

International Journal of Scientific Research and Reviews

Extent of Suicide intent among Teenagers having low Academic Grades

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ABSTRACT

Suicide is a word that many people like to avoid. Talking about suicide makes most people cringe and makes them very uncomfortable. Suicide affects teenagers and young adults around the globe each year. Knowing the signs and symptoms associated with suicide is a start to preventing teen suicide; however, taking action is equally as important. Thus the present study focuses on how low grades influence suicidal thought among teenagers. The sample of those 300 teenagers was taken into study who have received less than 50% marks for two years consecutively from different schools of Jaipur, Rajasthan. Becks Suicide Intent Scale was administered on the students where it was found that nearly 50% of the students had medium to high suicide intent due to their low academic grades. It was concluded that immediate help should be provided to such students before they try and commit any self harming behavior. Limitations and implications of the study were stated.

KEYWORDS: teenagers, suicide intent, low academic grades.

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INTRODUCTION

There are about one million deaths per year from suicide. This means that worldwide, there is a successful suicide every forty seconds. Additionally, there are about another ten to twenty million non-fatal suicide attempts annually (Finn). Suicide is a third leading cause of death for teenagers ("Teen suicide overview"). As of 2001, the suicide rate in the United States was 10.7 per 100,000 people. For young adults ages fifteen to twenty-four the suicide rate was 9.9 per 100,000 people¹.

Life as a teenager is not easy and some teenagers cannot handle the pressure. There are a variety of things that can lead a teenager to commit suicide. Depression is the most common cause of teenage suicide; however, there are many factors that can cause depression. Some of these factors can be psychological or physical². Some of these other factors include, but are not limited to, substance abuse, changes at home, domestic violence, and financial problems. Difficulty keeping up at school may also contribute to teenage depression. This difficulty could be academic failure, the pressures of participating in extracurricular activities, and peer pressure to fit in with the majority³.

Incidence and Rate of Suicides during the Decade (2004–2014) On an average, more than one lakh persons commit suicides every year in the country during the decadal period from 2004 to 2014⁴.

Rate of suicides has been calculated using mid-year projected population for the non-census years whereas for the census year 2011, the population of The Population Census 2011 was use. The number of suicides in the country during the decade (2004–2014) has recorded an increase of 15.8% (1, 31, 666 in 2014 from 1, 13, 697 in 2004)⁵. The increase in incidence of suicides was reported each year till 2011 thereafter a declining trend was noticed. The population has increased by 14.6% during the decade while the rate of suicides has slightly increased by 1.0% (from 10.5 in 2004 to 10.6 in 2014). The rate of suicides is showing a mixed trend during the decade (2004-2014), however, rate of suicides is showing declining trend since 2010⁴.

Therefore, it is mandatory to take a step forward in analyzing the present education system of India and critically evaluate its effects on the students. The amount of academic pressure created by family, relatives, friends and significant others is very high in the Indian households. The student is continuously nagged due to the academic scores obtained by him. They are made to feel that they have no future if they are not good at academics. This leads to feeling of hopelessness among them

and students get worried about their future. This feeling often makes them work hard, but still if no considerable results are achieved then it may result in the feeling of suicide. As teenage is a very fragile age and a teen can get influenced very easily, there are more chances of him to feel lonely and worthless and commit any self harming behavior including suicide.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Objectives

1. To determine the level of suicide ideation among teenagers.

Hypothesis

1. There will be varied levels of suicide ideation.

Variables

1. Teenagers of age group 14-18 years.
2. Suicide ideation scale

Sample

The sample consisted of 300 students from various English medium schools of Jaipur, Rajasthan. The schools were selected on the availability basis by purposive sampling. The students belonging to 14-18 years of age groups having the academic grade of below 50% since last two years minimum were selected.

Inclusion criteria

1. Age range -14-18 years
2. Only those students who are having below 50% of annual academic results since last two years minimum were selected.
3. Informed consent.

Exclusion criteria

1. Students achieving above 50% marks were excluded.
2. Uncooperative students were excluded.
3. Students having any other chronic mental illness were excluded.

Tools employed

Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (BSS) ⁶

Procedure

The Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (BSS) was administered on 300 teenagers having below 50% academic grades in their classes since last two years minimum. The data obtain was analyzed

using various statistical tools and result tables were drawn. Interpretation of the results obtained was done. Findings, limitations & implications of the study were stated.

Statistical Analysis

Frequency-Percentage was used to analyze the data obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table -1. Showing sample distribution of teenagers having low academic grades.

S.NO.	CLASS	GENDER				TOTAL
		MALE		FEMALE		
		FREQ	%	FREQ	%	
1.	IX	40	58.82%	28	41.17%	68
2.	X	32	47.05%	36	52.94%	68
3.	XI	50	69.45%	22	32.35%	72
4.	XII	60	65.21%	32	34.78%	92

Table -2. Indicating percentage of students suffering from high, medium and low level of suicide intent.

