



Suicidal Patterns in India

For Prelims: World Suicide Prevention Day, International Association for Suicide Prevention, National Crime Records Bureau, [Mental Healthcare Act \(MHA\), 2017](#), [KIRAN Helpline](#), [Manodarpan Initiative](#), [National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022](#)

For Mains: Factors Contributing to the Problem of Suicide in India

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, [World Suicide Prevention Day](#) was observed serving a sobering reminder of the persistent problem of **female suicide in India**, especially among housewives.

- Despite being an often-overlooked issue, **housewives consistently rank among the top categories for suicide**, with alarming numbers reported in recent years.

World Suicide Prevention Day

- **World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD)** is observed on **10th September every year**. It was established in 2003 by the **International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP)** in conjunction with the [WHO](#).
 - It focuses attention on the **issue, reduces stigma and raises awareness among organizations, government, and the public**, giving a singular message that suicide can be prevented.
- **“Creating hope through action”** is the **triennial theme for the WSPD from 2021 - 2023**. This theme is a reminder that there is an alternative to suicide and aims to inspire confidence and light in all of us.

What are the Challenges Faced by Housewives in India?

- **Recent Statistics:** The [National Crime Records Bureau](#) reported that **housewives** accounted for 51.5% of female suicides in 2021.
 - Among the major states, **Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Karnataka** featured at the top of this list.
 - Housewives also account for around 15% of all suicides, highlighting the magnitude of this issue.
- **Challenging Circumstances:**
 - **Limited Mobility:** Many women in India face restrictions on their mobility, particularly in rural areas.
 - **Societal norms and safety concerns** often discourage them from traveling alone

- or venturing far from their homes.
 - This limited mobility can lead to feelings of isolation and helplessness.
- **Restricted Financial Autonomy: Economic dependence on their spouses or families** can make women vulnerable to various forms of abuse. Lack of financial independence limits their ability to make choices and escape abusive situations.
- **Marital Control: Traditional gender roles and [patriarchal norms](#) in Indian society** often result in women having little control over their lives, especially in the context of marriage.
 - **Expectation that women should conform to the wishes of their husbands and in-laws** can lead to feelings of powerlessness.
- **Physical, Sexual, and Emotional Abuse: [Domestic violence](#)**, including **physical, sexual, and emotional abuse**, is a significant problem in India. Many women endure these forms of abuse in silence **due to stigma, fear of reprisal, or lack of support systems**.
- **Reluctance to Seek Help:** Societal stigma around discussing mental health issues and seeking help for them is widespread in India. **Many women hesitate to seek external assistance** or confide in others about their struggles, leading to a lack of access to mental health support.

What are the Other Factors Contributing to the Problem of Suicide in India?

- **Agricultural Distress and Farmer Suicides:** India's [agrarian economy](#) faces numerous challenges, including [erratic weather patterns](#), [land degradation](#), and [high input costs](#).
 - This has led to a significant number of farmer suicides due to **debt burdens and crop failures**.
 - In rural areas of India, access to **lethal means like [pesticides](#) is relatively easy**, and this contributes to a higher rate of impulsive suicides.
- **Educational Pressure:** India's **competitive education system** places **immense pressure on students to perform well academically**.
 - The **fear of failure and the high expectations of parents lead to [mental health issues](#) and suicides**, with students feeling they have no way out.
- **Lack of Mental Health Services:** Despite recent efforts to improve mental health services, there is still a **shortage of mental health professionals and limited access to affordable mental healthcare**, especially in **rural areas**.
 - It amplifies the mental health crisis in India and emerges as a paramount concern **linked to the rise in suicides**.
- **Family Pressure on LGBTQ+ Individuals:** Many [LGBTQIA+ individuals in India](#) face severe discrimination and rejection from their families, leading to feelings of isolation and depression.
 - The lack of acceptance and support within families is a significant factor contributing to **suicides in this community**.
- **Cyberbullying:** With the rise of technology and social media, [cyberbullying](#) has become a **significant issue**, particularly among young people. **Online harassment and bullying** can have **severe consequences on mental health and lead to suicides**.

What are the Recent Government Initiatives Related to Suicide Prevention?

- [Mental Healthcare Act \(MHA\), 2017](#)
- [KIRAN Helpline](#)
- [Manodarpan Initiative](#)
- [National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022](#)

Way Forward

- **Levering AI and Innovation to Empower Housewives:** There is a need to introduce [AI-powered skill development and job placement programs](#) specifically designed for housewives who wish to enter or reenter the workforce.

- AI can help identify skills and job opportunities that align with their interests and abilities.
- These programs can provide training in various fields, such as **remote work, freelancing, or part-time employment**, allowing housewives to **gain financial independence and a sense of purpose**.
- **Improve Access to Mental Health Care:** There is a need to increase the **availability of [mental health services](#)**, especially in rural and underserved areas, by building more **mental health clinics and training more mental health professionals**.
 - There is a need to integrate **mental health services into primary healthcare** to ensure early detection and intervention for **mental health disorders**.
- **Legislation and Regulation:** There is a need to **implement stricter regulations on the sale of [pesticides](#)**, which are a common method of suicide in rural areas.
 - Also, **enforcing laws against cyberbullying and online harassment** can contribute to reduction in mental distress among young people.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

Mains

Q. Why suicide among young women is increasing in Indian society? (2023)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/suicidal-patterns-in-india>

