



Increasing Cases of Suicides in Educational Hubs

For Prelims: National Crime Records Bureau, Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India Report, World Mental Health Day.

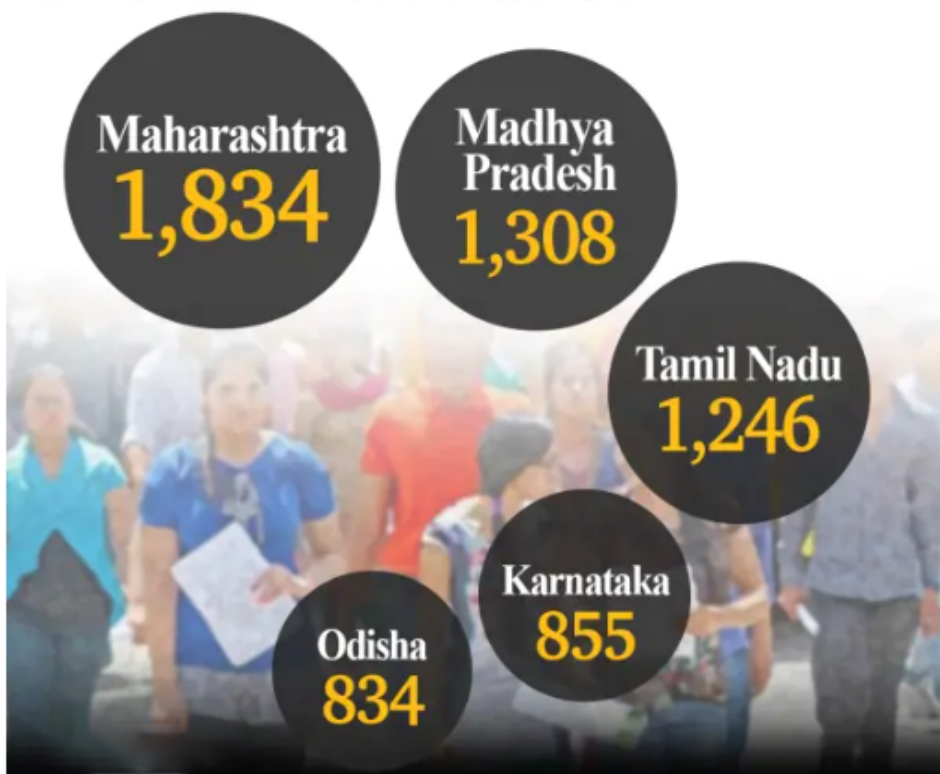
For Mains: Status of Suicides in India , Factors that Increase Suicide Risk, Related Initiatives to Reduce Suicides.

Why in News?

The [National Crime Records Bureau's \(NCRB's\) Accidental Deaths and Suicide in India \(ADSI\) report 2021](#) shows student [suicides](#) had gone up drastically during the [Covid-19](#) pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and have been steadily rising in the last five years.

What is the Current Status of Suicides in Students?

// TOP FIVE STATES WITH HIGHEST STUDENT SUICIDES IN 2021



- Over 13,000 students died by in 2021 in India at the rate of more than 35 every day, a

rise of 4.5% from the 12,526 deaths in 2020 with **864 out of 10,732 suicides being due to "failure in examination"** according to the latest data as per NCRB's ADSI report 2021.

- **Since 1995, the country lost the highest number of students to suicides in 2021**, while nearly 2 lakh of them have died by suicide in the past 25 years.
 - The death by suicide of students has **increased by 32.15% since 2017**, when 9,905 students died by suicide.
- **Maharashtra had the highest number of student suicides in 2021** with 1,834, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- The report also showed the **percentage of women student suicide was at a five-year low of 43.49%**, while **men student suicides made up 56.51%** of the total student suicides.
 - In 2017, 4,711 women students died by suicide, while **in 2021 such deaths increased to 5,693**.
- As per **Ministry of Education, 122 students from IITs, NITs**, central universities and other central institutions **died by suicide over 2014-21**.
 - 68 of 122 belonged to the **scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST) or other backward classes (OBC)**.
- Suicides are a **growing concern in Kota, India, a hub for engineering and medical entrance exams preparation**.
 - As of January 2023, **22 students have died in Kota since 2022 and around 121 have died since 2011**.

What are the Factors that Increase Suicide Risk?

