



Strengthening Suicide Prevention Efforts in India

For Prelims: [National Suicide Prevention Strategy](#), [National Crime Records Bureau](#), [Supreme Court](#), [District Mental Health Programme](#), [Ayushman Arogya Mandirs](#), [Ayushman Bharat](#).

For Mains: Suicide in India, National Suicide Prevention Strategy, Mental Health Initiatives in India

Source: [TH](#)

Why in News?

The recent *Lancet* article highlights the **need for greater political will** to address the pressing public health issue of [suicide prevention in India](#), where over 1 lakh lives are lost annually.

- It also discusses the [National Suicide Prevention Strategy \(NSPS\)](#) launched in 2022, aimed to tackle this issue but has seen little progress since its inception.

What is the National Suicide Prevention Strategy?

- The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention in India aims to reduce **suicide mortality by 10% by 2030** through multisectoral collaboration, inclusiveness, and innovation.
 - It provides an action framework for key stakeholders to implement, monitor, and take corrective actions towards achieving the strategy's goal.
- Vision:** Establish a society where individuals value their lives and receive the support they need during critical times.
- Objectives:** It plans to set up psychiatric outpatient departments in all districts within five years through the **District Mental Health Programmes**.
 - It seeks to integrate a **mental well-being curriculum into all educational institutions within eight years**.
 - Calls for developing guidelines for responsible media reporting of suicides and restricting access to means for suicide.

What is the Suicide Scenario in India?

- Annual Deaths:** The [National Crime Records Bureau \(NCRB\) annual report for 2022](#) revealed that India reported a total of over 1.7 lakh suicides in 2022, with nearly one-third of the victims being daily wage earners, agricultural laborers, and farmers.
 - From 2019 to 2022, the suicide rate increased from 10.2 to 11.3 per 1,00,000.
- Primary Affected Groups:** 9.6% of suicides were of self-employed or salaried professionals. 9.2% of suicides were of unemployed persons, and over 12,000 students died by suicide.
 - Among the approximately **48,000 women who died by suicide, over 52% were homemakers, constituting about 14% of the total suicides**.
 - Maharashtra reported the highest number of suicides (22,746)**, followed by Tamil Nadu (19,834), Madhya Pradesh (15,386), Karnataka (13,606), Kerala (10,162), and Telangana (9,980).
- Causes of Suicides:** The most common causes were family problems, [unemployment](#), [Farmers](#)

Distress, financial problems and illness, accounting for almost half of all suicides.

- Other causes included **drug abuse, alcohol addiction, and marriage-related issues**, with a significant number of women citing **dowry-related problems**.
- The rise of suicides among young women in India is driven by multiple factors, including the clash between increased **education and rigid societal norms, leading to feelings of relative deprivation**.
 - The shift toward modern relationships, such as **love and inter-caste marriages**, fosters individualism but also loneliness. Persistent **patriarchy and gender discrimination**, alongside high rates of **domestic violence** affecting 31% of married women, exacerbate these challenges.
 - Limited **social and financial opportunities** further compound their struggles, contributing to the alarming suicide rates in this demographic.
- **Academic performance pressures** are frequently cited as a leading cause of student suicides, linked to exam failures in the 18-30 age group.
 - The **Supreme Court** noted that intense competition and parental pressure are significant contributors to rising suicide rates, highlighting the need for balanced expectations from children.

What is the Need to Address the Suicide Prevention in India?

- **Impact on Individuals and Society: Each suicide death profoundly impacts close individuals, including family and friends, underscoring the widespread social and emotional ramifications.**
- **Mental Health Stigma:** Cultural and social stigma surrounding mental health issues **often prevent individuals from discussing their challenges openly or seeking help**.
 - Suicide is misinterpreted as an act of cowardice, a crime, or a sin, rather than a **manifestation of deep psychological distress**, deterring preventive measures.
 - Societal norms regarding academic and career achievements, gender roles, and marital expectations exert significant pressure, making it challenging for many to speak out or seek help against these norms.
- **Economic Burden:** The economic cost of suicide includes healthcare expenses and loss of productivity, which affects the nation's economy.

