



**BACKGROUNDERS**  
Press Information Bureau  
Government of India

# World Suicide Prevention Day

## *Hope Beyond Despair: Preventing Suicide Together*

September 10, 2025

### Key Takeaways

- **World Suicide Prevention Day (10th September):** Observed globally to raise awareness, foster compassion, and promote collective action in preventing suicides.
- **India's first National Suicide Prevention Strategy (2022):** Aims to reduce suicide mortality by **10% by 2030** through multi-sectoral action.
- **National initiatives:** Programs like **Tele-MANAS (Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States)**, **DMHP (District Mental Health Programme)**, **RKSK (Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram)**, and **Manodarpan** strengthen helplines, community outreach, and school-based support.

### What is World Suicide Prevention Day?



World Suicide Prevention Day is observed since **2003** by the **International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP)**, with the **World Health Organization (WHO)** as co-sponsor. The day mobilises governments, organisations and the public around one message: **Suicide is preventable**.<sup>1</sup> The triennial theme for World Suicide Prevention Day (2024–2026) is “**Changing the Narrative on Suicide**”. This theme calls on us all to challenge harmful myths, reduce stigma, and foster open,

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iasp.info/wspd/about/?utm>

compassionate conversations around suicide.<sup>2</sup>

This day holds significance as every year, over **727,000 people die by suicide globally** (2021 figures), and for each death, an estimated 20 suicide attempts are made.<sup>3</sup> In 2021, suicide was the third leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds globally underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive intervention strategies<sup>4</sup>.

**Do you know someone who may be considering suicide?**

It's not uncommon to think about taking your own life. If you're worried about someone, read on...

**What you should know**

- It's OK to talk about suicide.
- Asking someone if they are thinking about suicide does not make them act on their feelings. In fact, it often reduces anxiety and helps people feel understood.

**Warning signs**

- Severe mood changes.
- Social withdrawal.
- Expressing thoughts, feelings or plans about ending their life.
- Saying things like "No-one will miss me when I'm gone." or "I've got no reason to live."
- Looking for ways to kill themselves.
- Saying goodbye to close family members and friends.
- Giving away valued possessions.

**Who is at risk?**

- People who have tried to take their own life before.
- People in acute emotional distress or with depression.
- Someone who's socially isolated.
- Someone with alcohol or drug problems.
- People living with chronic pain or illness.
- People who have experienced violence, abuse or other trauma.
- People from groups of society that are marginalized or discriminated against.

**What you can do**

- Find an appropriate time and a quiet place to talk with the person you are worried about. Let them know that you are there to listen.
- Encourage them to seek help from a health worker, such as a doctor or mental health professional, or a counsellor or social worker. And offer to accompany them to an appointment.
- If you think someone is in immediate danger, don't leave them alone. Contact the emergency services, a crisis line, a health worker or a family member.
- If the person you're worried about lives with you, make sure they don't have access to means of self-harm at home.
- Check in regularly to see how they're doing.

**REMEMBER:** If you know someone who may be considering suicide, talk to them about it. Listen with an open mind and offer your support.

World Health Organization

## Suicide in India: Magnitude, Trends, and Key Demographics

India accounts for a **third of global female suicides annually and nearly a fourth of male suicides**. On an average, more than 100,000 lives are lost to suicide in India each year. The underlining factors include:

- **Overall Prevalence:** In India, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) statistics showed a consistent, concerning rise in suicide rates from 9.9 per lakh population in 2017 to 12.4 per lakh population in 2022<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-suicide-prevention-day/2025#:~:text=The%20triennial%20theme%20for%20World,open%2C%20compassionate%20conversations%20about%20suicide>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.who.int/health-topics/suicide#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/suicide#tab=tab_1)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide>

<sup>5</sup> <https://ncrb.gov.in/uploads/2022/July/11/custom/adsi/chapter-2-suicides-2017.pdf>

- **Geographic Variations:** The incidence rates of suicide vary across states, ranging from 0.6 per 100,000 population in Bihar to 43.1 per 100,000 population in Sikkim. The southern cities of Vijayawada (42.6 per 100,000 population) and Kollam (42.5 per 100,000 population) reported the highest rates in 2022.<sup>6</sup>

## Suicides in India: Interwoven Factors



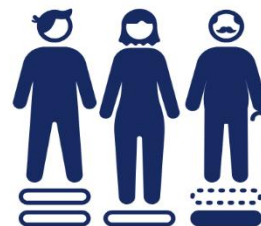
### Gender distribution

- Men: 72.5% of all suicides.
- Women: 27.4% of all suicides.
- Men commit almost three times more suicides than women



### Age Demographic

- The 18–30 years age group accounts for the highest share (34.5%) of suicides.
- The 30–45 years group is next with 31.7%.
- Together, 18–45 years contribute ~66% of total suicides in India