- **Academic Pressure:**
 - High expectations from parents, teachers and society can lead to excessive stress and pressure to perform well in exams.
 - This pressure to succeed can be overwhelming for some students, leading to feelings of failure and hopelessness.
- **Mental Health Issues:**
 - Mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder can contribute to student suicides.
 - These conditions can be exacerbated by stress, loneliness, and lack of support.
- **Isolation and Loneliness:**
 - Many students in educational hubs come from far away and live away from their families and friends.
 - This can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, which can be particularly difficult to deal with in an unfamiliar and competitive environment.
- **Financial Concerns:**
 - Financial difficulties, such as not being able to afford tuition fees or living expenses, can create a great deal of stress and worry for students.
 - This can lead to feelings of hopelessness and desperation.
- **Cyber Bullying:**
 - Cyber bullying and online harassment are becoming increasingly common and can contribute to student suicides.
 - Cyber bullying can take many forms, such as harassment, cyberstalking, or bullying through social media.
- **Substance Abuse:**
 - Substance abuse and alcohol abuse can contribute to student suicides. Substance abuse can lead to mental health problems, financial difficulties, and legal issues, all of which can be overwhelming for students.
- **Relationship Problems:**
 - Relationship problems, such as break-ups, family conflicts, and friendship issues can also contribute to student suicides.
 - These problems can be particularly difficult to deal with for students who are far from home and have limited support.
- **Lack of Support:**
 - Many students in educational hubs are reluctant to reach out for help when they are struggling.

- This can be due to stigma surrounding mental health problems or a fear of being judged.
- This lack of support can lead to feelings of hopelessness and desperation.

What can be Done to Prevent Suicides?

- **Improved Mental Health Services:**
 - Providing students with access to mental health services and resources such as counseling services, support groups, and psychiatric services can help prevent suicides.
 - Also, schools and universities **must train teachers, staff, and students in mental health first aid** .
- **Embracing Positive Attitude towards Mental Health:**
 - Positive attitudes towards mental health and help-seeking must also be promoted through **open discussions about mental health and suicide**.
- **Focus on Overall Personality Development:**
 - By taking a holistic approach to personality development, educational institutions can create a **supportive and inclusive environment that helps students thrive both academically and emotionally**, and can play a critical role in preventing suicides.
- **Encouraging Participation in Sports:**
 - Sports can play a role in preventing suicides in educational hubs by **providing a positive outlet for stress and emotions**, as well as increase self-esteem and confidence.
- **Addressing the Socio-economic Issues:**
 - Socio-economic factors such as **poverty, homelessness, and unemployment should be addressed** to improve students' overall well-being and reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.
- **Stricter Cyber Bullying Policies:**
 - Implementing stricter cyber bullying policies and cracking down on online harassment can help reduce the risk of student suicides.
 - This may include **monitoring social media sites, providing education about cyber bullying, and taking legal action** against cyber bullies.
- **Substance Abuse Prevention Programs:**
 - Implementing substance abuse prevention programs can help reduce the risk of student suicides.
 - This may include **educating students about the dangers of substance abuse, providing support for those struggling with addiction**, and taking steps to reduce access to drugs and alcohol.
- **Building Positive Relationships:**
 - Encouraging students to **build positive relationships and connections, offering relationship counseling services**, and encouraging students to reach out for help can help reduce the risk of suicide.
- **Family Support:**
 - **Providing students with support from their families** can help reduce the risk of suicide.
 - This may include **offering support and resources for families, and encouraging students to maintain contact** with their families.

What are Related Initiatives to Reduce Suicides?

- **Global Initiatives:**
 - **World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD):** Observed on **10th of September every year**, WSPD was established in **2003 by the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP)** in conjunction **with the WHO**. It focuses attention on the issue, reduces stigma and raises awareness among organizations, government, and the public, giving a singular message that suicide can be prevented.
 - **“Creating hope through action” is the triennial theme** for the WSPD **from 2021 - 2023**. This theme is a reminder that there is an alternative to suicide and aims to inspire confidence and light in all of us.
 - **World Mental Health Day: 10th October** is celebrated as [World Mental Health Day](#), every year. The overall objective of World Mental Health Day is to **raise awareness of**

mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health.

- The theme of **World Mental Health Day 2022** is **“Making Mental Health & Well-Being for All a Global Priority”**.

▪ **Indian Initiatives:**

- **Mental Healthcare Act (MHA), 2017:**
 - [MHA 2017](#) aims to **provide mental healthcare services** for persons with mental illness.
- **KIRAN:**
 - The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has launched a **24/7 toll-free helpline “KIRAN”** to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns.
- **Manodarpan Initiative:**
 - [Manodarpan](#) is an **initiative of the Ministry of Education under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**.
 - It is aimed to **provide psychosocial support to students, family members and teachers** for their mental health and well-being during the times of Covid-19.
- **National Suicide Prevention Strategy:**
 - Announced in 2023, [National Suicide Prevention Strategy](#) is the **first of its kind in the country**, with time-bound action plans and multi-sectoral collaborations to **achieve reduction in suicide mortality by 10% by 2030**.
 - The strategy is **in line with the World Health Organisation’s South East-Asia Region Strategy for suicide prevention**.
 - **Its objectives are:**
 - The strategy broadly seeks to **establish effective surveillance mechanisms for suicide within the next three years**.
 - It seeks to **establish psychiatric outpatient departments** that will **provide suicide prevention services** through the District Mental Health Programme in all districts **within the next five years**.
 - It also aims to **integrate a mental well-being curriculum in all educational institutions** within the next eight years.
 - It envisages **developing guidelines for responsible media reporting of suicides, and restricting access to means of suicide**.

[Source: IE](#)

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