What are the Challenges Related to Suicide Prevention in India?

- **Lack of Resources: The healthcare system in India often lacks the resources to provide adequate mental health support.**
 - Despite recent efforts, **India still faces a shortage of mental health professionals and limited access to affordable mental healthcare**, especially in rural areas, amplifying the mental health crisis and contributing to the rise in suicides.
- **Insufficient Data Collection:** Inadequate reporting, lack of comprehensive studies, and **under-reporting of suicide attempts** hinder understanding the extent of the crisis and designing effective interventions.
- **Lack of Political Will:** Both central and state governments show insufficient commitment.
 - Political leaders often exhibit a **fatalistic attitude towards suicide prevention, believing it cannot be completely eliminated**.
 - **Despite the introduction of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 and the NSPS, there are significant gaps in the implementation of policies.**
- **Inadequate Media Involvement:** The media often lacks the **will to educate itself on responsible reporting of suicides**. Proper guidelines for media reporting of suicides need to be developed and followed.

What are the Initiatives Related to Suicide Prevention in India?

- **National Mental Health Programme (NMHP):**
 - **District Mental Health Programme (DMHP)** is Implemented in 738 districts, offering outpatient services, counselling, continuing care, and a 10-bedded inpatient facility at the district level.

- **National Tele Mental Health Programme:** Launched in 2022 to improve access to quality **mental health counselling and care services across the country.**
 - As of December 2023, 34 States/UTs have established 46 Tele MANAS Cells, handling over 500,000 calls on the helpline.
 - The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched a **24/7 toll-free helpline "KIRAN" to provide mental health support.**
- **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs:** More than 1.6 lakh Sub-Health Centres (SHCs), Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Urban Primary Health Centres (UPHCs), and Urban Health and Wellness Centres (UHCs) have been upgraded to **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs.**
 - Mental health services are included in the Comprehensive Primary Health Care package at these centres.
 - Guidelines on Mental, Neurological, and Substance Use Disorders (MNS) have been released under **Ayushman Bharat.**
- **Manodarpan Initiative:** Manodarpan is an initiative of the **Ministry of Education under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** to provide psychosocial support for mental health and well-being during Covid-19.

Note:

- **Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860** deals with the provision regarding attempt to **commit suicide, which is punishable** with simple imprisonment for up to one year or fine, or both.
 - The legality and correctness of this provision have been subject to judicial debate, with some courts condemning it as unconstitutional, while the **Supreme Court** has upheld its validity.
- The new **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS)** **removes the section on attempting suicide but retains the provision for punishing** those who attempt suicide with the **intent to compel or restrain a public servant from discharging their official duty.**
 - This amendment aligns the law with the **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.**

Way Forward

- **Workplace Wellness: Mandate mental health support in workplaces, especially in high-stress sectors. Public health strategies, such as gatekeeper training and awareness programs, are needed.**
- **Strengthen Mental Health Infrastructure:** Expand access to mental health services, especially in rural and underserved areas. Increase the number of trained mental health professionals.
 - Develop targeted interventions for high-risk groups such as farmers, students, women, and the elderly. Establish support networks specifically for these groups.
 - Even a 20% drop in suicides would save 40,000 lives annually.
- **Addressing Root Causes:** Create jobs, reduce inequality and poverty, strengthen social safety nets. Promote gender equality, address domestic violence and dowry harassment.
 - Enforce guidelines to prevent suicide copycat behavior, promote mental health awareness.
 - Implement **comprehensive mental health education programs**, foster open dialogue, and promote stress management techniques.
- **Technology and Mental Health:** Expand access to mental health services through digital platforms. Facilitate peer support through online communities.
 - Develop user-friendly apps for self-care and stress management. Utilise data to identify patterns and target interventions effectively.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Evaluate the need for improving mental health infrastructure in rural and underserved areas in India. What steps should be taken to strengthen mental health services in these regions?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

Mains

Q. Why suicide among young women is increasing in Indian society? (2023)

Charles Darwin's Frog

[Source: DTE](#)

Recently scientists have discovered **unique tree hole breeding behaviour** in **Charles Darwin Frog (*Minervarya charlesdarwini*)** species **endemic** to Andaman Islands.

