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# Driving to Suicide: By Bullying Amongst Youth

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## ABSTRACT

*The phenomenon of bullying is a contributing factor to teens committing suicide. Teen suicide is one of the prominent causes leading to commitment of suicide amongst youth through cyber, family, workplace, school, body shaming, college bullying. This research paper explicitly highlights some of the recent suicidal attempts amongst the youth faced due to various bullying mediums. Furthermore, this paper focuses on some of the preventive measures, detection techniques through which this issue can be addressed to a considerable extent. An attempt has been also made to put light on legal awareness by which bullying attempts amongst youth can be taken care of. In addition, the statistical data in this paper show figures for specific states, and the alarming increase in suicidal incidents among youth in India is equally troubling.*

**Keywords:** *bullying, suicidal attempts, youth harassment, prevention & detection, youth counselling, abetment of suicide.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Population-based statistics reveal approximately 20%-30% of schoolchildren are frequently involved in bullying either as bullies or as victims. Being overweight and obese as an adolescent also seem to be linked to bullying. It has been observed that for adolescents aged 15-19 years suicide is the second most prevalent cause of death. Teenage suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth aged 10-14. Despite the higher suicide rate among male adolescents, female adolescents are more likely to have suicidal thoughts or try to commit suicide. There is no doubt that the school environment affects the behaviour and health of young people because they are heavily engaged with their peers and exposed to potential pressures of school achievement and future success. Given the significance of the school environment, youth suicide in the context of school is of paramount importance.

The seasonal variations in the frequency of youth suicide have also been demonstrated in recent research, suggesting that involvement in school is an important factor in youth suicide patterns.

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People are subjected to bullying at every level of their lives, right from their home and early school and college years till late in their retirement years. Furthermore, cyberbullying has brought bullying to a whole new level when an individual cannot handle his psychological unbalance, suicide becomes the only option. There are several reasons from where bullying advances:

- **Bullying at home:** As a matter of fact, it is commonly seen that a family is a place where bullying can begin; a child's parents, siblings, or anyone within his or her family can be responsible for bullying him/her. As a result of this abrupt behaviour, one cannot discern between true and false in any way and issues like depression arise as a result. In contradiction to peer bullying, family bullying is more manipulative and passive-aggressive, because they know you and their relationship with you allows them to control you.
- **Bullying at school:** Education institutions are considered a place of devotion because knowledge is imparted here. It is at school that a child grows and works toward their future, but if that child is bullied, that could impede their growth physically and mentally. Every word, action, and feeling that touches a child's heart turns into something that affects them greatly. A silly rumor can put them on edge. These kinds of actions leave a deep mark in their hearts, causing them great pain and fear for the future. In *Sanjeev Garg v. Ut of Chandigarh and ors*<sup>2</sup>. It was alleged by the father of a child that his child was bullied by other students while at school, and the school did nothing to stop it so it was blamed for causing him mental depression. These situations can have long-term effects on a child's brain, and he may feel like he will fail as an adult.

A school does not believe it is necessary to take serious action or to punish the bullies. Therefore, they do not take any steps necessary to end the bullying culture.

- **Bullying at Colleges:** After school, a college is a place where many children step out of their houses for the very first time and stay away from their families which itself is a very big deal and additionally, if they are bullied by other students or members of that culture, in this scenario, this could be a worse situation for them to deal with. In the case of *Yelchuri Manohar v. State of Andhra Pradesh*<sup>3</sup>, the appellant, who was the brains behind this shocking crime, was sentenced to Life Imprisonment under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, after brutally attacking a girl student studying for

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<sup>2</sup> *Sanjeev Garg v. Union territory of Chandigarh and ors*. AIR 2020 Punjab Haryana High Court.

<sup>3</sup> *Yelchuri Manohar v. State of Andhra Pradesh* 2005 (2) ALD Cri 751, 2005 CriLJ 4593

her practical exam from behind and hacking her to death. Furthermore, to combat ragging in educational institutions, the government of India introduced The Prohibition and Eradication of Ragging Act, 2016.

