

# Project Sahara (सहारा)

## Your Confidential Companion for Mental Wellness

### 1. Vision & Mission

**Vision:** To create a future where every young Indian has a safe, confidential, and empathetic space to navigate their mental health journey, breaking the chains of stigma and building a foundation of emotional resilience.

**Mission:** To leverage Google Cloud's generative AI to build "Sahara," a multi-faceted, culturally-sensitive mental wellness platform that provides anonymous support, accessible information, and a non-judgmental companion for Indian youth facing academic and social pressures.

### 2. The Problem: The "Silent Struggle"

Mental health is a significant taboo in India. Young adults and students, facing immense pressure, often suffer in silence due to:

- **Social Stigma:** The fear of being judged or labeled ("log kya kahenge?").
- **Lack of Access:** Professional help is expensive, scarce, and concentrated in urban areas.
- **Absence of Confidentiality:** Fear that their concerns will not be kept private, especially within family or university ecosystems.

Sahara is designed to be the first line of support—a primary resource that is always available, completely anonymous, and understands their unique cultural context.

### 3. Key Features & Platform Components

Sahara is a holistic ecosystem, not just a chatbot.

#### a. "Mitra" - The AI Wellness Companion (Core Feature)

The heart of Sahara. Mitra (मित्र, 'friend') is a conversational AI powered by Google Cloud's **Gemini** model.

- **Empathetic Dialogue:** Mitra is engineered for natural, free-flowing conversation. It can understand user sentiment (anxiety, exam stress, loneliness) and respond with validation and empathy.
- **Guided Self-Help Modules:** Based on the conversation, Mitra can suggest simplified, evidence-based techniques:
  - **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Exercises:** Helps users identify and reframe negative thought patterns (e.g., "I failed a test, I'm a failure" -> "Failing one test is a learning opportunity, not a reflection of my worth").
  - **Mindfulness & Breathing:** Offers guided prompts for stress relief.

- **Guided Journaling:** Encourages users to articulate their feelings, helping them process emotions.
- **Crisis Intervention:** If the AI detects keywords related to self-harm or severe crisis, it immediately provides contact information for verified Indian helplines (e.g., Vandrevalla Foundation, iCall) using its Google Search grounding tool.

## b. "Gyan Kendra" - The Knowledge Center

A curated library of resources in a simple, easy-to-digest format.

- **Content:** Articles, infographics, and short videos on topics like "What is Anxiety?", "How to Deal with Exam Stress," "Talking to Parents about Mental Health."
- **Culturally Relevant:** Content is created specifically for the Indian context.
- **Powered by AI:** Gemini can summarize long articles or answer specific questions based on the library's content, making information highly accessible.

## c. "Samaaj" - The Anonymized Community

A moderated, safe peer-support forum where users can share experiences anonymously.

- **AI Moderation:** A Gemini-based model will flag bullying, hate speech, or crisis-level posts for human review, ensuring the space remains safe and positive.
- **Topic-based Threads:** Forums for "Exam Stress," "Relationship Advice," "Family Issues," etc.

# 4. Technical Architecture

**Frontend:** A responsive web application built with **HTML, Tailwind CSS, and JavaScript**. This ensures maximum accessibility across all devices without requiring an app download.

**Backend & Database: Firebase.** It provides a complete, scalable, and secure backend solution perfect for a hackathon.

- **Firestore:** To store user conversations and journal entries securely. The data structure will be strictly partitioned per anonymous user ID.
- **Firebase Authentication:** To manage anonymous user accounts, providing persistence without requiring personal information.

## Generative AI Core: Google Cloud Vertex AI

- **Model:** The gemini-2.5-flash-preview-05-20 model will be used for its balance of speed, intelligence, and long-context capabilities.
- **System Prompt Engineering:** The model is given a carefully crafted system prompt to define its persona: "You are Mitra, an empathetic and non-judgmental AI companion for young Indians... You are not a doctor, but a supportive friend..."
- **Grounding with Google Search:** The tools parameter in the API call will include Google Search. This is critical for the crisis intervention feature, allowing Mitra to fetch up-to-date, accurate contact information for mental health helplines in India.

## 5. Hackathon Go-to-Market & Impact

- **Launch Strategy:**
  1. **Pilot Program:** Partner with a university/coaching center to offer Sahara to students.
  2. **Social Media Campaign:** Use targeted ads on Instagram and YouTube with relatable content about student life and mental stress.
  3. **Influencer Collaboration:** Partner with educational and youth-focused influencers to talk about the importance of mental health.
- **Monetization (Post-Hackathon):** A freemium model. All core features remain free. Premium features could include advanced journaling analysis or the ability to book sessions with verified therapists through the platform.
- **Measuring Impact:**
  - Daily Active Users (DAU)
  - Average session duration with "Mitra"
  - User sentiment analysis over time
  - Number of crisis helpline referrals

Sahara is not just an app; it's a movement to destigmatize mental health and provide a vital support system for the next generation of India.