The mandate of National Brain Research Centre (NBRC) is to be a Centre of Excellence in Brain Research with State-of-art facilities, to evolve the centre through a networking approach and generate highly trained human resource.

The vision we have for NBRC is that it would not only grow into a world-class institute for brain research but also create a vibrant, active neuroscience community by catalysing the overall growth of this discipline in the country. The expected benefit from this initiative would be the generation of skilled manpower in this important area of research who would help India achieve an international leadership in this frontier area of science. This initiative would also help Indian neuroscientists to participate in global research efforts as equal partners.

The knowledge base generated from these efforts would help diagnostic tools and therapeutic strategies for treatment of brain-related disorders. A unique role for NBRC is that it will act as a node with linkages to other centres carrying out neuroscience research in the country, acting in effect as the "hub of the wheel" rather than the wheel itself.

The first announcement of the National Brain Research Centre by Dr. Manju Sharma, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology was on 14th November 1997 the birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first prime minister.

The Centre was registered as an autonomous Society on 14th June 1999 on 38 acres of land acquired on lease at Manesar, Gurgaon district, 40 km from Delhi. Prof. P. N. Tandon is the founder Chairman of the NBRC Society and the founder director was Prof. Vijaylakshmi Ravindranath. The institute at Manesar was formally dedicated to the nation by the Hon’ble President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Kalam on December 16, 2003.

Prof. Prakash Tandon, a neurosurgeon of international repute and a neuroscientist at heart, continues to be chairman of the NBRC society and is actively associated with neuroscience research. Prof. Vijaylakshmi Ravindranath, was director NBRC from its inception to 2009, and is currently chairperson of the Centre of Neurosciences at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.