- **Bullying at Workplace:** A workplace bullying act is a repeated behavior directed at employees that are intended to insult them. Workplace bullying is hazardous to employee health and safety. The ragging culture also involves unhealthy criticism that is a form of humiliation and taunting when people are misled about work or given incorrect guidelines. In the leading judgment of *Vishaka and others v. The State of Rajasthan*<sup>4</sup>, here were guidelines given by the Supreme Court in *Vishaka* that defined sexual harassment, as well as employer obligations to create a secure working environment for women.
- **Cyber Bullying:** Using social media, messaging platforms, online gaming platforms, and mobile phones, cyberbullying is bullying conducted by using technology to scare, anger, or shame the targeted person. In one of the famous cases of *Patanjali Ayurveda Limited & Anr. v. Google LLC. & Ors*<sup>5</sup>. A video of some defamatory statements and threatening statements posted on Facebook were uploaded by some unknown person Plaintiff gave the notice to remove those videos that were defamatory and damaging to the reputation of a large industry. The High Court of Delhi passed a judgment granting the plaintiff's request and removing the video in its entirety was ordered.

## II. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Figure 1<sup>6</sup> shows the data of every 5 years in the last two decades representing the number of suicides committed in India. Here, the chart portrays the alarming increment of the number of suicides committed in India over the past two decades, starting from 1995-1999 with 27,359 suicides committed, in 2000-2004 the count increased by 2% to 27,880. Further, in the period of 2005-2009, the cases rose to 30,064 with an increment of 8%. Additionally, the number of suicidal cases recorded between 2010 and 2014 was 38,220 which rose by around 27% as compared to the period of 2005-2010. Finally, the period from 2015 to 2019 also had an estimated increment of 27% in comparison with the previous years and the count in this period shockingly advanced to 48,537.

As these statistics illustrate, India's suicide rate has recklessly risen in the past two decades

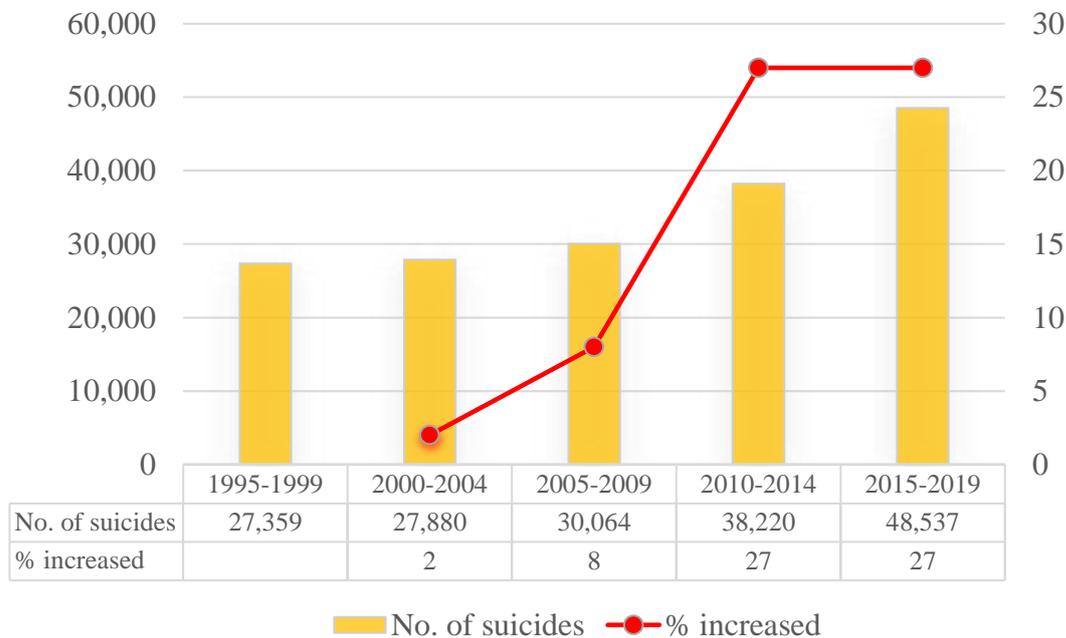
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<sup>4</sup> *Vishaka and others v. The State of Rajasthan* (1997) 6 SCC 241

<sup>5</sup> *Patanjali Ayurveda Limited & Anr. v. Google LLC. & Ors* AIR 2019 Delhi High Court

<sup>6</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/one-every-hour-at-10335-last-year-saw-most-student-suicides-in-25-years/articleshow/77969096.cms>

which is a matter of great concern. Moreover, some immediate steps should be taken to prevent suicidal cases in the nation.



