

Influence of Demographic Variables on Suicidal Tendency among Arts and Science College Students

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Suicidal tendency is common among college students as a result of various factors like academic pressure, family problems, love failure, etc. It is presumed that there would be influence of demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, department, family type, family income and history of previous mental illness) on suicidal tendency among college students. **Aim:** The aim of this research study was to assess the influence of selected demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, department, family type, family income and history of previous mental illness) on suicide tendency among arts and science college students. **Materials and Methods:** The sample comprised of 84 respondents of arts and science students and Simple random sampling by lottery method was used. The following questionnaire was used to collect the data 1) Demographic variables: It includes respondents' age, gender, department, class, family income, type of family, residence area and history of mentally illness of the respondent. 2) Suicidal tendency scale. **Results:** 33.3% of the respondents were up to 18 years of age, 32.1% of the respondents were in the age group of 19 years, 20% of the respondents were in the age group of 20 years of age, 10.7% of the respondents were above 21 years of age, 2.4% of the respondents were in the age group of 22 years of age and 1.2% of the respondents were above 17 years of age. 56% of the respondents were males and 44% of the respondents were females. 50% of the respondents belong to sociology department and 50% of the respondents belong to psychology department. 72.2% of the respondents belong to nuclear family and 23.8% of the respondents belong to joint family. 53.3% of the respondents have monthly income above Rs. 5000-10000, 31% of the respondents have monthly income above Rs. below 5000 and 15.5% of the respondents have monthly income up to Rs. Above 10000. 97.6% of the respondents had no previous mental illness in the family and only 2.4 percent of the respondents had previous mental illness in the family. **Conclusion:** This research study found that there was a significant impact of age and family income with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.

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Suicidal tendency is common among college students as a result of various factors like academic pressure, family problems, love failure, etc. It is presumed that there would be influence of demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, department, family type, family income and history of previous mental illness) on suicidal tendency among college students. Literature review shows that there is dearth of research studies on the influence of above mentioned selected demographic variables on suicidal tendency among college students in both India and foreign countries. Hence, this research study would bring out the influence of above mentioned selected demographic variables on suicidal tendency among arts and science college students in Puducherry.

Suicidal Tendency

Suicidal tendency is impulsive thoughts relating to taking one's own life.

Conceptual Perspectives on Suicide

Suicide is defined as deliberate and impulsive act of ending one's own life. It is one of the contemporary topics of research in the area of clinical social work. Various types of suicide are:

Egoistic Suicide

This is the type of suicide that occurs where the degree of social integration is low, and there is a sense of meaninglessness among individuals (Lunagariya, 2013). The factors leading to egoistic suicide can be social currents such as depression and disillusionment (Lunagariya, 2013).

Altruistic suicide

This is the type of suicide that occurs when integration is too great, the collective consciousness too strong, and the "individual is forced into committing suicide (Lunagariya, 2013). Integration may not be the direct cause of suicide here, but the social currents that go along with this very high degree of integration can lead to this.

Anomic Suicide

This is a type of suicide related to too low a degree of regulation, or external constraint on people (Lunagariya, 2013). For example, suicides of family members may occur after the death of a husband or wife (Lunagariya, 2013)000.

Fatalistic Suicide

When regulation is too strong, Durkheim considers the possibility that "persons with futures pitilessly blocked and passions violently choked by oppressive discipline" may see no way out (Lunagariya, 2013). The individual sees no possible manner in which their lives can be improve, and when in a state of melancholy, may be subject to social

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currents of fatalistic suicide (Lunagariya, 2013). Suicide ranks as the tenth leading cause of death in the United States of America. Globally, as estimated 700,000 people take their own lives annually. In certain populations, such as adolescents and young, suicide constitutes 1 of the top 3 causes of death.

Conceptual Perspectives on Suicidal Tendency

Suicidal tendency is impulsive thoughts relating to taking one's own life. The following aspects are of importance in the current discussion concerning suicidal tendencies (as cited in Lunagariya, 2013) :

Suicidal ideas

May appear just as well in healthy people, however, acquire a pathological status when they occur in the context of illness, e.g., depression or physical illness.

Biological readiness to act (Impulsivity)

This refers to a neuro - biochemical and genetic disorder involving impulsiveness and behavior control, which manifests itself on the neuro-biochemical level mainly in a central serotonin disturbance. In certain circumstances, this biological readiness to act can also be activating by psychosocial or psycho-dynamical means, however also by biological, i.e., medicament us means. As an example, see the discussion on "suicide promotion" caused by anti-depressants.

