



A STUDY OF IMPORTANT DETERMINANTS AND RISK FACTORS OF SUICIDE AMONG THE ADOLESCENTS AND THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN PREVENTING IT

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*“People who die by the suicide don’t want to end their life; they want to end their pain.”
(Bria Barrows)*

ABSTRACT:

Sanjai Prasad (18), a second year diploma student, committed suicide in his house in Tirupur on 16th July 2018. The protesters alleged that Prasad ended life following disciplinary action taken by a teacher. (The Hindu). But Suicide is not a remedy for a temporary problem. Talking globally, more than eight lakh (800000) people die every year due to suicide, one person every 40 seconds and suicide rate has increased up to 60% from last 45 years worldwide as per the reports of WHO. It occurs at all stages, but it is the second leading cause of death among youth in the world. Now in country like India every hour fifteen (15) suicides took place (NCRB-2015). When we talk about Indian adolescent suicides they are increasing at a fast rate, with 26 suicides reported every 24 hours. Even though, every religion of the world highly condemns it. Suicide means self killing or self murder. Suicide is undoubtedly an intricate phenomenon and there is not a single determinant rather there are several risk factors of suicide among adolescents, which involves mental, physical, economical, social, biological etc. Symptoms/warning signs of adolescent suicides can be very easily recognised if keenly observed, therefore suicides can be prevented. It is predicted that India will have youngest population in 2020 with median age of 29. With this fabulous forecast, we must have the knowledge of important determinants and risk factors of suicide among adolescents and should try to create an environment which will be very conducive and promote positive wellbeing for them. It is everybody’s duty to prevent suicide as our one minute help, call and talk can save somebody life who is badly hurt and needs support and encouragement, but this course of action should start first from parents as their role is immensely important and can’t be replaced by anyone.



KEY WORDS: determinants, risk factors, adolescents, suicide, preventable and parents.



INTRODUCTION

Suicide is referred to as an intentional self killing or simply a self murder. The person who shoots himself to death, or drinks severe poison, or jumps down from 15th story of a building, or hangs himself, is fully aware of the consequences of such an act, but adolescent stage is a risky stage and most likely adolescents have depression, anxiety, and stress and also get easily influenced by people. But every suicide has a cause that needed to be understood. This was Sir Thomas Browne who used the word suicide for the first time in his "Religio Medici" in 1642 and later by 'Walter Charleton' in 1651. Suicide occurs when stress level goes beyond the enduring abilities of an individual. At this stage adolescents might do something foolish as if they are kids. As per the reports of the WHO suicide rate has increased up to 60% from last 45 years worldwide and is one of the leading causes of death in teenagers and principally people between the ages of fifteen (15) to forty-five(25). In every 40 seconds one man dies because of suicide. Suicidal attempts are approximately 25 times more frequent than suicidal deaths. After every 55 minutes, one student dies in India due to suicide according to 2015 data (the latest available) from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) despite it is condemned highly by all the religions of the world. So the total number of students who committed suicide in India is 8934 (2015 report of NCRB).

Man no longer wants to be a social animal; he has become more individualistic and less social. Adolescents are forced to be competitive and the pressure is being laid on them. The intricacy in consideration is one of the most frequently encountered complaints presented by adolescents. These students become discouraged, sure that they are not able to deal with their studies. This type of thinking can further reduce their already weakened confidence and can push them towards depression. Adolescents can harm themselves when they feel depressed, hopeless, isolated and humiliated. In addition, they can be brutal and anxious because when teenagers are down in the dumps they feel worthless. It is very difficult for the adolescents' to handle their depression because prefrontal cortex has not fully developed in them. Many adolescents who make serious attempts will never do so again while others, who make an insignificant gesture, will later die of suicide. Finally, teenagers who undergo from depression are probable to think about committing suicide. Thinking about suicide also leads to self-harm and violence most likely if the depression is continuing and not paid attention by family then surely suicide is the result. Depression is the most general state connected with suicide, and it is frequently undiagnosed or untreated. Durkheim points out by saying that suicide is not an individual act or a private and personal action it is because of the power which is over and above the individual or super individual. It is not being called personal situation but a manifestation of a social condition. Suicide is heart-rending, but it is often preventable. When we have the knowledge of important determinants and risk factors of suicide among the adolescents it can surely help to reduce the suicide rate. Adolescent suicide is mostly due to failure in examination, drug abuse, alcohol, mental disorder, love affairs, prolonged illness, bullying, impotency, sexual abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, intermittent explosive disorder, dissociative disorders, humiliation etc.

