



Suicides in 2023:

Translating data into action

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) of India released its Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI) report for 2023 at the end of September 2025. The report provides the country's only official source of suicide data, compiled from State Crime Records Bureaus. However, persistent delays in the publication of this data hinder timely analysis and weaken policy response to one of India's most persistent public health challenges: suicide prevention.¹

Suicide remains a public health crisis shaped not only by mental health concerns but also by socio-economic and structural factors such as poverty, debt, unemployment, and a lack of safety nets.

In 2023, a total of 171,418 suicides were reported in India, marking a marginal increase of 0.29% from 170,924 suicides in 2022.

The suicide rate—defined as deaths by suicide per 100,000 population—declined slightly from an all-time high of 12.4 in 2022 to 12.3 in 2023.

This translates to an average of 470 deaths by suicide every day, or nearly 20 every hour. India accounts for the highest suicides in the world², a stark reminder of the magnitude of the crisis persisting despite the release of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy in 2022, which aims to reduce the burden of suicides by 10% by 2030.

DEATHS BY SUICIDE IN INDIA IN 2022 vs 2023



2022

Hourly suicides:
20.5

Rate per lakh
population: 12.4

2023

Hourly suicides:
20.6

Rate per lakh
population: 12.3

Suicide rates across India continue to vary widely – from 0.7 per 100,000 in Bihar to 49.6 per 100,000 in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Nearly half of all suicides in India in 2023 were attributed to just two broad causes—family issues and illness (both physical and mental)—a trend consistent with previous years.

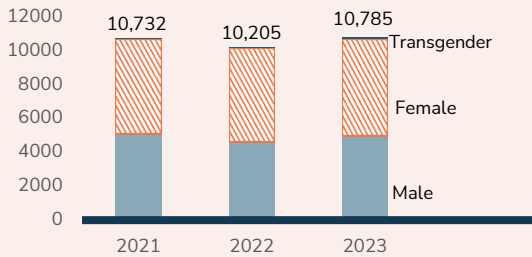
Suicides among children and young people

The 2023 NCRB data paints a deeply concerning picture of India's young population.

10,785 children under the age of 18 were reported to have died by suicide in 2023, accounting for 6.3% of total suicides. The reasons are attributed to various factors such as illness, failure in examination, family problems, etc. The preceding data (2022) shows that over 500 additional suicides were recorded in 2023. Those between 18–30 years and 30–45 years together constituted nearly two-thirds (66%) of all suicides in India.

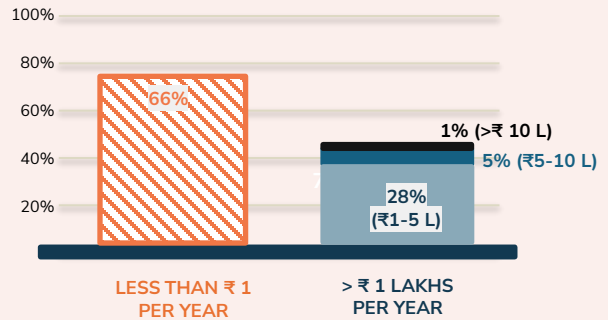


INCREASE IN SUICIDES AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Suicide continues to be the leading cause of death among young people aged 15–29 years in India, reflecting the mounting pressures of academic stress, social isolation, and economic insecurity³. The rise in child suicides points to an emerging crisis that requires urgent attention within families, schools, and communities.

SUICIDES BY INCOME LEVEL



OCCUPATIONAL VULNERABILITIES



65%

increase in suicides among students in last decade⁴



28% of deaths by suicide were among daily wage workers, increasing by 4% from 2022.

24,048 of suicides took place among “housewives”, marginally decreasing by 1% from 2022.



10% of suicides were among salaried persons with over two-thirds from the private sector

Suicides among farmers continue to be a huge concern with **10,786** reported deaths



14,234 unemployed individuals died by suicide, against 15,783 in 2022

Income levels and suicides

Economic vulnerability remains a central determinant of suicides in India. Individuals earning ₹1 lakh or less annually constituted 66% of all deaths by suicide in 2023, an increase from 64% in 2022. India’s poorest bear a disproportionate burden of suicide, highlighting the urgent need for robust social protection measures, income support, and accessible mental health care. Individuals earning between ₹1 lakh and ₹5 lakh accounted for 28% of suicides, while those earning above ₹5 lakh annually represented around 6%. The gradient reflects a consistent pattern of suicide being concentrated in low-income households facing economic strain, indebtedness, and limited to no access to psychosocial support tools.



Recommendations

The 2023 NCRB data once again shows India's deeply entrenched social and economic inequalities. This necessitates an integrated policy response from the central, state, and local governments

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Data limitations: NCRB is the only official source available for suicide data in India. The framework is oversimplified ignoring multiple complex factors leading to death by suicide. Severe delays in the report's release slows down policy action and research for prevention of suicides.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Establish a national registry for deaths by suicides that integrates data from police, ambulances, national death registry, health, and community sources⁵. ii. Prioritise timely data reporting through health information systems to avoid the lag associated with irregular releases. iii. Improve the classification framework in the ADSI report to reflect multi-causal factors rather than a single attributed cause. Provide appropriate training of officials responsible for data collection to ensure consistency across union territory and state records. iv. Ensure public access to raw data for independent research and analysis by multiple stakeholders.
<p>Increase in child suicides: Persistent increase in suicide levels among children and youth, particularly children below the age of 18 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Expand peer support programs and life skills education in educational institutes, allowing early detection of suicidal ideation and timely interventions by mental health professionals. ii. Provide flexibility in rigid academic requirements to qualify exams and provide reasonable accommodations to students in need. For example, Tamil Nadu introduced special supplementary examinations for school students. This provision of a second chance to candidates who failed an exam led to a reduction in exam failure suicides by 70% in the state⁶. iii. The Ministry of Education should institute a strong monitoring and evaluation and governance mechanism to hold authorities accountable and ensure multi-level implementation of guidelines and strategies.



ISSUE	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Disproportionate burden of suicide amongst India's poorest classes highlighting financial stress as a major cause of suicide.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Strengthen financial protection, insurance, and livelihood generation programs across states targeted to people living with poverty and income insecurity. ii. State governments implementing cash-based programs have the opportunity to examine their impacts on suicide rates and their potential as a suicide prevention intervention. Similar programs in Brazil and Indonesia led to a reduction in suicides among economically vulnerable groups⁷.
<p>Ineffective implementation of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS).</p> <p>Released in 2022, the NSPS has largely remained on paper. Lack of governance structures at state and central levels, poor intersectoral coordination, inadequate funding and absence of political will have hindered progress to reduce and prevent suicides.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Earmark multi-year funding in union and state budgets for suicide prevention activities in the NSPS. ii. Establish a central coordinating body to synchronise activities across different departments with designated PoCs from relevant ministries and departments.

References

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