CLASS	BSIS	
IX	CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE
	HIGH	59.70%
	MEDIUM	35.29%
	LOW	5%
X	CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE
	HIGH	40.05%
	MEDIUM	52.94%
	LOW	7%
XI	CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE
	HIGH	46%
	MEDIUM	47.22%
	LOW	6.77%
XII	CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE
	HIGH	43.82%
	MEDIUM	52.17%
	LOW	4%

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to assess the level of suicide intent among teenagers. The sample of 300 teenagers was collected from various schools of Jaipur, Rajasthan. Only those students were selected who have gained less than 50 % marks in their annual exams for two consecutive years. The Becks Suicide Ideation Scale was administered over these students to basically assess the impact of academic stress on them. The results obtained were tabulated and the interpretation was drawn as follows-

Table 1 highlights the number of respondents taken into the study, it may be seen that total 68 students were selected from class IX where 40 were girls and 28 were boys. In class X, 32 were girls and 36 were boys. When class XI was taken into account, 50 boys and 22 girls were included and majority of the sample was taken from class XII where 60 were boys and 32 were girls. Thus, the BSS was administered over the students from class IX to XII, age ranging from 14-18 years.

After the administration of BSS, the results were quite significant. The data was tabulated in table 2 where it may be clearly observed that students perceive a great pressure of performing well in academics and this pressure overpowers their mind to a lot of extent which makes them feel like nothing can support them, they have no future and the only way left now is to quit.

As seen from the table, majority of the students of class IX, perceived high (59.7%) and medium (35.2%) level of suicide ideation. Similar results were seen when the percentage of students lying in a particular category of BSS was calculated for class X which indicate that 40% and 53% students had high and medium level of suicide ideation.

When level of suicide ideation of students achieving low grades in exams for two consecutive years was checked for class XI, it was found that 46% had high and 47.2% medium level of suicide ideation. Results obtained by conducting BSIS of Class XII also revealed similar results showing that 43.8% of the students perceiving high and 52.1% students felt medium level of suicide ideation in their lives.

A similar study was conducted by Ang and Huan (2006) in which relations among academic stress, depression, and suicidal ideation were examined in 1,108 Asian adolescents 12–18 years old from a secondary school in Singapore. The previously significant relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation was significantly reduced in magnitude when depression was included in the model providing evidence in this sample that adolescent depression was a partial mediator. The applied and practical implications for intervention and prevention work in schools were discussed⁷.

Tan et al., (2018) also investigated the prevalence and predictors of suicide ideation among primary, middle and high school students. Multilevel modeling was used to investigate suicide ideation among 12,733 Chinese children and adolescents aged 9–18 years from wide range of areas across China. Approximately, 32.09% of children and adolescents reported suicide ideation, with females were

more likely to report suicide ideation than males (38.09% vs. 29.95%). Results showed that the risk factors in primary school students were different from middle and high school student groups, whereas significant risk factors for middle and high school students were similar. Significant risk factors for suicide ideation included study anxiety, self-accusation tendency, impulsive tendency, terror tendency and physical symptoms. Though the other factors responsible for the occurrence of suicidal thoughts were not much controlled, but one of the factors was clear in the sample that all of these were having the feeling of disappointment and hopelessness in their lives because they were not able to perform well academically⁸.

Thus, it is clear that the students of Indian educational system face with strong societal pressure of getting marks in their exams. This is all there society ever thinks and talks about around them and make them feel that there is no future for them if they are unable to get good grades.

CONCLUSIONS

It may be concluded by the results obtained that students in Indian education system, are facing a lot of pressure from their external surroundings for performing well in academics. This pressure is becoming one of the major factors in discouraging the student and increasing hopelessness which leads to increase in the level of suicide intent. Thus, major steps should be taken against changing the perception of the public and imparting the message that, “Grades are not everything in life”.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the above discussion, many strategies and directions may be advised for future researches in this area such as:-

- 1) Further studies are needed with larger sample size and deeper evaluation to generalize the result.
- 2) Some other variables may be included to achieve better information on the topic.
- 3) Further interventions and follow ups may be given to such students and feedback may be taken.
- 4) Training may be provided to these students on the certain technique of physical workout, stress management and medication which insure longevity and would enhance quality of life.
- 5) Counseling strategies may be offered for enhancing physical, mental, emotional and cognitive state of these students.

LIMITATIONS

The following limitations were identities by the researchers:-

- 1) This study was limited to students from Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- 2) Students were assessed on only one variable.
- 3) The sample size was less.
- 4) Many respondents would not like to talk about their personal problems, which were excluded from this research.

It is therefore, suggested that the future researchers may start from where the present work ends. However, the present study serves its heuristic purpose.

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