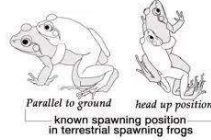


- **Family:** It belongs to the **Dicroglossidae family**, a large group of Asian frogs with over 220 species.
- **IUCN Status:** The frog is currently listed as '**vulnerable**' in the [IUCN Red list](#).
- **Key Characteristics:**
 - They are named in honour of the renowned naturalist **Charles Darwin**.
 - These frogs **lay their terrestrial eggs above water, adopting an upside-down position on tree cavity walls** during mating, likely as an adaptation to **habitat loss**.
 - Due to fragmented forest habitats, they now **use artificial objects like plastic bags as breeding sites**.
 - Male frogs produce **three distinct sounds to attract females**, with aggressive calls to deter rivals. If unsuccessful, they engage in physical confrontations resembling human fighting techniques.

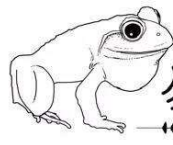


A UNIQUE TREEHOLE BREEDING BEHAVIOR *of* the threatened Charles Darwin's frog from Andaman Islands

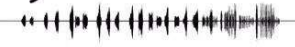
1 First report of
upside-down terrestrial
spawning in frogs



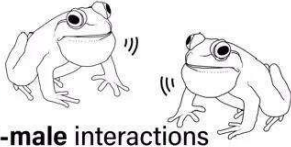
upside-down position



2 Three types of
complex male calls



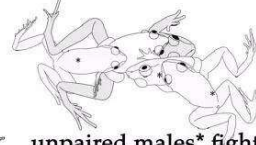
3 male-male interactions



4 Agonistic
interactions

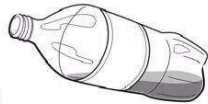


male-male combat



unpaired males* fight
with amplexant pair

5 Breeding inside
water-filled trash



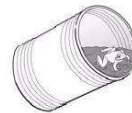
Plastic bottles



Nursery bags



Automobile waste



Metal containers

Concept & design: S.D. Biju
Illustrations: S.D. Biju & Natália Zahn



Biju et al. 2024. Tree holes to Trash: unique upside-down terrestrial spawning, agonistic interactions, complex mating calls, and unnatural breeding alterations in *Minervarya charlesdarwini* (Anura, Dicroglossidae). **Breviora**

Read More: [Monsoon Croaks Bioblitz](#).

CRPF Foundation Day

Source: [PIB](#)

27th July is observed as the **foundation day of the [Central Reserve Police Force \(CRPF\)](#).**

▪ Inception and Evolution

- The CRPF was initially **established as the Crown Representatives Police in 1939** in response to political turmoil and unrest within the princely states.
- The force was **renamed the Central Reserve Police Force in 1949**.
- **Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, the then Home Minister**, envisioned a multifaceted role for the CRPF, aligning its functions with the evolving needs of a newly independent nation.

▪ Key Roles and Responsibilities



- Specialised Units:

- The CRPF has several specialised units, including the [Rapid Action Force \(RAF\)](#), [Commando Battalion for Resolute Action \(CoBRA\)](#), VIP Security Wing, and Mahila Battalions.

- **Achievements and Contributions:**

- The force has thwarted attacks on important national landmarks, **controlled militancy in Punjab and insurgency in Tripura**, and made significant contributions to eradicating [Naxalism](#).

- **Honouring the Bravehearts:**

- The CRPF has paid a heavy price, with 2,255 of its **soldiers making** the supreme **sacrifice** and being honoured with decorations, including the [George Cross](#), [Ashok Chakra](#), [Kirti Chakra](#), [Shaurya Chakra](#), etc.

