Increasing Youth Suicides in India

What is the issue?

\n\n

In India youth suicides are ubiquitous, and the educational ecosystem must take the blame for this.

\n\n

What are the incidences of suicides in India?

\n\n

\n
- In India there have been frequent news reports of suicides taking place in coaching centers that train students for medical and engineering entrance examinations.
\n
- According to the National Crime Records Bureau, between 2014 and 2016, 26,476 students committed suicide in India. Of them, 7,462 committed suicide due to failure in various examinations.
\n
- The deaths of 49 students in Navodaya Vidyalaya schools in the last five years, and of three students preparing for the IIT entrance examinations in Kota in a span of four days, brings the issue of youth suicides to the fore again.
\n
- More youths are taking their lives due to the fear of failing in examinations, constant flak from teachers, bullying from peers, family pressure and a loss of a sense of a decent future.
\n

\n\n

How education eco system affects students?

\n\n

\n
- The rising number of student suicides provokes a serious discussion on the way in which outcomes of education are perceived in India.

\n
- The instrumental value of education in India is its potential in generating socio-economic and cultural capital through a promise of decent job opportunities in the future.
\n
- But the education system has not been successful in generating enough job options.
\n
- For instance, the International Labor Organization’s World Employment and Social Outlook Trends Report of 2018 says that in 2019, the job status of nearly 77% of Indian workers would be vulnerable and that 18.9 million people would be unemployed.
\n
- With their job future being so bleak, students are put under constant pressure to perform.
\n
- They have failed to learn to enjoy the process of education, Instead, the constant pressure and stress has generated social antipathy and detachment among them.
\n
- With a loss of community and other social bonds, students in schools, colleges and coaching centers end up taking their lives.
\n

\n\n

What are the issues in measures taken by government?

\n\n

\n
- Following the reports of suicides the National Human Rights Commission sought information from the Ministry of Human Resource Development on whether trained counsellors were present on campus.
\n
- HRD Ministry is also setting up an expert committee to look deep into the matter.
\n
- According to Navodaya Vidyalaya Samitis, merely one or two training sessions are included to sensitize the teachers and principals regarding safety and security of the children and to prevent suicidal tendencies.
\n
- The framework for implementation of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) recognizes the role of guidance and counselling services to students.
\n

- In 2018, the government approved an integrated school education scheme subsuming the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the RMSA, and Teacher Education from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2020.
  \n
- However, without any significant rise in budgetary allocations for education, it is likely that there would be cuts in “non-productive” areas of education such as guidance and counselling.
  \n
- Thus stop-gap solutions to setting up expert committees and counsellors in schools have not been able to solve the problem, thus deep-rooted causes must be addressed.
  \n

\n\n

What holistic measures needs to be taken?

\n\n

  \n
- The government must undertake a comprehensive study on the reasons behind these suicides.
  \n
- Academic curriculum should be designed in ways that stress the importance of mental exercises and meditation.
  \n
- The Delhi government’s initiative on the ‘Happiness Curriculum’ may be a step in the right direction.
  \n
- Union government must consider to setup Equal Opportunity Cells with an anti-discrimination officer functional in universities and colleges.
  \n
- Apart from this it is need of the hour to reinvent our educational ecosystem in ways that impregnate new meanings, new ideas of living, and renewed possibilities that could transform a life of precocity into a life worth living.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering