



RISING SUICIDAL TENDENCIES DURING PANDEMIC: A REVIEW

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Abstract:

Pandemic has led to widespread mental health issues throughout the world and one of the most serious issues is committing suicides. The incidences of suicide have never been uncommon but it is rising sharply during this corona virus pandemic. This paper is a sincere effort to examine the most probable causes of suicides during this pandemic and the suicidal ideation. It also discusses the warning signs and argues strongly that there is an utmost need of psychological counselling, proper care, love and attention to manage the stress which takes human lives.

Key Words: Covid-19, Suicide, Self-Harm, Suicidal Thoughts, Depression, Stress

Introduction:

It is a time proven fact that all the living organisms on this earth fight for survival and existence. But this is also a pertinent fact that someone, somewhere, commits suicide every 18 minutes. You might never be able to tell who it will be; it could be the person sitting right next .Not a single day passes when we do not come across shocking cases of suicides. Have we ever asked ourselves that what makes someone to risk his own life?

The Oxford English Dictionary places the first occurrence of the word in 1651. However suicide was seen with much disgust, therefore many did not put the word in their dictionaries. They used phrases like "self-murder", "self-killing", and "self-slaughter" in place of suicide because these words closely define its relation with murder. Eventually, many scientists and doctors considered suicide as a possible illness. Most often, suicidal thoughts are the result of feeling like you can't cope when you're faced with what seems to be an overwhelming life situation. You might not be able to handle that kind of pressure and feel that death would be the only way to escape it also if you don't have hope for the future; you may mistakenly think suicide is a solution. So basically the person has very restricted thinking at that time which we can also refer as a sort of tunnel vision, where in the middle of a crisis you believe suicide is the only way out.

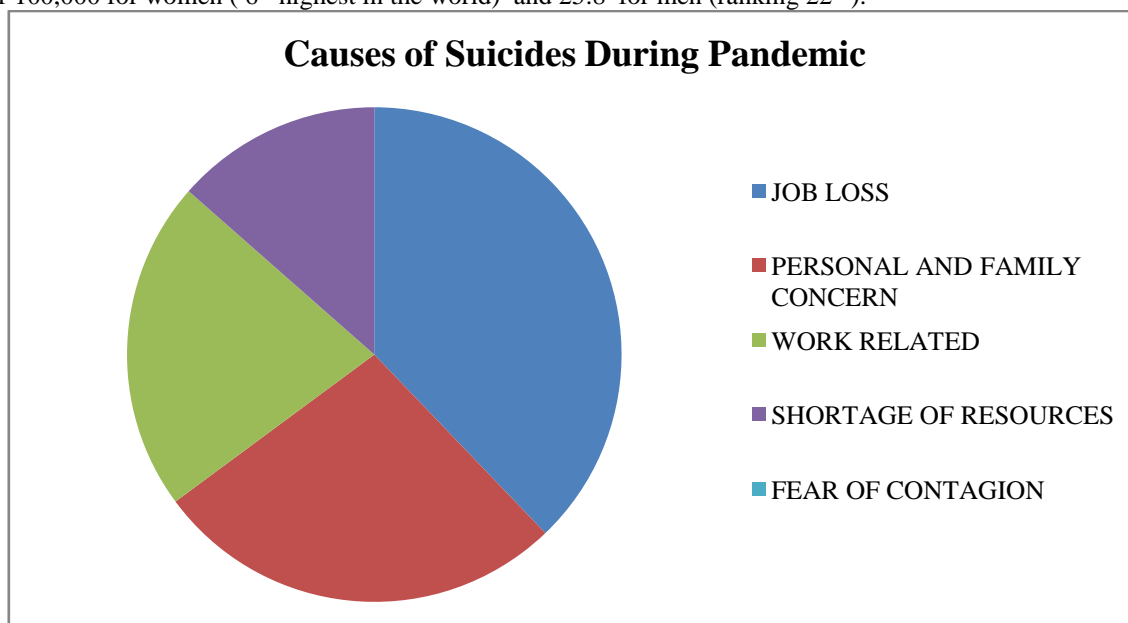
Objectives of the Study:

- To find out the possible causes of suicides during pandemic.
- To examine the effect of corona virus pandemic on rising suicidal rates

Methodology - The Study is based on Secondary data:

Possible Causes: Suicidal Ideation and Attempts:

India is labelled as "Suicide Capital of South-East Asia" as it has recorded the highest number of suicides in South-East Asia in 2012 .According to WHO data ,the age standardized suicide rate in India is 16.4% per 100,000 for women (6th highest in the world) and 25.8 for men (ranking 22nd).



There have been diverse reasons for suicides in different ages. Ancient India has witnessed many suicides due to superstitions or sacrificial motives. Many suicides were committed due to poverty wherein the

family is not able to earn the bread for their livelihood and take this extreme action. Students commit suicides because of peer pressure, unemployment, stress. Women commit suicides mostly because of domestic violence, problem with in laws or spouse. There also may be a genetic link to suicide. People who complete suicide or who have suicidal thoughts or behaviour are more likely to have a family history of suicide. So, today the reasons for suicide are many, and the ways to achieve it are broad. In earlier eras, some found it to be the only way to redeem them from failure

The cases of committing suicides have increased even more during this pandemic because of varied reasons. The pandemic is causing fear, anxiety, depression and stress among people. Social distancing, isolation and coping with perpetually evolving and changing information about the virus, Stigma related to COVID-19 infection may also lead to feeling of isolation and has both triggered and aggravated existing and pre-existing mental health conditions which need urgent attention. The disruption in the medical system may prevent people with chronic mental health conditions from getting the therapy or medications they need. Skyrocketing unemployment rates and a looming recession is also adding stress. going by the history of pandemics, and the knock-on effects of an inevitable economic downturn, India is looking at a mental health crisis, with suicide-related deaths as its lead indicator and for a country with the highest number of poor and malnourished, and individuals with depression and anxiety, this is the perfect storm. So, The corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic has triggered a mental health crisis owing to a number of stressors - such as

Job Loss:

The covid-19 pandemic has taken up unemployment levels to historic heights in several countries. Even as lockdowns continue to disrupt livelihoods, the larger mental health issue cannot be ignored. As a new study suggests, job losses due to covid-19 could result in up to 9,570 more suicides globally than is normal in a year. With the job loss the person get the feeling of hopelessness, rejection, self hate, guilt, insomnia change in appetite and suicidal thoughts.

Personal and Family Concerns:

Situations vary, but personal and family issues may include:

- Fear that you or your loved ones will get COVID-19
- Grief over the loss of a loved one to COVID-19 or another illness
- Social isolation, especially if you live alone or in a facility where visitors are temporarily not allowed
- Being in close quarters with family under stay-at-home orders, which could increase the risk of spouse, partner or child abuse
- Starting or worsening of alcohol or drug misuse
- Having psychiatric disorders, such as major depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder or an anxiety disorder.
- Having family history of mental disorder, suicide or violence.

Work - Related Concerns:

Depending on the type of job you have, examples of work-related issues include:

- Anxiety due to working in a high-risk environment, such as in a hospital or nursing home, or being a first responder.
- Feeling overwhelmed working in crowded health care facilities that treat people. With COVID-19, especially in places that may have a shortage of personnel and personal protective equipment.
- Feeling burned out and frustrated as a health care worker because you feel that you couldn't do enough for people with COVID-19 who died.
- Fear and anxiety about the increased risk of COVID-19 because you're an essential worker, such as a worker in the food or transportation industry, whose job requires serving the public in person.
- Worry about or actual loss of a job or business, causing financial hardship.
- Worry about how you'll provide basic needs for yourself and your family if you're out of work for an unpredictable amount of time or if you lose your job.

Fear of Contagion:

Social isolation - social isolation can include staying home for lengthy periods of time, having no communication with family, acquaintances or friends, and/or wilfully avoiding any contact with other humans when those opportunities do arise. Social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic can lead to depression.

Severe Shortages of Resources for Testing and Treatment:

Shortages of medical materials, manufacturing and consumer goods caused by the COVID-19 pandemic quickly became a major issue. Shortages of personal protective equipment, such as medical masks and gloves, face shields, and sanitizing products, [2] along with hospital beds, ICU beds, oxygen therapy equipment, ventilators, and ECMO devices were reported in most countries. According to mental health experts, the corona virus pandemic is causing panic attacks, anxiety and depression, putting more people at risk for suicide. The world is fighting against COVID-19, yet, a parallel pandemic that India is seeing is 'anxiety and depression',

which experts said is scarier than the corona virus. The stress caused by the pandemic can affect different people in different ways.

Warning Signs:

We often say people who commit suicide are coward because they tend to choose the easy way out but we need to understand that Suicide is neither a cowardly act nor a brave act. It's actually a cry of a person in a distress who says 'I am helpless and I don't know how to cope with helplessness.