We need to understand that suicidal behaviour is "a desperate cry for help" or" a way of showing one's anger and frustration "which includes suicidal threats (suicidal ideations), and suicidal actions. It is also seen that some attempt the suicide and also some are completers. According to a research ninety percent (90%) of suicidal teens complained that their families did not understand them and about seventy five (75%) of these people who commit suicide are both physically and mentally depressed which is truly a sign to be mediated on. Any person can be at the risk of the suicide but there are some who are largely at risk tend to have certain characteristic and we need to understand them. We need not to discuss the means of the suicide in front of the adolescent as they try to follow the trend. We can do a lot to prevent suicide by knowing its warning signs even though we know that it is a composite phenomenon and there is not a single factor rather there are numerous risk factors of suicide among adolescents which involves social, economic, cultural, biological, mental and situational factors.

Parent's role cannot be replaced by any one as they can truly avoid suicide if proper care is taken. It's important to all parents that they should listen patiently to what their teen says. Someone contemplating suicide is feeling pain or he is badly hurt. So it's clear that they need someone to care and understand them.

Parents frequently do not recognize the signs of suicidal behaviour in their children and deny the significance of an acute depressive illness when it appears in the context of a readily identifiable life stress. Stressors can mislead. It may be the mental illness or any other problem that is causing the stress. Many commentators identify the combination of depression and a tendency to react to stress with impulsive aggression as a profile of special risk. What they are saying may not seem rational to you (parents). In order to understand the problem of your adolescents you (parents) can join hands with their friends as they feel more comfortable to share their problems with their friends rather than to their parents. In major cases getting the chance to express how they are feeling and knowing that they are being listened, will certainly relieve their pain so that, they don't take any kind of instant action which could take their life. This is most likely to happen if they feel your support, empathy and love.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Suicide is an international public health concern across the world, not undoubtedly restricted to India only as we all know that but the need for this study rose from continuously increasing suicides of adolescents in the country. Suicide has a large social cost to bear and adopting silence on this issue can have shattering results. Because of suicide; early and unnatural deaths take place which is a big blow not only to families, relatives, and friends but also to the nation and its knowledge can save thousands of lives. That is why the researcher wants to make an attempt to know the most important determinants and the risk factors of suicide that pushes/forces the adolescents to kill themselves. Moreover, this study also aims to highlight the role of the parents in preventing their adolescent suicides. As suicide is not a solution to a temporary/short-lived problem, rather it is a permanent response and it can be prevented if government, community, adults, parents, friends and teachers, together shoulder the responsibility to protect and nurture our young generation from committing suicide then surely India will be the most powerful, developed and happiest country in the world.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the important determinants and risk factors of suicide among adolescents.
2. To discover the role of parents in preventing the suicide of their adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

The present study focussed on the important determinants and the risk factors of suicide among adolescents and the role of parents in preventing the suicide of their teens. Keeping all this in view, the researcher has used secondary resources to collect the data which includes Published Journals, Newspaper articles, Books, NCRB, NFHS and WHO.

Important determinants and risk factors of suicide among the adolescents

Speak

If a person speaks about:

- ❖ Ending his life
- ❖ Not having an aspiration to live
- ❖ Feeling a burden to his family
- ❖ Prolonged and Unbearable pain

Behaviour

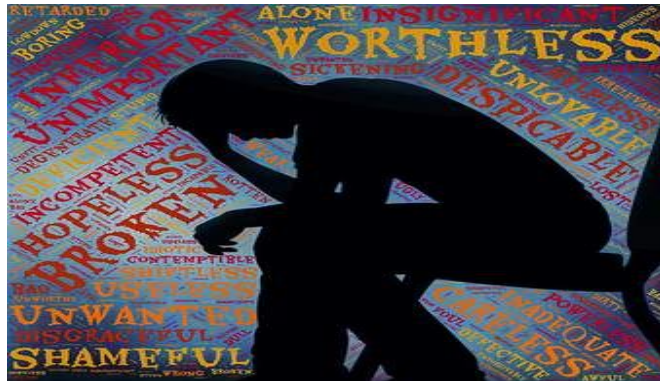
- ❖ Behaviours that may indicate risk, particularly if related to a painful event, failure or change
- ❖ Too much use of drugs
- ❖ Searching a means to end one's life
- ❖ Separation from family and friends
- ❖ Sleeping too little or too much

