

Strategy to save:

On the National Suicide Prevention Strategy

The Hindu

Paper - II
(Social Justice)

❖ The National Suicide Prevention Strategy must cascade down to every district.

The best first step towards addressing a malaise is to recognise that it exists. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's recently published National Suicide Prevention Strategy fits right there. It has been a long time coming, but the Strategy, finally in the public realm, calls attention to the massive burden of suicides in the country, and initiates steps to achieve a reduction in suicide mortality by 10% by 2030. At the same time, it has measured the paces forward with a time-bound action plan that takes into account the grim realities of a varying ground situation in India.

Suicide Problem

The problem is indeed dire, and without targeted intervention programmes and stigma reduction strategies, a public health crisis of gargantuan proportions is imminent. Globally, suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds and also the second leading cause of death for females aged 15-19 years, as per WHO estimates. In India, more than one lakh lives are lost every year to suicide. In the past three years, the suicide rate has increased from 10.2 to 11.3 per 1,00,000 population.

According to data from the National Crime Records Bureau

As per National Crime Records Bureau statistics, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka have the highest percentage share of suicides (2018-2020), ranging between 8% to 11%.

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB):

- ↳ The NCRB was established in the year 1986 under the Ministry of Home Affairs to act as a repository of information on crime and criminals to help investigators of crime understand the link between crime and criminal.
- ↳ The headquarter of NCRB is in New Delhi.
- ↳ The NCRB was established based on the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the Task Force (1985) of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ↳ The NCRB publishes detailed annual statistics of crime across the country (the 'Crime in India' report). Having been published since the year 1953, this report serves as an important tool in understanding the law and order situation across the country.

The most common reasons include family problems and illnesses, while other causes include marital conflicts, love affairs, bankruptcy, substance abuse and dependence. Further, in approximately 10% of cases, the cause for suicide remains unknown. Importantly, the document notes that contrary to belief, the majority of suicides are preventable.

Suicide Prevention Strategy

The Strategy is etched with evidence-based practices to reduce the number of suicides, inspired by WHO's strategy for the South East Asian region, and strings together multiple sectoral collaborations to provide a cohesive strategy and achieve the intended reduction in the number of suicides. In addition to committing to establishing effective surveillance mechanisms within the next three years, and psychiatric outpatient departments in all districts over five years, the Strategy also intends to write in mental health in the curriculum in educational institutions within the next eight years.

Status in India

Addressing issues relevant to India, including access to pesticides, and alcoholism, has set the Strategy on the path towards achievement of the goals. It is, however, incumbent on the Government to stay the course until the targets are achieved. Of course, in a federal country, any success is possible only if States are enthusiastic participants in the roll out.

↳ Recently the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has released the "Accidental Deaths and Suicides Report 2021 in India". According to this report -

1. The suicide rate has increased from 10.2 to 11.3 per 1,00,000 population in the year 2019-22.
2. At the national level, the number of suicides increased by 7.17% from the year 2020 to the year 2021.
3. Daily wage earners remained the largest professional group among suicide victims in the year 2021, accounting for 42,004 suicides (25.6%).
4. The group of "unemployed persons" was the only group that registered a decline in suicides, falling by 12.38% from 15,652 in 2020 to 13,714 in 2021.
5. Maharashtra tops the country in terms of the number of suicides, followed by Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh.
6. Delhi recorded the highest number of suicides at 2,840 among union territories.

National Suicide Prevention Strategy:

- ↳ Strive to set up an effective monitoring mechanism.
- ↳ Provide suicide prevention services through the District Mental Health Program in the districts.
- ↳ Inclusion of mental wellness curriculum in educational institutions.
- ↳ Responsible media reporting and restricting access to means of suicide.

Indian government's efforts to reduce suicides:

- ↳ Mental Health Care Act, 2017 which aims to provide mental health services to persons with mental illness.
- ↳ 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.
- ↳ The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) (now Ministry of Education) launched the Manodarpan initiative under the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign. Which aims to provide psychological support to students, family members and teachers for their mental health and well-being in the time of Covid-19.

Expected Question

Que. Recently the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has released the "Accidental Deaths and Suicides Report 2021 in India". According to this report which statement (s) is/are true?

1. There has been an increase of 7.17% in the number of suicides at the national level from the year 2020 to the year 2021.
2. The group of "unemployed persons" was the only group to report a decline in suicides.
3. Maharashtra is at the forefront of the country in terms of the number of suicides in the states.
4. Delhi has recorded the highest number of suicides among union territories.

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer : D

Mains Expected Question & Format

Que.: According to the recently released "Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India Report 2021" of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the number of suicides in the country is on the rise. Mention the causes of suicides and steps taken by the government to reduce it. Discuss the efforts being made and the strategies being adopted?

Answer Format :

❖ **Introduction (40-50 words)**

Give a brief description of NCRB's Report-2021.

❖ **Main Body (150-160 words)**

Discuss in detail the causes of suicides in the country, the efforts and strategies being made by the Government of India to reduce it.

❖ **Conclusion (30-40 words)**

Explain in brief how the efforts and strategy of the government can be made successful.

Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC mains examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.