Current psycho reactive triggering factors

Particular importance is attributing to the psychoanalytic and inside-psychological concept of suicidal tendency as the manifestation of a narcissistic crisis of a significant role model. Loss, insult, existential inevitability all plays an important role in this experience.

Despair, helplessness, hopelessness

Convictions of lacking prospects for the future and the impossibility of changing this outlook are central psychopathological phenomena that form the threshold between suicidal ideas and suicidal action (Beck, 1990).

Loss of or loss of effectiveness of protective factors

"Bonds", social control of aggression (societal norms on aggression control), religious, spiritual or family bonds, group cohesion, etc.

Statement of the Research Problem

Research on suicidal tendency is of contemporary importance and numerous research studies have been conducted in both India and foreign countries. It is presumed that there is influence of selected demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, department, family type, family income and history of previous mental illness) on suicide tendency among the respondents of the research study. Literature review pertaining to suicidal tendency construct reveals that there is dearth of

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research studies on the impact of above mentioned selected demographic variables on suicide tendency among the respondents of the research study in both foreign and especially in India. Hence, this research study would bring out the effect of above mentioned demographic variables on suicidal tendency among arts and science college students in Puducherry.

Significance of the Research Study

Significance of this research study is presented in detailed manner with respect to the following: Social work discipline There are less research studies in both foreign and India on the influence of selected demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, department, family type, family income and history of previous mental illness) on suicide tendency among arts and science college students in Puducherry. Hence, the above mentioned statement brings out the value - addition this research study would make to the existing body of knowledge in the discipline of Social Work.

College Students

This research study would bring out the influence of selected demographic variables on suicide tendency among arts and science college students in Puducherry. It would also provide suggestions to reduce suicidal tendency among college students.

College Management

This research study would help the college management to know about the influence of selected demographic variables on suicide tendency among arts and science college students in Puducherry. It would also provide suggestions to reduce suicidal tendency among college students.

Social Workers

This research study would help the social workers to know about influence of selected demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, education, designation, work experience and department) on suicide tendency among arts and science college students in Puducherry. It would also provide suggestions to highlight on the suggestions to reduce suicidal tendency among college students.

Variables of the Research Study

Dependent variable

The dependent variable of the research study is suicidal tendency.

Independent variables

Demographic variables have been considered as independent variables in this research study.

Demographic variables

Demographic variables pertaining to this research study are: age, gender, department, family type, family income and history of mental illness.

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Operational Definition

The variables used in this research study are operationally defined as under:

Suicidal Tendency

Suicidal tendency pertaining to this research study refers to suicidal thoughts by the respondents of this research study.

College Students

The respondents of this research study are arts and science college students in Puducherry.

Arts and Science Colleges

Arts and Science colleges are those colleges that offer under graduation, post graduation and research programmes in arts, science, commerce and management discipline. All arts and science colleges in India come under University Grants Commission, New Delhi.

Age

It refers to the completed age of the respondents pertaining to this research study as on most recent birthday. It is classified in this research study as 17 years, 18 years, 19 years, 20 years and 22 years.

Gender

It refers to gender of the respondents pertaining to the research study. It may be categorized as males and females.

Department

It refers to department of the respondents pertaining to this research study. It is classified as (a) Psychology and (b) Sociology.

Type of Family

Type of family: Type of family pertaining to respondents of this research study can be classified as nuclear family and joint family.

Nuclear family (2014) is also called elementary family. It refers to a group of people who are united by ties of partnership and parenthood and consisting of a pair of adults and their socially recognized children.

Typically, but not always, the adults in a nuclear family are married. Children in a nuclear family may be the couple's biological or adopted offspring. Nuclear family in this research study refers to small family which consists of the respondents and their family.

Joint family (2014) is a family in which members of a unilineal descent group (a group in which descent through either the female or the male line is emphasized) live together with their spouses

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and offspring in one home and under the authority of one of the family members. It is an extension of the nuclear family (parents and dependent children) and it typically grows when children of one sex do not leave their parents' home at marriage but bring their spouses to live with them. Joint family in this research study refers to large family where respondents live with their grandparents.

Family income per month:

It refers to family income per month earned by the respondents of this research study and their family members.

History of mental illness:

It refers to prevalence of mental illness in the respondents and their family members.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Aim:

The aim of this research study was to assess the influence of selected demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, department, family type, family income and history of previous mental illness) on suicide tendency among arts and science college students in Puducherry.

Objectives of the Research Study

Various objectives of this research study were as follows:

- (a) To find out the relationship between selected demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, department, family type, family income and history of previous mental illness) with respect to suicide tendency among the respondents of the research study.
- (b) To assess the influence of selected demographic variables (i.e. age, gender, department, family type, family income and history of previous mental illness) with respect to suicide tendency among the respondents of the research study.