CENTRAL ARMED POLICE FORCES (CAPF)

The CAPF includes the seven security forces in India functioning under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Assam Rifles (AR)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1835, as militia called 'Cachar Levy'
 - ↳ **Erstwhile objective:** To protect British Tea estates
- ↳ **Current Objectives:**
 - ↳ Conducting anti-terrorist operations in NER
 - ↳ Ensuring security at India-China and India-Myanmar borders
- ↳ **Imp Role in:**
 - ↳ Sino-India War 1962
 - ↳ Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka (1987)

Due to long association with tribal belts, Assam Rifles are also called 'Friends of the North East'

Border Security Force (BSF)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1965
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Securing land borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh
 - ↳ Also performing Anti-Infiltration in Kashmir Valley
 - ↳ Counter Insurgency in NER
 - ↳ Anti-Naxal Operations in Odisha and Chhattisgarh
- ↳ **Wings:** Air wing, marine wing, an artillery regiment, and commando units

BSF is India's First Line of Defence and the world's largest border guarding force

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

- ↳ **Pre-Independence Origin:** 1939 (Crown Representative's Police)
- ↳ **Post Independence:** 1949 - under CRPF Act, became Central Reserve Police Force
- ↳ **Objective:** Crowd control, riot control, counter militancy/insurgency operations, etc.

CRPF is the principle central police force for internal security

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1962
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Deployed on border from Karakoram Pass (Ladakh) to Jachep La (Arunachal Pradesh) (~3488 km of Indo-China Border)
 - ↳ Manning Border Outposts on altitudes 9000 ft - 18700 ft in Western, Middle and Eastern sectors of Indo-China Border

ITBP is India's specialised mountain force & the first responder to natural disasters

National Security Guard (NSG)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1984 (came into being in 1986), following **Operation Blue Star**
- ↳ **Objectives:** Counter-terrorism unit/Federal Contingency Force
- ↳ **Task-oriented Force - Two complementary elements:**
 - ↳ Special Action Group (SAG)
 - ↳ Special Ranger Groups (SRG)

Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1963
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Guarding Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders
 - ↳ Enhance border security, curb trans-border crimes, prevent unauthorised entry/exit, halt smuggling, etc.

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

- ↳ **Origin:** Central Industrial Security Force Act, 1968
- ↳ **Objectives:** Ensuring security of major critical infrastructure installations

CISF is the sole CAPF unit with a specialised fire wing



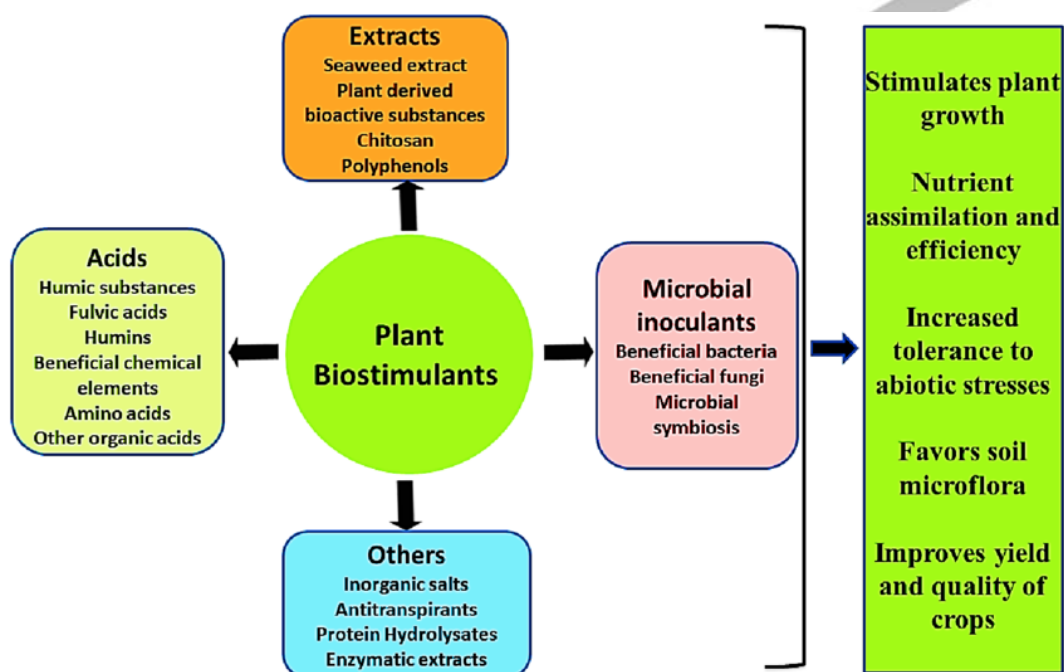
Read more: [Central Armed Police Forces Reforms](#)

