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Suicides in India with respect to professional and educational Status

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Abstract

Suicide implies an act of intentionally causing one's own death. The various vital factors responsible for suicide are psychiatric disorders, drug misuse, psychological states, culture, genetic, economic, family and social situations. About eight lakh people commit suicide worldwide every year, of these 1.35 lakh (17%) are residents of India (G.O.I. Report, 2012). Keeping in view the gravity of the situation an attempt has been made to examine the intensity, nature, growth and S.M.R. (Suicidal Mortality Rate) of suicidal deaths with respect to professional and educational status of India from 2004 to 2013.

Mean value, proportion, Average Annual Compound Growth Rates of suicidal deaths and S.M.R. are reckoned and results are presented using Histogram and Pie charts. Suicidal deaths in India have ascended from 113697 in 2004 to 134799 in 2013 at an A.A.C.G.R. of 2.29%, indicating a rising trend. S.M.R. is sufficiently high varies between the range of 10.32 to 11.35. Among the various heads of profession, self-employed and housewives figures about 69 percent of total suicidal deaths. In case of educational status, the heads of uneducated, primary and middle standard constitute 69% of total suicides in India, though A.A.C.G.R. is highest among graduates followed by the head of post-graduate and above during the period of analysis.

Keywords: Suicidal deaths, farmers, unemployed, psychiatric disorders, women

Introduction

Suicide implies an act of intentionally causing one's own death (Williams & Wilkins, 2006). Historically suicide came to be regarded as a sin in Christian Europe in 452 A.D., as the work of the devil. The matter remained unsettled and controversial and Catholic Doctrine was not clear on this subject until the later 17th century. Renaissance period was marked by shift in attitude towards suicides and it began to be defended on the grounds of reason and nature in certain circumstances. By the 19th century, suicide was considered as a sin but being caused by insanity and was illegal. By the middle of 20th century, suicides became legal in much of the western world. It remains a criminal offence in most Muslim majority nations. In India it used to be illegal but the government decided to repeal the law in 2014 (Section 309 I.P.C.).

The Government of India classifies a death as suicide, if it meets the following criteria:-

- It is an unnatural death.
- The intent to die originated within the person.
- There is a reason for the person to end his or her life. The reason may have been specified in a suicide note or specified.

The various vital factors responsible for suicide are psychiatric disorders, drug misuse, psychological states, culture, genetic, family and social situations (Howlon, 2012). Among the common causes of suicides mental illness is the most common cause of suicide and untreated depression leads to suicidal tendencies. People with mental illness live in constant state of despair and numerous times even medications and therapies to do not help. Besides depression, illness is related to mental state can be in form of anxiety, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

Personality disorder is another term, which is closely related to mental illness and people with personality disorders have trouble maintaining relationships, jobs and coping with life. Borderline Personality Disorder (B.P.D.) is most associated with suicide risk and is

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characterised by impulsive behaviour, unstable relationships and difficulty regarding emotions. Abusive and stressful relationships take their toll on the mental health of a person. Break-ups of relationships too cause intense despair, anxiety, guilt and panic. This emotional pain may also lead to suicide. Chronic pain or terminal illness, which implies dealing with pain on everyday basis and impairing the ability to function properly. Terminal illness leads to depression as scope for recovery is bleak and affected person may want to end it all. A person experiencing trauma and a victim of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and trauma in war may end up with P.T.S.D. (Post-Trauma Stress Disorder). Such people keep on relieving their post-traumatic experiences and may feel helpless and intense anxiety may overcome them. They may turn to suicide as the last resort. Some may resort to drug addiction (substance abuse). Consistent use of drugs and alcohol builds up high tolerance to them, altering brain functioning and neurotransmitters. Many people get addicted and are likely to get depressed with life. They contemplate suicide as the way to get out of addiction trap.

Unemployment may lead to feelings of a purposeless life and isolation, which leads to depression. This may give rise to suicidal tendencies. Financial stress takes a major toll on people. Many millionaires commit suicide when they become bankrupt. A series of accumulated debts put a huge burden on individuals and they may consider suicide as a last resort.

About eight lakh people commit suicide worldwide every year, of these 1.35 lakh (17%) are residents of India (G.O.I. Report, 2012) [7]. Keeping in view the gravity of the situation it becomes imperative:

1. To examine the intensity, nature, growth and Suicidal Mortality Rate (S.M.R.) of suicidal deaths in India with respect to professional status from 2004 to 2013.
2. To analyse the growth and nature of suicides in India with respect to educational status from 2004 to 2013.

