



## Attitude of Youth Towards Suicide

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**ABSTRACT**

The study assessed the attitudes of youth towards suicide. Method: The study adopted descriptive approach and used self – administered, standardized test to measure the attitude of youth. Out of 280 boys and girls, 100 youth from the age group of 17 -21 were selected through randomized sampling. The attitudes towards suicide questionnaire (ATTS) developed by Salander Renberg and Jacobsson (2003) was employed in the study. The data was analyzed using SPSS 20. Results: The finding revealed that, permissiveness towards suicide was found to be in two situations, 20 (40%) boys have expressed permissiveness towards suicide in a situation if they are suffering from severe or incurable disease, whereas girls 38(76%) agree to finish their life in a situation of loneliness. Suicide can be prevented was accepted by 49 (98%) girls whereas only 40 (90%) boys accepted this statement. In order to avoid suicide 30 (60%) girls and 25(50%) boys say that one should not talk about suicide. Conclusion: In general youth are not in favour of committing suicide but when it comes to Physical suffering and loneliness they have accepted suicide as a remedy. Since suicide is the third leading cause of death of youth in India, they must be equipped with life skills.

**KEYWORDS**

Youth, Attitude, Suicide, Permissiveness, Loneliness, prevention.

**Introduction**

Life is precious and it is God given gift to each individual and no one has the right to take away one's own life, but most of the people do not realize this fact and when they face difficulties, they are ready to finish their life. Suicide may be as old as man himself, but most of the times it was cursed and condemned by others. Suicide is among the top three causes of death among youth globally, according to World Health Organization every year nearly one million people die from suicide. The rates of suicide is increasing among youth and they are highly at risk in developed and developing countries (Rajive Radhakrishnan et al). A study done on attitude towards suicide among regional politicians in five European countries, namely Austria, Hungary, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden, indicates that the acceptance of suicide was higher among politicians (Paulius Skruibis et al). Young adults without personal experience, but with suicide education perceived suicide as acceptable and a normal behavior (Jaime Thornhill et al). Another study on Attitude towards Youth Suicide indicates that most of the Indian youth have negative attitude towards suicide and youth who commit suicide, than Austrian and Italian youth. (Erminia Colucci et al). Young people hold different attitudes towards suicide both positive and negative according to Daniel L. Segal on his research on "Attitudes towards suicide". Therefore we cannot say in general that youth have totally positive attitudes or totally negative attitudes towards suicide because it differs from place to place according to their circumstances.

**Results and findings**

**Table – 1 Age of the Respondent**

Item	Age of the Respondent			Total (n=100)
	16 – 18	19 - 20	21-22	
Female	27 (54%) 61.4%	22(44%) 40.7%	1(2%) 50%	50(100%) 50%
Male	17(34%) 38.6%	32(64%) 59.3%	1(2%) 50%	50(100%) 50%
Total	44(44%) 100%	54(54%) 100%	2(2%) 100%	100(100%) 100%

**Table – 1 shows that 27(54%) of young girls and 17(34%) of young boys fall under the age group of 16 -18 years, 22(44%) of young girls and 32(64%) of young boys belong to the age group of 19 – 20 years.**

**Table – 2 Permissiveness**

Item	I strongly agree	Agree	I cannot decide	I strongly disagree	disagree
I would consider the possibility of taking my own my life if I were to suffer from a severe, incurable disease.					
Female	5(10%) 35.7%	11(22%) 50%	7(14%) 43.8%	18(36%) 64.3%	9(18%) 45%
Male	9(18%) 64.3%	11(22%) 50%	9(18%) 56.2%	10(20%) 35.7%	11(22%) 55%
People should have the right to take their own lives					
Female	2(4%) 25%	6(12%) 42.9%	9(18%) 69.2%	10(20%) 37%	23(46%) 60.5%
Male	6(12%) 75%	8(16%) 57.1%	4(8%) 30.8%	17(34%) 63%	15(30%) 39.5%

The above table reveals that most of young boys (40%) are having positive attitude towards taking one's own life while they undergo incurable or severe disease than young girls. A few 18(36%) of female strongly disagree and 9(18%) of female agree in killing oneself because of incurable or severe disease. A study conducted by Urska Arnautovska et al on Attitude towards Suicide also tells that while the attitude of the boys is, towards permissiveness, whereas girls are towards rejection. Females have more positive and accepting attitude towards suicide (Jaime Thornhill et al).

People should have the right to take their own lives was strongly disagreed by 10(20%) and 23(46%) was disagreed by female and 17(34%) of male strongly disagreed and 15(30%) of male disagreed. Therefore this table also clearly depicts that respondents are not in favour of committing suicide in general.

**Table – 3 Loneliness**

Item	Loneliness could for me be a reason to take my life					Total (n=100)
	I strongly agree	Agree	I cannot decide	I strongly disagree	disagree	

Female	10(20%) 47.6%	28(56%) 63.6%	3(6%) 42.9%	5(10%) 55.6%	4(8%) 21.1%	50(100%) 50%
Male	11(22%) 52.4%	16(32%) 36.4%	4(8%) 57.1%	4(8%) 44.4%	15(30%) 78.9%	50(100%) 50%
Total	21(21%) 100%	44(44%) 100%	7(7%) 100%	9(9%) 100%	19(19%) 100%	100(100%) 100%

Table – 3 Shows that majority of girls agree that loneliness could be a reason to take away their life. A few young girls 10(20%) strongly agree and 28 (56%) of young girls agree to this statement whereas table 2 projects that male agree to commit suicide in a situation where they have severe or incurable disease. May be it is because; girls are more attached to their family and relationships whereas, men being masculine believe in their strength and they don't prefer to be alive in situation when they have to depend on others, say during severe sickness or incurable disease. People, who are lonely, are more vulnerable to suicidal behavior and family structure also plays an important role (Urska Arnautovska et al). Dysfunctional families, parental loss and lack of social integration are some of reasons for loneliness that lead to emotional distress which may lead to suicidal tendency (A. Herrera et al).

