.2 Overly Descriptive in Early Sections

Extensive historical descriptions (e.g., Minuchin, Haley, Bowen) occupy large space.

Could be condensed.

Reduces analytical sharpness.

### 3.3 Limited Critical Analysis

The review is largely supportive of family therapy.

Minimal critique of:

Inconsistent findings

Cultural mismatches

Cost-effectiveness

Therapist training barriers

Risk of reinforcing dysfunctional hierarchies in patriarchal settings

A more balanced tone would improve academic rigor.

### 3.4 Referencing and Formatting Issues

Minor inconsistencies in citation formatting.

Some references appear dated (e.g., early editions without latest updates).

Duplicated or truncated reference entries toward the end.

Minor typographical errors:

“therepy”

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Formatting overlaps

Spacing issues

These require technical revision.

### 3.5 Novelty Clarification

The manuscript synthesizes existing knowledge well, but:

It does not clearly state what is new beyond contextual integration.

The novelty appears to be:

Integration of Western FT models with Indian PSW practice.

Emphasis on implementation and policy.

This needs stronger articulation in the introduction and conclusion.

### 4. Significance

#### **Clinical Significance: High**

Particularly relevant for India and LMIC settings.

Aligns with current emphasis on community and family-based mental health.

#### **Academic Significance: Moderate to High**

Strong integrative review.

Would benefit from sharper analytical positioning.

#### **Policy Significance: High**

Useful for DMHP, psychiatric training programs, and PSW curriculum development.

### 5. Key Points

Family therapy has robust evidence in schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Mechanisms such as lowering expressed emotion are central.

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Family therapy requires cultural adaptation in Indian contexts.

Psychiatric social workers play a pivotal implementation role.

Stepped-care and telehealth may expand reach in low-resource settings.

### *6. Specific Recommendations for Improvement*

#### **Major Revisions Require**

##### **Strengthen Method Section**

Add:

Search timeframe

Keywords

Inclusion logic

Number of sources screened

Even in narrative format, transparency is required.

##### **Add Evidence Summary Table**

Disorder | Model | Key RCTs | Outcomes | Indian Evidence

This will enhance clarity and scholarly impact.

##### **Enhance Critical Appraisal**

Discuss:

Situations where family therapy may fail.

Risks in patriarchal/hierarchical systems.

Cost and scalability issues.

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### Clarify Novel Contribution

Add a paragraph explicitly stating:

“This review uniquely integrates global evidence with Indian psychiatric social work practice and implementation realities.”

### Technical Editing

Correct typos and formatting.

Standardize referencing.

Remove duplication in references.

### 7. Recommendation to Editor (IJAR)

### Decision: Major Revision

#### Rationale:

Strong conceptual foundation.

High contextual relevance.

Good integration of Indian mental health practice.

However, methodological clarity and analytical depth need strengthening before acceptance.

### Final Verdict

This manuscript has **clear potential for publication in IJAR** after substantial but feasible revisions. It is not ready for immediate acceptance but is academically sound and worthy of reconsideration following revision.

### Major Revision Justification

#### Manuscript Title:

*Family Therapy in Mental Health Care: A Narrative Review with Indian Contextual and Psychiatric Social Work Perspectives*

**Recommendation:** Major Revision

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### *ABSTRACT*

#### **Lines 1–4 (Background statements)**

The opening provides a general overview of family therapy but lacks a clearly articulated problem statement.

No clear gap in existing literature is identified.

The novelty of integrating Indian psychiatric social work perspectives is not highlighted sufficiently.

#### **Revision Required:**

Add 1–2 sentences specifying:

Why a new review is needed.

What gap in the literature this manuscript addresses.

#### **Lines 5–10 (Aim and Scope)**

The aim is broadly described.

The type of review (narrative vs. systematic) is not clearly positioned.

No mention of evidence selection process.

#### **Revision Required:**

Clarify:

That this is a narrative review.

The thematic scope.

The inclusion logic for literature selection.

#### **Lines 11–End (Conclusions)**

Conclusions are somewhat general and descriptive.

Policy and implementation implications are not sharply articulated.

#### **Revision Required:**

Strengthen with:

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A clear take-home message.

Explicit statement of clinical and policy implications in India.

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Lines 1–10 (Historical overview)**

Overly descriptive and textbook-like.

Historical models are introduced without analytical framing.

#### **Revision Required:**

Condense historical description and emphasize:

Why these models remain relevant today.

Their evolution in LMIC contexts.