Seaweed Based Biostimulants

[Source: PIB](#)

Recently, the Government of India has incorporated **seaweed-based biostimulants** under the **Fertilizer (Control) Order, 1985** to **ensure a supply of good quality biostimulants** to farmers.

- **Biostimulants:** Biostimulants **promote natural processes in plants** or their roots, improving nutrient absorption, efficiency, stress tolerance, and overall crop quality and yield.
 - They align **well with organic farming** as they also emphasise on **ecological balance, soil health, and reduced reliance** on synthetic chemicals.
- The government is promoting seaweed cultivation in the country through the [Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana \(PMMSY\)](#).
- The government is also promoting **organic farming** through schemes like [Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana \(PKVY\)](#) and [Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region \(MOVCDNER\)](#).
 - **PKVY is being implemented in all the States other-than North Eastern States**, across the country whereas **MOVCDNER** scheme is being implemented **exclusively in the NE States**.
 - Both the schemes stress on **end-to-end support to farmers** engaged in organic farming i.e. from production to processing, certification and marketing and post-harvest management Training and Capacity Building are integral part of the scheme.



Read More: [Organic Farming in India](#)

SC Launches Special Lok Adalat Drive

[Source: TH](#)

The [Supreme Court of India](#) has launched a week-long **special week-long Lok Adalat drive** to **address and resolve long-standing disputes as part of its 75th anniversary (diamond jubilee) celebrations**.

- This initiative aims to **tackle the substantial backlog of cases** and provide expedited justice.
- The initiative involves the first seven Benches of the Supreme Court, with [Chief Justice](#) leading a

five-member panel that includes prominent judges and legal professionals.

- **Cases Covered:** Includes matrimonial disputes, property disputes, motor accident claims, land acquisition, compensation, and service and labour issues.
 - Citizens with pending cases are encouraged to participate for amicable and speedy resolutions.
- The drive employs an **informal, technology-based solution** to facilitate dispute resolution, making the process more accessible and efficient for the public.
- Lok Adalats are informal, voluntary and conciliatory dispute resolution forums based on **Gandhian principles**, which have statutory backing under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**.
 - It is a component of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system that provides **informal, inexpensive, and expeditious justice to the common people**.



Read more: [Diamond Jubilee of the Supreme Court](#)

WHO Study on Adolescent Girls

For Prelims: [WHO](#), [Legal property rights](#), [Inheritance rights](#), [Gender equality](#), [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao](#), [Mahila Shakti Kendra](#), [National Creche Scheme](#), [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana](#)

For Mains: [Issues Related to Women](#), [Women's Issues](#)

Source: IE

Why in News?

Recently, a [World Health Organization](#) study published in the Lancet medical journal revealed that **adolescent girls aged between 15 and 19 who have been in relationships have experienced physical or sexual violence.**

- The survey was conducted with thousands of adolescent girls from 154 countries and regions.

What are the Key Highlights of the WHO Study on Adolescent Girls?