**Table – 4 Preventability**

Item	Suicide can be prevented					Total (n=100)
	I strongly agree	Agree	I cannot decide	I strongly disagree	disagree	
Female	36(72%) 51.4%	13(26%) 65.4%	-	-	1(2%) 20%	50(100%) 50%
Male	34(68%) 48.6%	7(14%) 35%	1(2%) 100%	4(8%) 100%	4(8%) 80%	50(100%) 50%
Total	70(70%) 100%	20(20%) 100%	1(1%) 100%	4(4%) 100%	5(5%) 100%	100(100%) 100%

The above table indicates that almost all the respondents agree that suicide can be prevented. A few 1(2%) female and 8(16%) male respondents disagreed that suicide cannot be prevented. Prevention strategies can be education of public about suicide, including risk factors, warning signs, treating any mental health disorders (Kelly Kadisak).

**Table – 5 Incomprehensibility**

Item	Suicide can never be justified					Total (n=100)
	I strongly agree	Agree	I cannot decide	I strongly disagree	disagree	
Female	12(24%) 38.7%	25(50%) 59.5%	0(0%) 0%	6(12%) 42.9%	7(14%) 70%	50(100%) 50%
Male	19(38%) 61.3%	17(34%) 40.5%	3(6%) 100%	8(16%) 57.1%	3(6%) 30%	50(100%) 50%
Total	31(31%) 100%	42(42%) 100%	3(3%) 100%	14(14%) 100%	19(19%) 100%	100(100%) 100%

Table – 5 depicts that 12(24%) of girls strongly agree, 25(50%) of girls agree and 19(38%) of boys strongly agree, 17(34%) of boys agree that suicide cannot be justified. Most of the youth in general agree that suicide is not a remedy for sufferings. Suicide seems to be the most incomprehensible to both the groups. A study on Attitudes towards suicide by Emma Sethina et al also reveals that the respondents disagree with the issue that suicide is one's own business, suicide is the only solution and people have the right to commit suicide.

**Table – 6 Avoidance of Taking**

Item	Suicide is a subject that one should not talk about					Total (n=100)
	I strongly agree	Agree	I cannot decide	I strongly disagree	disagree	
Female	12(24%) 44.4%	18(36%) 64.3%	13(26%) 72.2%	6(12%) 30%	1(2%) 14.3%	50(100%) 50%
Male	15(30%) 55.6%	10(20%) 35.7%	5(10%) 27.8%	14(28%) 70%	6(12%) 85.7%	50(100%) 50%
Total	27(27%) 100%	28(28%) 100%	18(18%) 100%	20(20%) 100%	7(7%) 100%	100(100%) 100%

Table – 6 projects that 12(24%) of female strongly agree, 18(36%) of female agree and 15(30%) of male strongly agree, 10(20%) of male agree that we should not talk about suicide. May be the respondents have a feeling that talking about suicide will trigger the thoughts of suicide, which may lead to the increase in death among young people. But an-

other study done by St. Angela's College, Sligo on Knowledge and Attitude of students to suicide the respondents (94% ) indicated that suicide is a subject that should be talked about openly and said that open communication helps to prevent the suicide attitudes. The study respondents do not want to talk about suicide openly but the truth is that the more we speak openly about suicide the more we can prevent.

**Table – 7 Unpredictability**

Item	People who make suicidal threats seldom complete suicide				
	I strongly agree	Agree	I cannot decide	I strongly disagree	disagree
Female	10(20%) 50%	17(34%) 39.5%	12(24%) 60%	8(16%) 61.5%	3(6%) 75%
Male	10(20%) 50%	26(52%) 60.5%	8(16%) 40%	5(10%) 38.5%	1(2%) 25%
Suicide happens without ( previous) warning					
Female	5(10%) 33.3%	26(52%) 70.3%	6(12%) 54.5%	10(20%) 35%	3(6%) 33.3%
Male	10(20%) 66.7%	11(22%) 29.7%	5(10%) 45.5%	18(36%) 64.3%	6(12%) 66.7%

People who make suicidal threats seldom complete suicide is strongly agreed by both female and male 10 (20%) and agreed by 17(34%) of female and 26(52%) male agreed this statement. The statement Suicide happen without (previous) warning is also strongly agreed 5(10%), 10(20%) of female and male respondents respectively and 26(52%), 11(22%) of female and male agreed respectively. This finding says that the respondents don't have sufficient knowledge toward suicide in general as suicide happens with warning signs like suicide note, talking about suicide, withdrawal from social contact, saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again etc. Young people hold different attitudes about suicide for example they say that people commit suicide because of lack of faith and suicidal behavior is normal in some situations (Daniel L. Segal et al).

**Conclusion**

In this study male and female have difference of opinion when it comes to permissiveness, loneliness, unpredictability and avoidance of Talking but in preventability and incomprehensibility they go together unanimously. The study clearly indicates that in general youth are not in favour of committing suicide but when it comes to Physical suffering and loneliness they have accepted suicide as a remedy. Since suicide is the third leading cause of death of youth in India, they must be equipped with life skills. Educational programs on suicide prevention have to be conducted for every male and female at different level.

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