2. Methodology

The data on suicidal deaths, with respect to professional status in India from 2004 to 2013 is subjected to primary and

graphical analysis. To examine nature and intensity of suicides with respect to profession during the period of analysis, the different professions were divided into eight categories (Heads) namely, Housewife, Service, Student, Unemployed, Self-employed, Retired persons and others are scrutinized. The head of Service is further divided into three sub-heads, they are, Government, Private and Public Sector Undertaking. Similarly the head of Self-employed is divided into four sub-heads of Business, Professional activity, Farming/Agriculture and Others. While examining suicidal deaths with respect to educational status, again eight categories (Standard Heads) were taken namely, Uneducated, Primary, Middle, Matriculate /Secondary, Intermediate /Higher Secondary, Diploma, Graduate and Post-graduate & above.

Suicide Mortality Rate (SMR) is also computed, which is defined as the number of suicides reported per lakh population of a specific year. This rate is universally taken as a realistic indicator since it balances the effect of growth in population. To ascertain the growth of suicides under various heads of professional status, during the period of analysis, average annual compound growth rates were computed using the following formula:

$$Y = a b^t e^u$$

Y = Yearly expenditure on Police
 t = Time period
 u = Stochastic term

a and b are constants which were estimated by principle of least square using following formula

$$\log b = \frac{n \sum t \log y - (\sum t) (\log y)}{n \sum t^2 - (\sum t)^2}$$

$$\log a = \frac{\sum \log y}{n} - (\log b) \frac{\sum t}{n}$$

Average C.G.R. = (b - 1) 100

Sources of Data

	Type of Data	Source
i)	Year wise suicidal deaths under various heads with respect to profession in India from 2004 to 2013.	Various annual issues of Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, National Crime Records Bureau, G.O.I. from 2004 to 2013.
ii)	Year wise suicidal deaths under various heads with respect to education in India from 2004 to 2013.	Various annual issues of Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, National Crime Records Bureau, G.O.I. from 2004 to 2013.
iii)	Adjusted Mid-year projected population of India for the years 2004 to 2013.	Registrar General of India, M.H.A.

Limitations of the study

1. Classification of suicides in India with respect to professional status is made strictly according to the availability and pattern adopted by National Crime Record Bureau, G.O.I.
2. Due to unavailability of data, gaps in data are filled by figures of the preceding year.

134799 in 2013 at an A.A.C.G.R. of 2.29%, indicating a rising trend. Suicide Mortality Rate (S.M.R.) is sufficiently high, which varies between the ranges of 10.32 to 11.35, highest being in 2010. S.M.R. which is defined as the number of suicidal deaths reported per lakh of population, which is universally taken as a realistic indicator since it balances the effect of growth in population.

3. Discussion

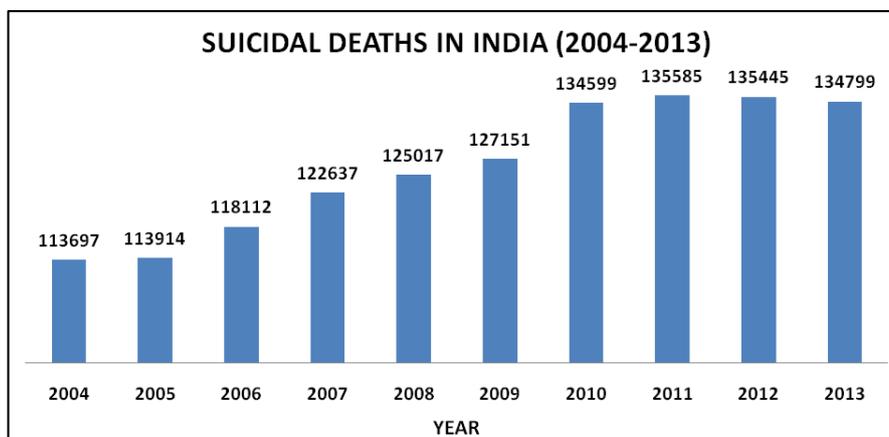
Suicides in India with respect to professional status (2004-2013)

Clearly shown in table 1 given in the appendix that suicidal deaths in India have ascended from 113697 in 2004 to

Table 1: Suicides in India with Respect to Profession (2004-2013)