- ❖ Sending good bye messages or calling people to say goodbye
- ❖ Giving away prized possessions
- ❖ Not giving importance to worldly things

State Of Mind

People who are bearing in mind suicide often put on one or more of the following moods:

- ❖ Dejection
- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Loss of interest in life
- ❖ Bad tempered
- ❖ Feels depressed /humiliated
- ❖ Always in a state of own thoughts



Continuous Mental and Physical Illness

- ❖ Serious and acute physical illness
- ❖ Traumatic brain injury
- ❖ Violent behaviour, mood changes and not having good relationships
- ❖ Conduct disorder
- ❖ Anxiety disorders
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Bipolar disorder
- ❖ Schizophrenia

Environmental and Social Determinants

- ❖ Family support problem
- ❖ Examination failure
- ❖ long-lasting stress such as harassment
- ❖ Love affairs
- ❖ Bullying
- ❖ Stressful life events, like rejection
- ❖ Divorce
- ❖ Access to lethal means including firearms and drugs
- ❖ Peer pressure
- ❖ Dowry dispute

Biological and Economic Determinants

- ❖ Low serotonin levels

- ❖ Higher than normal levels of cortisol
- ❖ Sexual disorder or impotency
- ❖ Homosexuality
- ❖ Pre mature development of pre- frontal cortex.
- ❖ Poverty
- ❖ Financial crisis, other life transitions or loss
- ❖ Property dispute.
- ❖ Unemployment