**Fig. 1 (suicidal cases in India from 1995 to 2019)**

The second figure<sup>7</sup> (fig. 2) illustrates a state-by-state analysis of the 10,335 student suicides in 2019 shows that five states account for over 44% of the total, these include Maharashtra with the highest number of student suicides recorded i.e., 1487, while Madhya Pradesh had the second-highest student suicidal cases that recorded up to 927 suicides, in Tamil Nadu 914 students committed suicide in 2019, as per the records of Karnataka there were 673 students who committed suicide in 2019 and Uttar Pradesh had 603 student suicidal cases.

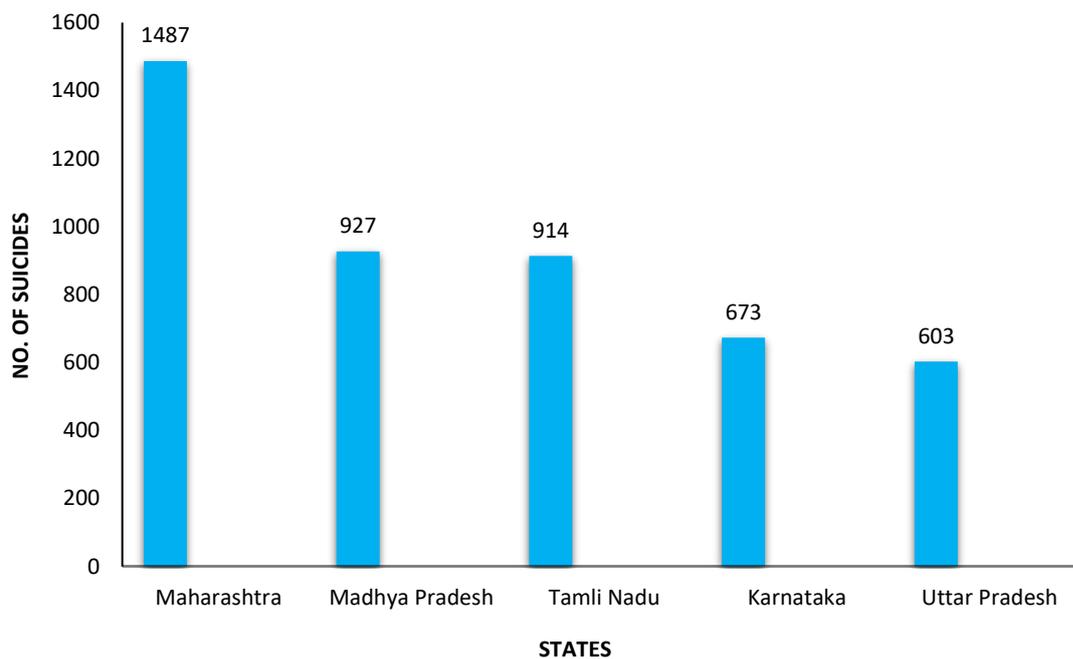
Activists claim that many adolescents, especially those over the age of ten and twelve years, feel they have no outlet for their anxiety, which makes stress management even more difficult.

There were over 5.2 % of student suicides between 1995 and 1999, with 1995 (6.6 %) being the worst year. In the five years between 2000 and 2004, student suicide accounted for 5.5% of total suicides in only one year, and under 5% for the next four, and under 5% in 2001. From here, student suicides also accounted for under 5.5% for the next five years.

From the year 2010 to 2014, there were more than 6% of suicides in the last two years of this period. Since then, they have accounted for more than 6% every year. For the past four years,

<sup>7</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/one-every-hour-at-10335-last-year-saw-most-student-suicides-in-25-years/articleshow/77969096.cms>

they accounted for more than 7% of suicides.