American Psychological Association (APA) has also identified the suicide warning signs as:

- Talking about killing or harming oneself - for example, making statements such as "I'm going to kill myself," "I wish I were dead"
- Has trouble eating or sleeping.
- Withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone
- Exhibits sudden personality changes or Having dramatic mood swings, such as being emotionally high one day and deeply discouraged the next
- Prepares for death by writing a will and making final arrangements.
- Feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation is a strong predictor of suicide
- Self destructive behaviour like Increased use of alcohol or drug use ,driving recklessly etc
- Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again.
- Loses interest in his or her personal appearance.

Warning signs aren't always obvious, and they may vary from person to person. Some people make their intentions clear, while others keep suicidal thoughts and feelings secret.

WARNING SIGNS FOR SUICIDE 

Suicide is often not talked about openly. Yet, almost 1 in 5 people have been personally impacted by a suicide.



LEARN THE WARNING SIGNS:

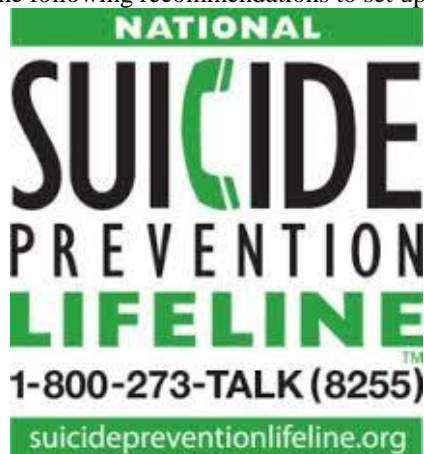
- SUICIDAL TALK**
Talking about wanting to die or kill themselves. 
- EXTREME SELF HATRED**
Feeling very critical toward themselves. 
- UNBEARABLE PAIN**
Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain. 
- FEELING OF BEING A BURDEN**
Talking about being a burden to others. 
- FEELING OF NOT BELONGING**
Feeling like they don't belong anywhere.
- DISRUPTED SLEEP**
Sleeping either too much or too little. 
- ALCOHOL & DRUG USE**
Increasing use of alcohol or drugs. 
- LOSS OF INTEREST IN ACTIVITIES**
Losing interest in the activities they once enjoyed.
- SUDDEN MOOD CHANGE**
Changing moods rapidly. Especially watch out for a sudden positive mood change. 
- ISOLATION**
Isolating themselves from family & friends. 

 **IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS EXHIBITING SOME OF THESE SIGNS, PLEASE CALL 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

www.PsychAlive.org

Suicide Prevention:

The view that suicide cannot be prevented is commonly held but this is not true. Suicide prevention starts with recognising the warning signs and taking them seriously. When we recognise that someone is having suicidal thoughts and we reach out to them we are instantly planting a seed of hope that they are not invisible, they are not alone. We should do everything in our power to give hope, help or motivation to survive. If needed call a crisis line for advice. Encourage the person to see a mental health professional meanwhile remove potential means of suicide such as ; pills, knives, razors or firearms and most importantly don't leave the person alone .Stay in touch .Your support is vital to ensure that your loved one remains on the recovery path because Suicide is often a permanent solution to a temporary problem. The person in distress can take help of National suicide prevention helpline. The lifeline provides 24/7 free and confidential support. Institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) have developed common guidelines and the following recommendations to set up suicide prevention strategies



Conclusion:

When people experience adversity - such as life-changing illness or loss - research shows their relationship with the world changes. Often, adversity may help us experience a new appreciation of life, improve our relationships with others, and help us gain personal strength. In other words, what doesn't kill us makes us stronger. Though stress is an understandable response during a time like this, choosing how you respond to it is important. The "tend and befriend" response will help us consider others. In the midst of a global crisis, this adaptive stress response may not only reduce incidents of anger, prejudice and violence, but also foster collective humanity and post-pandemic growth. Suicide is not a choice. Suicide is a health issue. It can result if a mental illness like major depression or bipolar disorder goes untreated, in the same way that a patient can die from pneumonia if they go untreated .Suicide is a tragic culmination of the interaction of a wide array of factors including biological, socio cultural, environmental, and psychological causes which means that Suicide is a multifaceted problem and therefore suicide prevention programmes should also be multidimensional. There is an urgent need to develop a national plan for suicide prevention in India and Collaboration, coordination, cooperation and commitment are needed to develop and implement these plans, which is cost-effective, appropriate and relevant to the needs of the community. When things are tough you must be tougher. Suicide is not the solution for pains, it does not take away the pains, it gives to someone else. Together we can erase the stigma and spread the hopeful news that the mental illnesses that lead to suicide are treatable and that suicide is preventable.

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