Family history of suicide

- ❖ Previous suicide attempts
- ❖ Family history of suicide

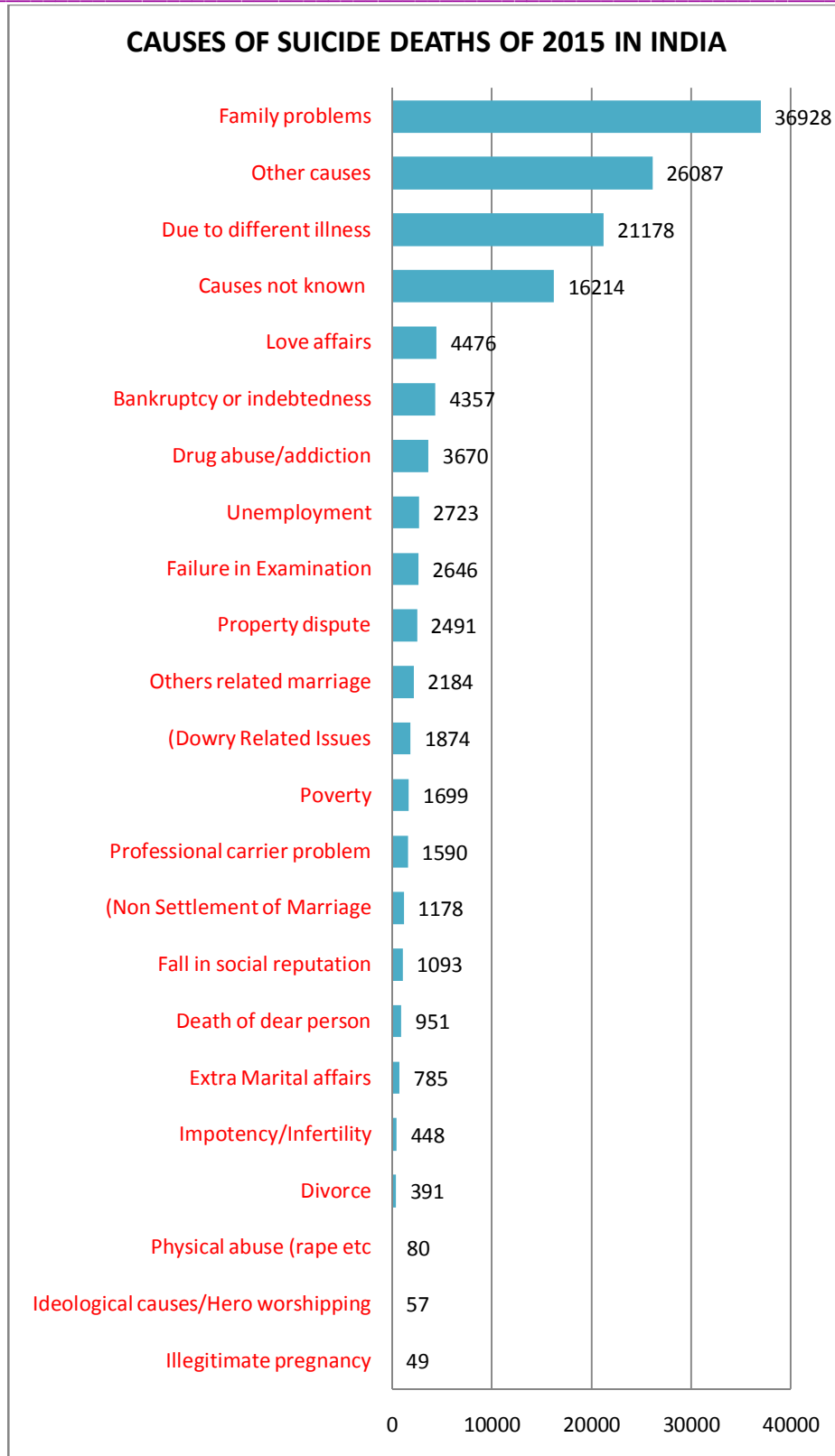
PARENTS ROLE IN PREVENTING SUICIDE

It is well said by F. Scott Fitzgerald, if someone listens or stretches out a hand, or whispers a word of encouragement, or attempts to understand a lonely person, extraordinary things begin to happen. So there is no doubt that sometimes adolescent lives is full of problems and complete loss of hope. But parents need to be there for them at that crucial time and help them in overcoming these problems and make them believe that when it is darkest, they can see the stars. Parents must understand the risk factors of suicide and then if they find such symptoms in their teens then they need to take it serious and play their role very swiftly and superbly. Following are some of the points that parents have to take in order to prevent the suicide of their teens.

- ❖ **Address depression:** - If you any way feels that your teen is disheartened worried or seem to be struggling don't wait that he will come to you for help. It is your duty first to ask teen what makes him/her sad and offer him/her help, because it can make a big difference in your teens life.
- ❖ **Take support from his/her friends:** - In order to understand completely the problems of your teen's you can take support from their friends as teen's feel more comfortable to share their problems with their friends rather than to their elders or parents.
- ❖ **Take care and enhance protective measures:** - If you feel that your teen has an idea of suicide or he or she is showing some warning signs. Talk to him directly about it with love, empathy and care, before it is too late. Don't leave him/her alone in this condition you need to monitor him/her but not being intrusive.
- ❖ **Shun separation:** - It is your duties to tell and encourage your teen to spend some time with his/her best friends, family and other relatives.
- ❖ **Express your love:**-It is very important that you tell your teen how much you love him/her and how important he/she is.
- ❖ **Develop healthy lifestyle:** - Motivate your teen to eat food, exercise, and get sufficient hours of sleep and avoid health spoiling things like, smoking, drugs etc.
- ❖ **Develop friendly relations:** - Parents should always treat their teen's well and should always try to keep a friendly and trustful relation with them.
- ❖ **Consult the doctor, counsellor and psychiatrists:** - If you feel that your teen should be shown to the doctor, counsellor or psychiatrist than don't wait to motivate him/her.
- ❖ **Support the treatment plan:** - Tell your teen that you will get well soon but it will take time you only have to follow the doctor's prescription or of other experts.
- ❖ **Build her confidence:** - Quote examples of those who out shine after facing failure in their life. So make him understand that to fail does not mean failure in life, it is not permanent rather it is the beginning of success. Make your teen believe that a better tomorrow is waiting for him/her.