Profession/ Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total	Average	A.A.C.G.R.
House Wife	23170	24141	25063	24162	24367	25092	25058	24596	21904	22742	240295	24029.5	-0.49
Service	11762	12650	13589	14572	15678	15348	15244	15482	15049	16706	146080	14608	3.16
Government	1874	1693	2147	1857	2070	1714	1842	1626	1666	1811	18300	1830	-1.22
Private	7700	8814	9041	10068	10501	10720	10502	11172	11273	12355	102146	10214.6	4.45
Public Sector Undertaking	2188	2143	2401	2647	3107	2914	2900	2684	2110	2540	25634	2563.4	1.22
Student	5610	5138	5857	6248	6060	6761	7379	7696	6654	8423	65826	6582.6	4.61
Unemployed	9538	8798	8886	8511	9001	9916	10033	10419	8927	9768	93797	9379.7	1.04
Self Employed	46112	44857	48439	51391	49698	50619	55329	51901	46667	51224	496237	49623.7	1.10
Business	5777	6244	6934	7280	7016	7748	7154	7176	5706	6968	68003	6800.3	0.77
Professional Activity	2689	2723	3643	3235	2405	3634	4059	4206	3456	3946	33996	3399.6	4.29
Farming/ Agriculture	18241	17131	17060	16632	16196	17368	15964	1407	13754	11772	145525	14552.5	-10.34
Others	19405	18759	20802	24244	23081	21869	28152	26492	23751	28548	235103	23510.3	4.16
Retired Persons	939	914	1119	1048	886	1031	898	857	833	1117	9642	964.2	-0.44
Others	16566	17416	15159	16705	19327	18364	20658	24634	20454	24809	194092	19409.2	4.82
Total	113697	113914	118112	122637	125017	127151	134599	135585	135445	134799	1260956	126095.6	2.29
Midyear Population (In Lakhs)*	10856.0	11027.9	11197.7	11365.5	11531.3	11694.4	11857.6	12101.9	12133.7	12287.9	116053.9	11605.39	1.41
Suicide Mortality Rate	10.47	10.32	10.54	10.79	10.84	10.87	11.35	11.20	11.16	10.97	---	---	---

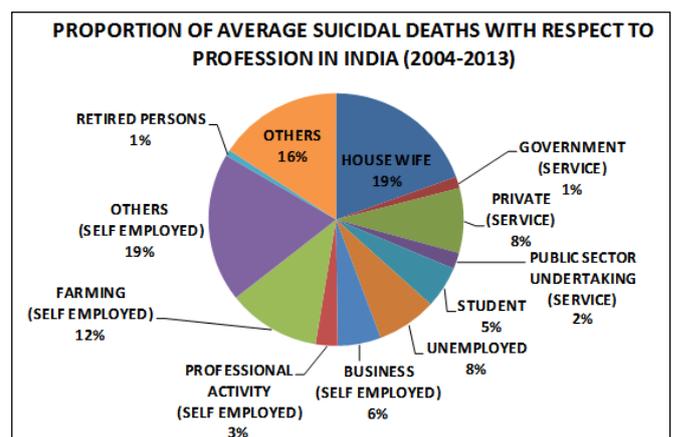
Source: Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home, G.O.I.
 *Registrar General of India, MHA (Adjusted Mid-year projected population for the years 2005 to 2014.)



Among the various professions, highest number of suicides during the period of analysis (2004-2013) in India is by self-employed persons collectively constituting 496237 and experiencing an A.A.C.G.R. of 1.10%. Among the self-employed, sub-head of others (235103) had the maximum number of suicides followed by Farmers (145525), Businessman (68003) and Professionals (33996). The trend of suicides is negative for farmers which has reduced from 18241 deaths in 2004 to 11772 in 2013, where as it is positive for rest of them.

The problem of farmer suicides has been severe across large swathes of the country, and calls for immediate and well planned policy interventions (Mishra, 2006) [5]. Farmer reeling under debts, frequent droughts, crop failure, and non-realization of prices for agricultural products are some of the reasons which drive farmers to take the extreme step (Biswas, 2015) [2]. Between 1995 and 2014, more than 300,000 farmers - cultivators and agricultural labourers - have committed suicide in India. That is roughly equivalent to a staggering figure of one farmer suicide every 30 minutes. (Basu, Das & Mishra, 2016) [1] The phenomenon of suicide by farmers, on such a large scale, is especially worrisome for India because the majority of the workforce is still dependent on agriculture for its livelihood. According to data from the latest census in 2011, about 55% of Indian workers were employed in agriculture, either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers (Basu, Das & Mishra, 2016) [1] Public institutions must step in to provide appropriate

cushion to effected farmers, thereby helping them to step out of the vicious circle of poverty.