▪ Key Highlights:

- **Prevalence:** It reveals that **nearly a quarter (24%) of adolescent girls** who have been in a relationship have **experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence** by age 20.
 - Approximately 1 in 6 (16%) adolescent girls reported experiencing such violence in the past year.
 - **No country is currently on track** to eliminate violence against women and girls by the 2030 [Sustainable Development Goal \(Goal 5\)](#) target date.
- **Regional Variations:** **The highest prevalence rates are in Oceania (47%) (e.g. 49% of girls reporting intimate partner violence in Papua New Guinea) and 40% in central sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. In the Democratic Republic of Congo 42% reporting intimate partner violence).**
 - The **lowest rates are in central Europe (10%)** and central Asia (11%).

▪ Factors Influencing Prevalence: Higher rates of violence are found in lower-income countries, regions with fewer girls in secondary education, and areas where girls have weaker legal property ownership and inheritance rights.

- **Child marriage significantly increases** the risk of intimate partner violence due to power imbalances, economic dependency, and social isolation.
 - According to the UN, **1 in 5 young women worldwide (19%) were married in childhood in 2022.**

▪ Implications of Intimate Partner Violence:

- **Increased likelihood of injuries, depression, anxiety disorders, unplanned pregnancies, and sexually transmitted infections.**
- Long-term physical and psychological impacts.
- **Negative effects on educational achievement, future relationships, and lifelong prospects.**

What are the Steps Needed to Empower Adolescent Girls?

▪ WHO Recommendations and Interventions:

- **Strengthening support services** and early prevention measures tailored for adolescents.
- **School-based programs** to educate both boys and girls on healthy relationships and violence prevention.
- **Legal protections and economic empowerment** initiatives for women and girls.
 - Ensuring **secondary education** for all girls.
 - Securing **gender-equal property rights.**
 - **Ending harmful practices** such as [child marriage.](#)
- **Supporting countries to measure and address violence** against women.

▪ Other Steps Needed:

- **Access to Healthcare:** Ensure that **healthcare providers are trained to recognize** and respond to signs of intimate partner violence.
 - Provide **mental health services** and counselling for affected girls.
- **Challenging Gender Norms:** Work to change societal norms and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality and violence against women and girls.
 - **Raise awareness in communities** about the signs and consequences of intimate partner violence and the importance of gender equality.
 - Ensure that girls and women have **equal property ownership and inheritance**

rights.

- **Continuous Monitoring:** Conduct **regular surveys and studies to monitor** the prevalence of intimate partner violence and the effectiveness of intervention programs.
 - **Use data to inform and develop policies** and programs aimed at reducing intimate partner violence.
- **Global Efforts:** Collaborate with **international organizations like WHO** to share best practices and resources.
 - **Develop comprehensive national action plans** to address intimate partner violence, integrating health, education, and legal sectors.

Initiatives for Adolescent Girls in India

- [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao \(BBBP\)](#)
- [Mahila Shakti Kendra \(MSK\)](#)
- [Sukanya Samridhi Yojna \(SSY\)](#)
- [Nirbhaya Fund Framework](#)
- [One Stop Centres \(OSCs\)](#)
- [Constitution \(106th Amendment\) Act, 2023](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana \(PMMY\)](#)
- **Gender Budget** has been made a **part of the Union Budget of India** since 2005 and entails fund allocation towards programmes/schemes dedicated to women.
- The **Vigyan Jyoti programme** aims to **encourage girls to pursue higher education and careers in STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), especially in the areas where women's participation is low in order to balance the gender ratio across the streams.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the major challenges faced by adolescent girls in India. What steps can be taken to address these challenges effectively?

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following gives 'Global Gender Gap Index' ranking to the countries of the world? (2017)

- (a) World Economic Forum
- (b) UN Human Rights Council
- (c) UN Women
- (d) World Health Organization

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q1. Distinguish between 'care economy' and 'monetized economy'. How can the care economy be brought into a monetized economy through women empowerment? **(2023)**

Q2. "Empowering women is the key to control population growth". Discuss. **(2019)**

Q3. Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on women in India? **(2015)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/31-07-2024/print>