**Fig. 2 (Data of suicides committed by students in some states)**

### III. HOW TO PREVENT BULLYING

Children can and should be protected from bullying if they have caring parents, teachers, and other adults in their lives. Adults and students have a responsibility to stop bullying in schools as well as in colleges and these educational institutions need to implement clear and comprehensive bullying prevention policies and practices that emphasize early detection, timely intervention, and social-emotional support for bullies and victims. Some strategies or approaches that can be very helpful in the prevention of both bullying and suicides in youth:

- **Promote an environment in which bullying and harassment of any kind are not tolerated:** Students, teachers, and parents should work together to create policies that outline expected behaviors, consequences, and specific policies for school bullying. Bullying victims should be modelled and intervened upon noticing it.
- **Strengthening student-adult relationships:** Adults must stress that no student should suffer unnecessarily, and students must feel secure in seeking help if they feel threatened by others, depressed, or considering suicide. At least one trusted adult must be present in order to create an intentional relationship between students and adults.
- **Replace bullying with positive behavior:** Students engage in less bullying and other negative behaviors when they are taught appropriate replacement behaviors using

positive behavior supports. The Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (www.pbis.org) program recommends that schools create predictable, positive environments across all settings; teach social skills that can be used as well as or better than problem behavior; reinforce the positive behavior of bystanders, and actively supervise students on an individual basis.

- **Collaboration between schools, families, and communities should be improved:** A comprehensive strategy that encompasses the school, the family, and the community is most likely to be effective as bullying is associated with many other risk factors, such as exposure to violence outside the school setting.
- **Students need to be educated and empowered:** Information about bullying and suicide prevention strategies should be framed in terms of how students contribute to a safe and caring school community, as well as a message of tolerance to diversity and individual differences.
- **Access mental health services and supports:** Students at risk of suicidal ideation and act are best supported by school psychologists, school counsellors, and school social workers who provide school-based mental health services. School-based mental health providers provide assessment, counselling, and referrals to community mental health providers, as well as facilitating collaboration between the school, the family, and private mental health providers.
- **Legal Awareness:** International Anti-Bullying Day, International Anti-Bullying Week, Global STAND UP to Bullying Day, and National Bullying Prevention Month are among the many programs and activities dedicated to preventing bullying.
  1. **Raghvan Committee:** Several laws and regulations have been issued to curb bullying in schools and colleges in the wake of this report, released in 2007. This report recommended that teachers and principals be held to account when bullying occurs.
  2. **UGC Circular:** An anti-ragging circular entitled, “*UGC Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Education Institutions, 2009*”, was issued in 2009 and was applied to all educational institutions in the country. Students are subject to ragging, and an exhaustive definition of it is offered along with calling for an Anti-Ragging Squad to be set up. This has led to the regulation of ragging, although it cannot be entirely eradicated.

3. **Provisions of IPC:** Ragging offenses committed by college-going students in juniors are most likely to happen after they turn 18 and are therefore considered adults under the law. As a result, criminal offenses committed by them would be governed by the Indian Penal Code. the relevant provisions of IPC under which they can be found guilty:
  - a) Section 506- Punishment for criminal intimidation.
  - b) Section 323 to 326, causing hurt and grievous hurt and their respective punishments
  - c) Section 304- provisions of culpable homicide will be applicable in case of the death of the victim.
  - d) Section 306- Abetment of suicide.
  - e) Section 307- Attempt to murder.

There is often an event or trigger that flips the switch, which is frequently mistakenly attributed as the "cause" of suicide. A trigger for a student of present generation can be anything that involves a loss of some kind, such as the death of a loved one, the end of a romantic relationship, or academic or disciplinary problems at school.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The laws and regulations can come to your rescue if your child is subjected to bullying or ragging in school or college. When it comes to incidents related to bullying and ragging, parents and guardians must keep these in mind. There is no way to stop bullying unless everyone is taught from an early age, beginning from school and home, the terrible effects that bullying has on people. Every individual must be taught how their acts can affect someone's life, sometimes not just one person, but often even the entire family. Bullying causes great hardship and disruption in someone's life.

Schools and colleges need to be taught a lot about bullying through awareness programs, strict laws, and basic education. These can reduce this appalling culture. It can strengthen the overall well-being of students by helping to detect and prevent mental health problems, victimization, and suicide risks early on.

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