

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1631

ANSWERED ON 31.07.2023

Suicide Cases due to Caste Discrimination

**1631. SHRI KUMBAKUDI SUDHAKARAN:
SHRI KARTI P. CHIDAMBARAM:
SHRI BENNY BEHANAN:
SHRI VINCENT H. PALA:**

Will the Minister of **EDUCATION** be pleased to state:-

- (a) the number of suicides reported in institutes of higher education, including IITs, NITs, Central Universities and IISERs, since the year 2014;
- (b) the number of suicides that were attributed to caste discrimination;
- (c) the manner in which the Government plans to tackle the issue of growing instances of caste discrimination in educational institutions;
- (d) whether the Government has conducted any studies to analyse the root cause behind the rising number of suicides in educational institutes and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) whether the Government intends to make it mandatory for educational institutions to provide counselling services?

A N S W E R

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(DR. SUBHAS SARKAR)

(a) & (b): A total number of 137 suicides have been reported across 135 different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs), Central Universities, Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) and School of Planning and Architecture (SPAs) since the year 2014. Usually, suicide amongst students is driven by varied causes working in isolation and mostly, in conjunction, which includes academic stress, family reasons, personal reasons, mental health issues, financial distress, and inter personal frictions between students.

(c) to (e): The Government accords highest importance to each incident of suicide on campuses of educational Institutions and has initiated numerous initiatives in this regard. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provisions for counselling systems for handling stress and emotional adjustments in Institutions. It also provisions for opportunities for students' participation in sports, culture/arts clubs, eco-clubs, activity clubs, community service projects, etc. To check suicidal tendency among students, the Higher Education Institutions take proactive welfare measures to prevent harassment and mental wellbeing of students and have engaged Counsellors / Psychologists / Doctors for counseling of students from time to time. In addition, the Institute's own faculties / Wardens / Mentors are also actively involved in helping students to deal with a wide range of concerns be it academic, personal, emotional. These Institutes conducts regular counseling sessions through sensitization program for the students' community. Further, students, wardens and caretakers are sensitized to bring to notice the signs of depression in fellow students to the authorities so that timely clinical consultation may be provided.

University Grants Commission (UGC) (Redress of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2019 have been formulated to safe guard the interest of students. UGC has also notified UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of Ragging in Higher Educational Institutions, 2009 and issued circulars for strict compliance of the regulations. To address the issue of mental health and well-being during and after COVID, UGC had issued advisories to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on 05.04.2020. UGC has also circulated the National Suicide Prevention Strategy, 2021 formulated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The Ministry of Education has undertaken various steps such as peer assisted learning, introduction of technical education in regional languages for students in order to ease the academic stress. The Government of India initiative, named MANODARPAN, covers a wide range of activities to provide psychological support to students, teachers and families for mental and emotional well-being during the COVID outbreak and beyond. Besides this, students' specialised psychological counselling helplines, students' wellness centres, buddy-support system and various other measures have been implemented in IITs and other Institutions, for early detection of cases of psychological stress.

In order to proactively address any issues of SC / ST students, Institutes have set up mechanisms such as SC / ST students' cells, Equal Opportunity Cell, Student Grievance Cell, Student Grievance Committee, Student Social Club, Liaison officers, Liaison Committee etc. Further, UGC has issued instructions from time to time for promoting equity and fraternity amongst students.