The sample comprising of 84 respondents of arts and science students and Simple random sampling by lottery method is used in this research study to select samples of the research study. The researcher used following questionnaire to collect the data from the respondents. Demographic variables: It includes respondents' age, gender, department, class, family income, type of family, residence area and history of mentally illness of the respondent. Suicidal tendency scale: This scale was made by Dr. D. J. Bhatt and Dr.R.G.Meghnathi (as cited in Phd thesis of Lunagariya, 2013). This scale consists of 40 items. It consists of Likert type scale options ranging from "Fully agree" to "Fully disagree".

RESULTS

Table-1: Demographic variables of the respondents pertaining to the research study

| Sl. No. | Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Age of the respondents | | |
| | 17 years | 1 | 1.2 |
| | 18 years | 28 | 33.3 |
| | 19years | 27 | 32.1 |
| | 20 years | 17 | 20.2 |
| | 21 years | 9 | 10.7 |
| 2 | Gender | | |
| | Male | 47 | 56 |
| | Female | 37 | 44 |
| 3 | Department | | |
| | Sociology | 42 | 50 |
| | Psychology | 42 | 50 |
| 4 | Family type | | |
| | Joint family | 64 | 72.2 |
| | Nuclear family | 20 | 23.8 |
| 5 | Fathers income per month | 26 | 31 |
| | Below 5000 | | |
| | 5000-10000 | 45 | 53.6 |
| | Above 10000 | 13 | 15.5 |
| 6 | Previous mental illness | 2 | 97.2 |
| | Yes | | |
| | No | 82 | 2.4 |

Table 1 presents the demographic details pertaining to respondents of the research study. In terms of age of the respondent half (33.3%) of the respondents were in the age group of 18 years, (33.1%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 19 years and (20%) of the respondents were in the age groups of 20 years, (10.7%) of the respondents were in the age groups of 21 years, (2.4%) of the respondents were in the age groups of 22 years and (1.2%) of the respondents were in the age groups of 17 years. Majority (59%) of the respondents were in the Male students and (44%) of the respondents were in the Female students. In terms of department of the respondent (50%) of the respondents were in the studying of sociology department and (50%) of the respondents were in the studying of psychology department. It is evident from the above table that more than two - third (53.6%) of the respondents were having family income per month of Rs 5000 - 10000. The above table also shows that 31% of the respondents have family

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income per month up to Rs Below 5000 and the above table also shows that 15.5% of the respondents have family income per month up to Rs Above 10000. Majority (72.2%) of the respondents' type of family was nuclear family and remaining (23.8%) of the respondents' type of family was joint family. Majority (97.6%) of the respondents' they have no mental illness in family and remaining (2.4%) of the respondents' they have mental illness in family members.

Table-2: Results of correlation with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study

| S.NO | Variable | Suicidal tendency |
|------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Age | $r = -0.278$ (p value = 0.010) |
| 2 | Gender | $r = 0.188$ (p value = 0.086) |
| 3 | Department | $r = 0.049$ (p value = 0.655) |
| 4 | Family type | $r = -0.047$ (p value = 0.669) |
| 5 | Family income | $r = 0.260$ (p value = 0.017) |
| 6 | Previous mental illness | $r = -0.021$ (p value = 0.850) |

The above table 2 shows results of relationship between selected independent variables (i.e. age, gender, class, family type, department, family income and previous mental illness) with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study. It is evident from the above table that there is relationship between age with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = -0.278$; p value = $0.010 < 0.050$) as p value (0.010) is lesser than 5% level of significance. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H1(a)) "There is significant relationship between age with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study." Is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that significant relationship exists between age with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.

The above table shows that there was no relationship between gender with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = 0.188$; p value = $0.086 < 0.100$) as p value (0.086) is lesser than 10% level of significance. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H1(b)) "There is significant relationship between gender with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study." Is accepted at 10% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that no significant relationship exists between gender with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.

The above table shows that there was no relationship between department with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = 0.049$; p value = $0.655 > 0.100$) as p

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value (0.655) is greater than 10% level of significance. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis H1(d)) “There is significant relationship between department with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study.” is rejected at 10% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that no significant relationship exists between department with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.

It is evident from the above table that there was no relationship between family type with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = -0.047$; $p \text{ value} = 0.669 > 0.100$) as $p \text{ value}$ (0.669) is greater than 10% level of significance. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H1(e)) “There is significant relationship between family type with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study.” is rejected at 10% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that no significant relationship exists between family type with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.

