Issues of depression and mental health

What is the issue?

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Education in India doesn’t discuss depression and mental health, thus making cinema the only crusader to deal about the issues.

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What is the stigma related with depression and mental health?

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- In our country, talking about depression is more of a taboo than talking about sex.
- We simply don’t discuss mental health, particularly its emotional aspect.
- Not just because of the stigma attached to it, but also because people don’t understand the subject properly.
- Because emotional development isn’t taught in schools or homes.
- No one has ever tried to tell us about emotions in a manner that doesn’t seem like an academic exercise or in a way that could make us relate to the issue and evoke genuine interest.
- Depression and suicides resulting from it, is the second leading cause of morbidity amongst 15 to 29-year-olds globally.
- Every year, more than 8,00,000 people die having committed suicide and many more attempt it.
- As WHO put states preventing suicide: a global imperative.
- Interest and motivation are in the domain of emotion, not cognition.
- Formal education helps the development of cognitive intelligence, not sensory.

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- Because it focuses on learning through reading and writing, language, words, not images and sound.
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- But films combine the two — that is the advantage of films; that makes cinema a richer medium of instruction.
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What is the role of cinema?

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- For far too long, we've perpetuated the theory that anything that has to be taught should be through books; cinema is only for entertainment.
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- But cinema's purpose goes far beyond.
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- You may watch cinema for entertainment but a lot of information from screen goes into your subconscious mind.
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- If this information isn't authentic, it results in misunderstandings, but when authentic cinema tackles a subject, it is a much better tool of education than any other.
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- For e.g. one knew the words "dyslexia" and "learning disability" but never gave them much thought till Taare Zameen Par lent viewers a new understanding.
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- With depression becoming the second largest reason for morbidity amongst the young, cinema can help create larger public opinion to remove the stigma.
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How is depression viewed in India?

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- It is unspoken, unrecognised depression that leads to suicide or substance abuse.
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- Depression is part of a psychiatric disorder.
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- To talk about it, one doesn’t require intelligence but acceptance.
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- Society is now accepting the concept of the intellectually challenged, but not the emotionally challenged.
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- In India, a sign of maturity, especially amongst women, is apparently how successfully they can conceal their emotions, rather than expressing them.
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- Meanwhile, social pressures are only rising.
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- The phenomenal growth in means of communication today could result in your getting lost within a jungle of information.
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- This in turn causes information bombardment which is a major cause for today’s depression.
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- Added with it is today’s changing lifestyle where in pursuit of getting all materialistic things we tend to lose ourselves which also leads to depression.
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Source: Indian Express

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