Suicidal deaths among housewives constitute the second largest head i.e. 240295 during the period of analysis and experienced almost a stable trend, highest being in the year 2009 to the extent of 25092. Indian society is plagued by the social evil of Dowry since a long time, besides high rate of violence against women comprising rape, kidnapping & abduction, assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty, cruelty by husband or his relatives, importation of girls, immoral traffic, indecent representation of women etc. The advent of 21st century has opened many new vistas for women in the country but irrespective of educational and

financial independence of women, magnitude of violence against women persists at a large scale. The gruesome repercussion of the violence is sometimes the occurrence of suicides. The increase in incidence of such cases in a society signifies subjugation of women through violent and crucial means in India.

The role of women police is advocated by various studies as they can empathize with the women victim (House wives) and the latter may feel more comfortable in reporting the violence in comparison to their male counterparts. The studies have suggested that greater use of dispute resolution by women police in dealing with domestic disputes could reduce domestic violence. The need of the hour is to modify police training, sensitize them regarding the emerging social issues and overhaul of police system. (Mangai Natarajan, 2006) [6].

Health care system for women in particular in India has to be improved, which is presently having dismal presence in rural areas. India faces a growing need to fix its basic health concerns to secure accessible and quality maternal and child healthcare among marginalised communities (Jayaraman, 2016). Prolonged illness causes frustration among the women patients and sometimes ends up in suicide. Special facilities should be crafted for patients with psychiatric disorders in the existing infrastructure so as to early diagnose and appropriate cure is done.

Among the servicemen, highest magnitude of average annual suicides is by employees working in private sector i.e. 10214.6, followed by P.S.U.s. (2563.4) and Government employees (1830) during the period of ten years (2004-2013). Government employees and employees in P.S.U.s. have generally less stressful working life as they are covered under service security rules, having fixed number of working hours and almost certain annual salary increments and other emoluments. Private sector employees are always at the discretion of their bosses, who fix huge targets, which remain unaccomplished and above all are mostly underpaid. This causes disturbance in their family life. Some of them who could not cope with the pressure might commit suicide. Suicidal deaths in private sector experienced A.A.C.G.R. of 4.45% during the period of analysis, whereas A.A.C.G.R. of government employees and employees in P.S.U.s is -1.22% and 1.22% respectively.

Average annual suicides by students are 6582.6, which constitute about 5% of total suicides. Pressure of studies and race for high percentage to secure seats in reputed professional colleges and then to earn hefty pay packages put undue stress in their lives. Some who fail to fulfil the aspirations of their parents and other family members get frustrated in life and may get into depression and resort to

drugs. Easy availability of narcotic substances due to drug trafficking across the international border, frustration due to unfulfilled high aspirations, peer pressure and negative influence of a family member are primary reasons for rising trend in consumption of drugs in India. It is an alarming situation, which pose a huge threat for the vulnerable youth. Rural youth are particularly susceptible to the influence of this evil.

The police department can play an important role in curbing the worsening scenario. It can launch an awareness drive with N.G.O.s. And civil society members and distribute literature highlighting the evils of drug abuse among the rural youth. The drug mafia which is flourishing in the country can be tethered in by effective and ethical policing only. The drug mafia operating since long in North and South Americas is being tackled primarily by police in the forefront. It's a war between the mafia on one hand and police at the other. Discussions on the drug problem in India always lean towards political bickering and blame games begin. Sprucing up the police force to tackle it is the answer. The suicides committed by unemployed people i.e. 93797 constitute roughly 8% to total suicidal deaths in India during the period of analysis (2004-2013) having AACGR of 1.04%. Unemployment causes severe economic, social and psychic stresses among its victims. Put together, these create an environment that threatens the peace in life of unemployed person, particularly among educated youth who develop a feeling of being left behind or "excluded" from the mainstream developmental activities of the society.

The category of retired person among suicides in India with respect to profession has a magnitude of 9642 during the period of analysis (2004-2013) with almost stable trend. In such cases even social isolation or loneliness leads to mental health conditions and negative feelings or even suicide. Humans are social animals and when they are isolated due to circumstances they feel lonely.

Suicides in India with respect to educational status (2004-2013)

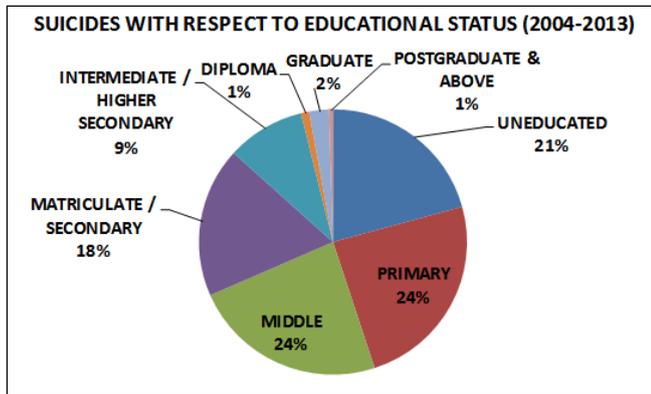
Clearly shown in table 2 given in the appendix that suicidal deaths with respect to educational status for the period of analysis (2004-2013) is highest by people having primary standard education to the extent of 307537, followed by middle standard (298850) and uneducated people (263630). Collectively these three heads constitute 69% of total suicides in India. Education less than Matriculation restraints their prospects for finding jobs in private, as well as public sector. Whatever menial jobs even if they manage to get will not be much rewarding. Unemployment leads to lower living standards, high degree of income inequality and poverty.

Table 2: Suicides in India with Respect to Educational Status (2004-2013)

Education\Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total	Average	A.A.C.G.R.
Uneducated	26916	26234	25165	26772	25920	27238	26702	27038	26641	25004	263630	26363	-0.09
Primary	28663	29334	28503	30851	31674	29799	35430	32371	31088	29824	307537	30753.7	1.07
Middle	26723	27318	28977	29694	29679	30144	30557	32779	31205	31774	298850	29885	1.96
Matriculate/Secondary	19260	19124	21454	21549	22388	23720	24581	25657	25967	27596	231296	23129.6	4.16
Intermediate/ Higher Secondary	8646	8401	10411	9990	11094	11194	11519	12231	13089	23849	120424	12042.4	8.51
Diploma	842	1093	1037	1078	995	1161	1349	1384	2043	1656	12638	1263.8	8.02
Graduate	2018	2034	2199	2352	2777	2886	3264	3422	4572	4380	29904	2990.4	10.10
Postgraduate & Above	629	404	366	251	490	1009	1197	703	840	716	6605	660.5	9.49
Total	113697	113914	118112	122637	125017	127151	134599	135585	135445	134799	1260956	126095.6	2.29
Midyear Population (In Lakhs)*	10856.0	11027.9	11197.7	11365.5	11531.3	11694.4	11857.6	12101.9	12133.7	12287.9	116053.9	11605.39	1.41
Suicide Mortality Rate	10.47	10.32	10.54	10.79	10.84	10.87	11.35	11.20	11.16	10.97	---	---	---

Source: Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home, G.O.I.

*Registrar General of India, MHA (Adjusted Mid-year projected population for the years 2005 to 2014.)



Highest A.A.C.G.R. during these ten years is experienced in case of people with graduate degree (10.10%) followed by post-graduate degree holders and above (9.49). Though these people with highest education degrees constitute only about 3 percent of total suicidal deaths but surprisingly there is rising trend since 2004, possible out of frustration and depression for not getting jobs which match to their education and aspirations.

4. Conclusion

It is concluded from the study that intensity of suicides is quite high in India. Among various professions, suicidal deaths by self-employed constitute about forty percent of total suicidal deaths in India, followed by the head of house wife (19%). Effective healthcare setup, war against drugs, overhaul police training & sensitize them regarding the emerging social issues, role of N.G.Os. And civil society can contribute profoundly in reducing magnitude of suicidal deaths. The problem of farmer suicides has become severe across large swatches of the country, and calls for immediate and well planned multi-dimensional policy interventions in order to provide appropriate cushion to effected farmers, thereby helping them to step out of the vicious circle of poverty. Creation of employment opportunities, easy finance facilities for self-employed, business persons and professionals, timely & appropriate counseling of students and elderly persons can save many valuable lives.

The three educational heads of uneducated, primary and middle standard constitute 69% of total suicides in India. Illiteracy is the foremost hurdle in the path of economic development. Large sized working population can turn into demographic dividend only if it is sufficiently educated and skilled. Vocational training and education is of paramount importance in the present scenario in India. Moreover it is a pre-requisite for peaceful existence and public order.

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