- ❖ **Safely store poison, weapons and other deadly means of suicide:** - Access to poison, weapons, and other deadly means of suicide plays an important role in preventing the suicide in certain cases. So these things should be locked or kept away from adolescents.





(Source:-National Crime Record Bureau)

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

1. The govt of India has to take a bold step to tackle the increasing suicide rate among adolescents as it is a big challenge and major public issue. The govt. should start mental health as one of the subject in school curriculum right from the middle level and the research work in this field should be increased.
2. Students self esteem, decision making, handling of depression and crisis management skills should be developed in schools.
3. Teachers should be given proper training related to suicide prevention and its risk factors. Moreover, the suicidal awareness curriculum should be framed to tackle it.
4. Seminars, workshops, and public awareness campaigns on Suicide should be increased and their access should be made possible at village level with the help of govt. and non-governmental organisations.
5. Media should be used to throw light on how to reduce and prevent the suicide among the adolescents. Careful and responsible reporting of suicide incidents is needed as it should help to reduce not to lead some vulnerable people to similar behaviour.
6. Harassment done by faculty members to adolescent students should be forbidden.
7. Suicide prevention Books, journals and pamphlets of it should be kept available in all hospitals and schools. Suicide emergency number should kept available for 24 hours.
8. Religious knowledge of suicide should be given to adolescents as all religions highly condemn it.
9. Professionals and experts in the required field such as Doctors, Counsellors and Psychiatrists ratio should be increased.
10. Suicidal prevention organisations and local centres should be opened at those places where it is highly required and more importantly made functional and goal oriented.
11. Suicidal attempters list should be framed and their problems should be taken in to consideration and then accordingly they should be given proper counselling.
12. Main causes of suicide should paid immediate attention and should be minimized as earlier as possible through suitable and strong strategies.
13. Suicidal internet sites should be completely banned and social networking sites should be used to prevent such acts.
14. World Suicide Prevention Day of 10 September must be celebrated in every school with its current theme. We need to have a class for national and global issues which are increasing and are of utmost importance till we get successful.
15. We have to observe that some adolescents are chronically suicidal while others make only one attempt and never think about it again. Others have severely broken and dysfunctional families. Similarly, other different problems they suffer from we need to take those problems in to account while treating them.

Now, if you find anyone who is attempting suicide or wants to attempt it don't ever try to ignore it rather be always ready to help him/her as our one minute help, call and talk can save his /her life and always feel proud in doing that.

CONCLUSION

The current paper highlights the important determinants and the risk factors of the suicide among the adolescents and the role of parents in preventing it. Adolescent stage is very critical stage and at that stage adolescents have to face numerous problems and these problems can be social, economic, biological, behavioural not necessary related to growth only. Adolescent suicide is continuously increasing and in order to put a full stop on it we must have the knowledge of important determinants and risk factors of suicide among adolescents. Adolescent suicidal behaviour is "a desperate cry for help" or "a way of showing one's anger and frustration "which includes suicidal threats (suicidal ideations), and suicidal actions which occurs mostly due to failure in examination, drug abuse, alcohol, mental disorder, love affairs, prolonged illness, bullying, impotency, sexual abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, intermittent explosive disorder, and dissociative disorders, humiliation etc It is a high time now, so the parents need to engage themselves by scratching deep into the matter and try to comprehend the root cause that why their wards choose the path

that leads them nowhere but to commit a suicide. They should not pressurize them rather they should support them to overcome from any failure and build in them a confidence which help them to cope up their day to today problems of life. We should keep this always in mind that ninety percent (90%) of suicidal teens complain that their families did not understand them and about seventy percent (75%) of these people who commit suicide are both physically and mentally depressed. At this critical and crucial stage parents have to boost the self confidence of their teens. Parents need to act more friendly rather than being harsh towards their wards and should not expect from them beyond their calibre in the different fields of life. Support them in their tough time and help them to overcome from negative thoughts and try to build their coping skills. Never leave your child alone if they are suicidal. Seek every kind of help for your teen due to which you are able to save her/his life. Always we have to realize that our one minute help, call, and talk can save somebody life.

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