

Editorial

Decreasing Stress Threshold Among the Youngsters

Birth and death are the two ends of continuum of life span development. Death at a ripe age is natural and denotes completion of lifespan. However, when it occurs at an earlier stages of life and that too inflicted by self, it is called suicide which is a matter of concern. The National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) in its latest statics of 2024 report records 12.2 suicides per lakh population. A review of 55 years record gives an alarming trend. While the number of suicides in 1967 was 38829, it escalated to 1,64, 033 in 2021 (Mishra, Shukla and Mani, 2025). The absolute numbers as per NCRB in 2024 was 1,70, 746.

While the progressive trend is certainly a matter of concern, the fact that 6% of these suicides are by those below 18 years of age is major concern. Further, it should not escape the attention of those concerned that for every completed suicide there are four hospitalizations of failed attempt. Though the attributed causes remain more or less the same, there is an increase in the attribution to family problem from 31.7% in 2022 to 33.5% in 2024. Similarly suicides due to drug abuse and alcoholic addiction also increased from 6.8% in 2022 to 7.6% in 2024(NCRB Report released in May 2026). Looking at the children and adolescents group, it is alarming to note that the suicide rates have increased several folds between 1995 and 2021(Jena et al, 2024).

The major reasons attributed to suicides are family problems, academic failure, social reputation and maltreatment or love affairs. These were the causes even for the earlier generations, but the sharp raise in the number of suicides among the younger age groups (6%) is something that should trigger a scrutiny of psychosocial factors. What has changed so drastically that the youngsters are taking such extreme step? A ten year old child takes her life because the teacher accused her of stealing ten rupees from her valet; another young boy takes his life because the peers bullied him

for wearing a shirt with faded colour; yet another child takes the extreme step because the mother chided her for being friendly with a boy. Such bullying, accusations and chiding were not uncommon even for earlier generations who coped with them in different ways. It is time that Psychologists, Educationists, Sociologists start scientific investigation into the lowered stress threshold levels among the youngsters. There is an urgent need to identify and plug the gaps and restore the wellbeing among the youth.

References

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