#### **Lines 11–25 (Global relevance)**

Good summary of burden of mental illness.

However, lacks citation precision for some epidemiological claims.

#### **Revision Required:**

Ensure:

Updated references.

Accurate epidemiological figures with citations.

#### **Lines 26–End (Indian context)**

Strong conceptual discussion.

However, the gap in Indian review literature is not clearly stated.

#### **Revision Required:**

Add:

Explicit sentence identifying absence of integrated reviews combining FT + PSW + Indian implementation context.

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### *METHODOLOGY SECTION (Major Concern)*

#### **Entire Section**

Labeled as a narrative review but lacks:

Search timeframe

Databases used

Keywords

Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Study selection approach

This significantly weakens methodological transparency.

#### **Major Revision Required:**

Add a structured subsection including:

Databases searched (e.g., PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar).

Years covered.

Keywords used.

Criteria for including Indian studies.

Rationale for narrative synthesis approach.

### *FAMILY THERAPY MODELS SECTION*

#### **Structural, Strategic, Bowenian Models (Multiple paragraphs)**

Well-described but overly theoretical.

Limited integration with current empirical findings.

Minimal critique of limitations.

#### **Revision Required:**

Condense theoretical description.

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Add:

Recent evidence.

Situations where models may not be effective.

Cultural constraints in Indian families.

### *MECHANISMS OF ACTION*

#### **Expressed Emotion and Communication**

Strong section.

Evidence cited but not critically appraised.

No discussion of measurement variability.

#### **Revision Required:**

Add:

Brief critique of expressed emotion measurement tools.

Limitations in Indian adaptation studies.

### *DISORDER-SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS*

#### **Schizophrenia Section**

Evidence presented confidently.

Some relapse reduction statistics lack contextual framing.

No mention of heterogeneity across trials.

#### **Revision Required:**

Add nuance regarding:

Study variability.

Duration of follow-up.

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Differences in intervention intensity.

### **Bipolar Disorder Section**

Good summary.

Limited Indian-specific data discussed.

### **Revision Required:**

Clarify whether Indian RCTs exist.

If limited, acknowledge research gaps.

### **Substance Use Disorders**

Descriptive rather than analytical.

Lacks discussion of implementation barriers.

### **Revision Required:**

Add:

Challenges in family engagement.

Gender dynamics.

Rural applicability issues.

## ***INDIAN CONTEXTUAL ADAPTATION***

### **Cultural Considerations**

Strong section.

However, largely supportive tone.

Does not critically examine:

Patriarchal hierarchy.

Domestic violence risks.

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Over-involvement of extended family.

### Major Revision Required:

Add a balanced discussion of:

Potential harms.

Ethical considerations.

Safeguards in Indian family therapy practice.

## *PSYCHIATRIC SOCIAL WORK SECTION*

### Role of PSWs

One of the manuscript's strongest contributions.

However:

Evidence base for PSW-led family therapy is not clearly cited.

Some claims appear experiential.

### Revision Required:

Distinguish between:

Empirical evidence

Practice observations

Add references where possible.

## *IMPLEMENTATION & POLICY*

### Community-Based Models

Important and relevant.

Needs stronger policy framing.

### Revision Required:

Link to:

DMHP

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National Mental Health Programme

Tele-mental health initiatives (if relevant and cited)

### *LIMITATIONS SECTION*

#### **Entire Section**

Too brief.

Does not adequately discuss:

Narrative review bias.

Selection bias.

Publication bias.

Lack of quantitative synthesis.

#### **Major Revision Required:**

Expand limitations to include:

Methodological constraints.

Cultural generalizability concerns.

Evidence heterogeneity.

### *CONCLUSION*

Well-written but somewhat generic.

Does not clearly restate novelty.

#### **Revision Required:**

Add explicit statement

This review uniquely integrates global FT evidence with Indian psychiatric social work and implementation realities.

Highlight research priorities.

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### REFERENCES

Minor formatting inconsistencies.

Some entries truncated.

Ensure uniform citation style per IJAR guidelines.

### Technical Revision Required.

### Summary of Major Revision Requirements

Add transparent narrative methodology section.

Condense historical theory sections.

Increase critical appraisal and balanced tone.

Expand limitations.

Clarify novelty.

Strengthen Indian evidence citation.

Correct formatting and reference inconsistencies.

### Final Editorial Recommendation

#### Major Revision

The manuscript demonstrates strong conceptual foundation and high contextual relevance but requires substantial methodological clarification and analytical strengthening before being suitable for publication.