

Suicide and Its Prevention Strategies in India: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

Suicide is a multifaceted issue that presents a significant challenge to public health worldwide, impacting individuals, families, and communities. This article offers a thorough examination of the occurrence, factors contributing to, and methods of preventing suicide, focusing specifically on the Indian context. Despite continuous endeavors, suicide rates in India persist at concerning levels, underscoring the necessity for cohesive interventions and cooperative prevention approaches. Through an analysis of current research and programs in this area, this article seeks to enhance comprehension of suicide prevention endeavors in India and guide forthcoming tactics to address this critical public health concern.

Keywords: Suicide, prevention, risk factors, India, public health, intervention strategies, mental health, government initiatives, community collaboration.

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INTRODUCTION

The act of intentionally ending one's own life, known as suicide, is influenced by a wide range of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. In India, where suicide rates are among the highest in the world, it is crucial to understand the underlying causes and implement effective strategies for prevention. This article provides an overview of the current situation regarding suicide in India and the ongoing efforts to address it. By examining the prevalence, risk factors, and methods of suicide, as well as government initiatives and interventions, this article aims to shed light on the complex nature of suicide and offer evidence-based strategies for prevention and intervention.

Prevalence and Epidemiology

Suicide is a major cause of death globally, particularly among young people and marginalized communities. In India, the prevalence of suicide is alarmingly high, with certain states and demographic groups experiencing disproportionately high rates. Accurate data collection and analysis are essential for informing targeted interventions aimed at reducing the impact of suicide. By analyzing trends in suicide rates and demographic patterns, this article seeks to provide insights into the scale and extent of the problem in India.

Risk Factors and Causes

There are several elements that contribute to suicidal behavior, such as mental illness, substance abuse, interpersonal conflicts, and socioeconomic stressors. It is crucial to address these underlying risk factors and promote mental well-being as part of suicide prevention strategies. Additionally, understanding the cultural and contextual influences on suicidal thoughts and actions is essential for effective intervention. This paper aims to explore the intricate relationship between individual, social, and environmental factors to identify opportunities for intervention and support.

Mental Health Disorders

Mental health disorders, especially depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder, are significant risk factors for suicide. In India, mental health issues are often stigmatized, leading to underreporting and inadequate treatment. Improving mental health literacy and reducing stigma are key steps in tackling these challenges.

Socioeconomic Factors

Economic hardships, unemployment, and financial instability are major contributors to suicide in India. Rural areas, in particular, face high suicide rates among farmers due to crop failure and debt. Providing comprehensive financial support and counseling services is crucial to mitigate these risks.

Interpersonal and Familial Conflicts

Family conflicts, domestic violence, and relationship issues often lead to suicide. Providing culturally sensitive counseling and mediation services can help resolve these conflicts and offer support to those in distress.

Means of Suicide and Prevention Strategies

Common suicide methods in India include pesticide ingestion, hanging, and firearm use. Prevention efforts should focus on limiting access to lethal means, encouraging help-seeking behavior, and building resilience within communities. Universal strategies, like improving access to mental health services and reducing stigma, should be combined with targeted interventions for high-risk groups. This paper aims to identify effective approaches for reducing suicide rates in India by examining both universal and selective prevention strategies.

Restricting Access to Means

Limiting access to common suicide methods, such as pesticides and firearms, can significantly decrease suicide rates. Enforcing strict regulations on the sale and storage of these substances, as well as promoting safe agricultural practices, are effective measures.

Enhancing Mental Health Services

Improving access to mental health care, especially in rural and underserved areas, is essential. This includes increasing the number of mental health professionals, establishing community mental health centers, and integrating mental health services into primary healthcare.

Promoting Help-Seeking Behavior

Efforts to promote help-seeking behavior are crucial in reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness. Educational campaigns in different settings can play a significant role in helping individuals identify signs of suicidal thoughts and seek appropriate help when needed.

Government Initiatives and Interventions

Government-led initiatives in India, such as the National Suicide Prevention Strategy and targeted programs for vulnerable groups like farmers, are steps in the right direction. However, continuous work is necessary to address existing barriers and ensure that mental health services are accessible to all. This paper seeks to evaluate the impact of government interventions and suggest ways to enhance suicide prevention efforts in the country.

National Suicide Prevention Strategy

The primary objective of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy is to decrease suicide rates by implementing a comprehensive approach that involves various sectors, including health, education, and social sectors. Vital elements of this strategy encompass

enhancing mental health literacy, bolstering crisis intervention services, and fostering research and data collection.

Programs for Supporting Farmers

In order to tackle the alarming suicide rates among farmers, it is crucial to implement targeted interventions that provide financial assistance, debt relief, and mental health counseling. Collaborations with agricultural organizations and local governments can significantly enhance the efficacy of these programs.

Crisis Intervention Services

The provision of crisis helplines and online support services is crucial in promptly assisting individuals in distress. It is imperative that these services are easily accessible, maintain confidentiality, and are staffed by professionals who have received appropriate training.

CONCLUSION

To effectively address the complex issue of suicide in India, it is essential for all stakeholders to collaborate and continue their efforts, despite the progress that has been made. The government, healthcare sector, educational institutions, community leaders, and civil society must work together to ensure effective prevention.

It is of utmost importance to prioritize targeted interventions for high-risk groups, while also implementing universal strategies. Improving access to mental health services and crisis helplines is vital in providing support to individuals experiencing distress.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of prevention programs are crucial in ensuring their effectiveness. By promoting data-driven decision-making and fostering collaboration, we can address the underlying causes of suicide and promote resilience within communities.

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