Increasing Student Suicides in Higher Education Institutions

Why in news?

Despite increased awareness about suicide, the suicide rates are increasing and has to be addressed.

What is the status of student suicide in Higher Education?

- According to Ministry of Education, 33 students died by suicide across the IITs since 2018.
- In total, there were 61 cases of suicides during this period, across the IITs, NITs and IIMs.
- According to National Crime Records Bureau data, student suicides saw an increase of 4.5% in 2021, attributed in a large measure to the Covid pandemic and related anxieties.

What are the factors responsible for student suicides?

- Academic stress
- Family reasons
- Personal reasons
- Mental health issues
- Official apathy
- Social and caste discrimination
- 85% attendance rule – if a student fails to do so then he must repeat the course.
- Intense, high-pressure educational environment, where students are unhealthily competitive.
- Relative-grading system makes the institutions more competitive.
- Due to the combination of academic pressure and the administration's indifference towards student's issues, students resort to substance abuse.

What are the various measures taken by higher education institutions?

- Conducting workshops/seminars on happiness and wellness.
- Regular yoga sessions.
- Induction programs.
- Institutions also focus on extracurricular activities, including sports and cultural activities.
- Assign one faculty adviser per 10 students to help with their academics and monitor their progress.
- The institute appoint student counsellors for overall personality development of the

students, especially those under stress.

What are the various measures taken by government of India?

- **MANODARPAN** - Covers a wide range of activities to provide psychological support to students, teachers and families for mental and emotional well-being
- **Peer-assisted learning** - Support for students, by students, and normally takes the form of regular, timetabled, coordinated group study sessions or workshop.
- **Regional languages** - Introduction of technical education in regional languages to ease academics-related stress.

What is the need of the hour?

- **Parents' participation** - The institutes should share student performance profiles (academic and non-academic activities) with their parents.
- **Early detection and alert generation** - Students live close to their peers and wing-mates for academic and non-academic activities.
- **Peers and wing-mates** - The peers and wing-mates could flag changes in behavioural traits such as missed classes, reduced participation in extracurricular activities and decreased interaction.
- **Remedial teaching and graceful exit** - Students struggling with academic pressure should be placed on academic probation for customised attention.
- **Third-party grievance redressal** - If a student is dissatisfied with the internal grievance redressal mechanism, they should have access to a third party for resolution.

References

1. The Indian Express | Student Suicide
2. The New Indian Express | IIT Student Suicide
3. The Print | Academic Pressure

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