### Major reasons for suicide (overall)

- Family Problems – 31.7%
- Illness – 18.4%
- Drug Abuse/Alcohol Addiction – 6.9%
- Marriage Related Issues – 4.8%
- Love Affairs – 4.6%
- Bankruptcy/Indebtedness – 3.3%
- Unemployment – 2.6%



<sup>6</sup> <https://ncrb.gov.in/uploads/nationalcrimerecordsbureau/custom/adsyearwise2022/170161093707Chapter-2Suicides.pdf>

# NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY

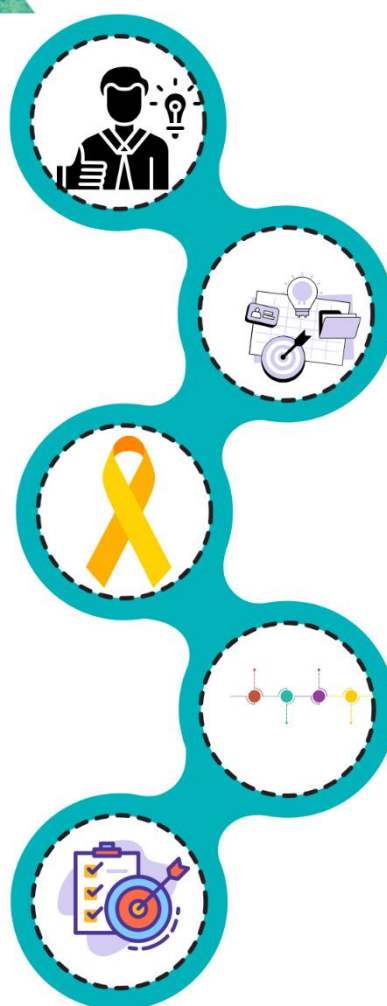


## Why It's a Game-Changer

- First-ever national strategy dedicated to suicide prevention in India.
- Multi-sectoral approach – health + education + social justice + media + communities.
- Action-oriented, time-bound goals, clear accountability.

## Priority Actions

- Restricting access to common methods of suicide.
- Community awareness via Nasha Mukt Bharat, Ayushman Bharat HWCs, and Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram.
- Strengthening outreach via helplines, school health ambassadors,
- Awareness campaigns under national programs on prevention of suicide.



## The strategy follows the REDS pathway

- R – Reinforce leadership & partnerships
- E – Enhance health services
- D – Develop community resilience & fight stigma
- S – Strengthen surveillance & research

## Timeline

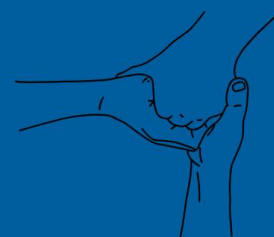
- Short-term goals (helplines, surveillance),
- Mid-term goals (district-level services, school outreach),
- Long-term goals (curriculum integration, measurable reduction in suicide rates).

**If you are in distress, you are not alone. Call Tele-MANAS 14416 / 1800-89-14416 for 24x7 support.**





# ONGOING NATIONAL INITIATIVES ON PREVENTING SUICIDES IN INDIA



01

## NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH POLICY (2014)



**Objective:** To provide a framework for mental health care and suicide prevention.

**Key Interventions:**

- Create awareness and de-stigmatize mental health issues.
- Address discrimination related to mental disorders.
- Tackle substance abuse and dependence.
- Establish crisis intervention centers and helplines.
- Develop guidelines for responsible media reporting of suicides.
- Restrict access to means of suicide.

04

## RASHTRIYA BAL SWASTHYA KARYAKRAM (RBSK) AND RASHTRIYA KISHOR SWASTHYA KARYAKRAM (RKS)



**Objective:**

- Promote health and well-being among children and adolescents.

**Key Focus:**

- Mental health promotion, Nutrition support.
- Addressing substance misuse.
- Shift from clinic-based care to promotive and preventive services in schools, families, and communities.

### SCHOOL HEALTH AMBASSADOR INITIATIVE

**Objective:** Promotion of health and well-being among school-going children.

**Implementation:** Two teachers per government school are trained as "Health and Wellness Ambassadors" to foster preventive and promotive health education, including mental well-being.

02

## MENTAL HEALTHCARE ACT (2017)



**Objective:**

- Provide a legal framework and ensure rights of persons with mental illness.

**Key Provisions:**

- Decriminalizes attempted suicide by presuming the individual is under severe stress.
- Mandates government support for care, treatment, and rehabilitation to reduce the risk of recurrence.

05

## NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION



**Objective:**

- Address student mental health and suicide prevention through inclusive, multi-stakeholder engagement.