The above table shows that there was no relationship between family income with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = 0.260$; $p \text{ value} = -0.017 < 0.050$) as $p \text{ value}$ (0.017) is lesser than 5% level of significance. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H1(f)) “There is significant relationship between family income with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study.” is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that significant relationship exists between family incomes with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.

It is evident from the above table that there was no relationship between previous mental illness with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = -0.021$; $p \text{ value} = 0.850 > 0.100$) as $p \text{ value}$ (0.850) is greater than 10% level of significance. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H1(e)) “There is significant relationship between previous mental illness with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study.” is rejected at 10% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that no significant relationship exists between previous mental illness with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.

Table-3: Results of multiple regression with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study.

| Model | B | S.E | β | t-value |
|---------------|----------|------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Constant | 152.451 | 34.766 | | 4.385** |
| Age | -4.069 | 1.751 | -244 | -2324** |
| Family income | 6.152 | 2.901 | 223 | 2.120** |

** Significant at 0.01 level of significance.

B- Unstandardized beta.

S.E- Standard error. β - Standardized beta.

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It is shown from the table 3 that age ($\beta = -0.244$, $p < 0.010$) has negative influence on suicidal tendency of the respondents of the study. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis H2 (a) “there is significant influence of age on suicidal tendency of the respondents of the research study” has been accepted.

It is shown from the table 3 that family income ($\beta = 0.223$, $p < 0.010$) has negative influence on suicidal tendency of the respondents of the study. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis H2 (e) “there is significant influence of family income on suicidal tendency of the respondents of the research study” has been accepted.

The results of regression analysis reveal that the entire alternative hypothesis is rejected. Hence, the findings pertaining to regression analysis reflects that:

- There was significant influence of age on suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study.
- There was significant influence of family income on suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study.
- There was no significant influence of gender on suicidal tendency among the respondents. There was no significant influence of department on suicidal tendency among the respondents.
- There was no significant influence of family type on suicidal tendency among the respondents.
- There was no significant influence of history of previous mental illness on suicidal tendency among the respondents.

Findings pertaining to Demographic Variables pertaining to the Respondents of the Research Study

- 33.3% of the respondents are upto 18 years of age, 32.1% of the respondents are in the age group of 19 years, 20% of the respondents were in the age group of 20 years of age, 10.7% of the respondents were above 21 years of age, 2.4% of the respondents were in the age group of 22 years of age and 1.2% of the respondents were above 17 years of age
- 56% of the respondents were males and 44 percent of the respondents were females.
- 50% of the respondents belong to sociology department and 50% of the respondents belong to psychology department.
- 72.2 % of the respondents belong to nuclear family and 23.8% of the respondents belong to joint family.
- 53.3% of the respondents have monthly income above Rs. 5000-10000, 31% of the respondents have monthly income above Rs. below 5000 and 15.5% of the respondents have monthly income up to Rs. Above 10000.
- 97.6% of the respondents had no previous mental illness in the family and only 2.4% of the respondents had previous mental illness in the family.

Findings pertaining to Correlation

- There was a significant relationship between age with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = -0.278$; $p \text{ value} = 0.010 < 0.050$)
- There was no relationship between gender with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = 0.188$; $p \text{ value} = 0.086 < 0.100$).
- There was no relationship between department with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = 0.049$; $p \text{ value} = 0.655 > 0.100$).
- No relationship was found between types of family with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = -0.047$; $p \text{ value} = 0.669 > 0.100$)
- There was relationship between family income with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = 0.260$; $p \text{ value} = 0.017 < 0.050$).
- There was no relationship between previous mental illness with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents of the research study ($r = -0.021$; $p \text{ value} = 0.850 > 0.100$).

Findings pertaining to Multiple Regression Analysis

- The result found that there was a significant influence of age with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.
- The result also found that there was a significant influence of family income with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.
- There was no significant influence found in terms of gender with respect to suicidal tendency, department with respect to suicidal tendency, family type with respect to suicidal tendency and previous mental illness with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.

SUGGESTIONS

Implications pertaining to the Research Study: This research study shows that there is significant influence of age and family income per month with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.

However, implication pertaining to reducing suicidal tendency is given

1. Colleges should have counseling centers to address the mental health problems and other problems of colleges students that may reduce suicidal ideation among them.
2. Social worker and psychologist can conduct workshop or seminar on reducing suicide among college student.
3. Social worker can do individual counseling and group therapy for benefit of college students which to reduce rate of suicide among them.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings it may be concluded that the influence of demographic variables on suicidal tendency among arts and science, it was found that there was a significant impact of age and family income with respect to suicidal tendency among the respondents.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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