**Key Features:**

- Interactive portal ([ntf.education.gov.in](http://ntf.education.gov.in)) for inputs from students, parents, faculty, professionals, institutions, NGOs, and citizens.
- Anonymous, bilingual surveys
- Open platform for sharing recommendations and lived experiences.
- On-ground consultations

03

## NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME (NMHP)



**Objective:**

- Ensure accessible and affordable mental healthcare for all, especially vulnerable groups.

**Key Components:**

- Integrates mental health into general healthcare.
- Provides community-based care via District Mental Health Programme (DMHP).
- Builds capacity through training of health professionals.
- Promotes community participation and self-help.
- Outreach activities to reduce suicides and stigma.

06

## AYUSHMAN BHARAT SCHEME



**Objective:**

To provide legal framework and ensure rights of persons with mental illness.

**Two Primary Components:**

1. **Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs):** Deliver comprehensive primary healthcare, including mental health services.
2. **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY):** A health assurance scheme that provides coverage for mental health disorders, including packages for treatment and therapies like Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) and Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS).

## Delhi Metro's 2024 Campaign Marked World Suicide Prevention Day

In 2024, the **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)** launched a special awareness campaign to **observe World Suicide Prevention Day**. The initiative aimed to foster greater understanding, compassion, and support for individuals dealing with mental health challenges.

As part of the campaign, DMRC **placed banners and digital displays at key Metro stations across Delhi, carrying messages of hope and resilience**. The awareness drive also extended to online platforms, with active engagement on social media to spark conversations around mental well-being. By reaching out to passengers through both visual and digital mediums, the 2024 campaign further strengthened DMRC's commitment to building **a supportive environment and spreading awareness on the importance of mental health**.<sup>7</sup>



#NeverGiveUp and #ChooseToLive

<sup>7</sup> <https://x.com/OfficialDMRC/status/1833475546333712439>

## Manodarpan Initiative

### **MANODARPAN - Psychosocial Support for Mental Health & Well Being of Students during the COVID Outbreak and beyond**

An initiative by Ministry of Education, Government of India  
as part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.



Manodarpan is a nationwide initiative by the Ministry of Education (formerly MHRD), launched under the broader Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, to provide psychosocial support for the mental health and emotional well-being of students, teachers, and families.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Key components of the initiative include:**

- **Web Portal:** Resources, FAQs, posters, videos, and tips for mental well-being.
- **24x7 Toll-Free Helpline (8448440632):** Tele-counseling by trained psychologists.
- **Counselor Directory:** National database of counselors across schools, colleges, and universities.
- **Publications:** *21st Century Skills Handbook* to build resilience and life skills.
- **Interactive Platforms:** Online tools, chatbots, and apps for psychological support.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://manodarpan.education.gov.in/>



### Help Prevent Suicide

#### What can the person do :

- **Seek immediate help:**
  - Call the 24x7 helpline **112** for confidential support.
  - Tele-MANAS (14416 / 1800-891-4416) : Free, 24x7 mental health assistance available in 20+ languages.
- **Reach out to mental health professionals:** You can access government-certified help via Ayushman Bharat HWCs, DMHP (District Mental Health Programme centers) via MoHFW, NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences), and eSanjeevani teleconsultation at <https://esanjeevani.mohfw.gov.in/>
- **Talk and share your feelings** with a family member, friend or teacher.
- **Avoid Isolation** and stay connected.

#### What can the family do :

- **Listen without judgment.**
- **Offer emotional support.**
- **Encourage professional help.**
- **Approach Institutions** like Ayushman Arogya Mandirs and access mental health care at primary care levels.
- **Ensure safety** by removing or restricting access to potential means of self-harm (pesticides, sharp objects, medication).
- **Be vigilant** and watch out for warning signs (withdrawal, hopelessness, talking about death).
- **Stay connected**

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, don't wait- Call **112** (India's National Emergency Helpline) or go to the nearest hospital right away.





## Way Forward

India is advancing suicide prevention through a comprehensive set of initiatives. **The National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS), launched in 2022, aims to cut suicide mortality by 10% by 2030.**<sup>10</sup> To expand access, the **Tele-MANAS helpline** now operates 53 cells across 36 states and UTs, handling over a million calls, while the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) covers 767 districts with community-level crisis care.<sup>11,12</sup> Mental health services have also been integrated into over 1.78 lakh **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs**, alongside **strengthened capacity in AIIMS**, Centres of Excellence, and government medical colleges.<sup>13</sup> For young people, **the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK)**, the School Health & Wellness Programme, and the **Manodarpan initiative** provide critical support in schools and communities. Together, these efforts reflect India's holistic, multi-tiered approach to mainstreaming mental health and reducing suicides.<sup>14</sup>

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