

The Alarming Rise of Suicide Cases in India

According to recent data submitted by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) of India, there is a tragic rise in suicide cases in the country. The data recorded by the NCRB is based on the FIRs (First Information Report) which also means that the actual number of suicides could be underreported. This is highly likely for a variety of reasons such as – lack of proper data collection mostly in rural areas, social stigma, legal issues, etc.

Nevertheless, with the existing data we try to analyse the underlying patterns of one of the most concerning public health issues in India.

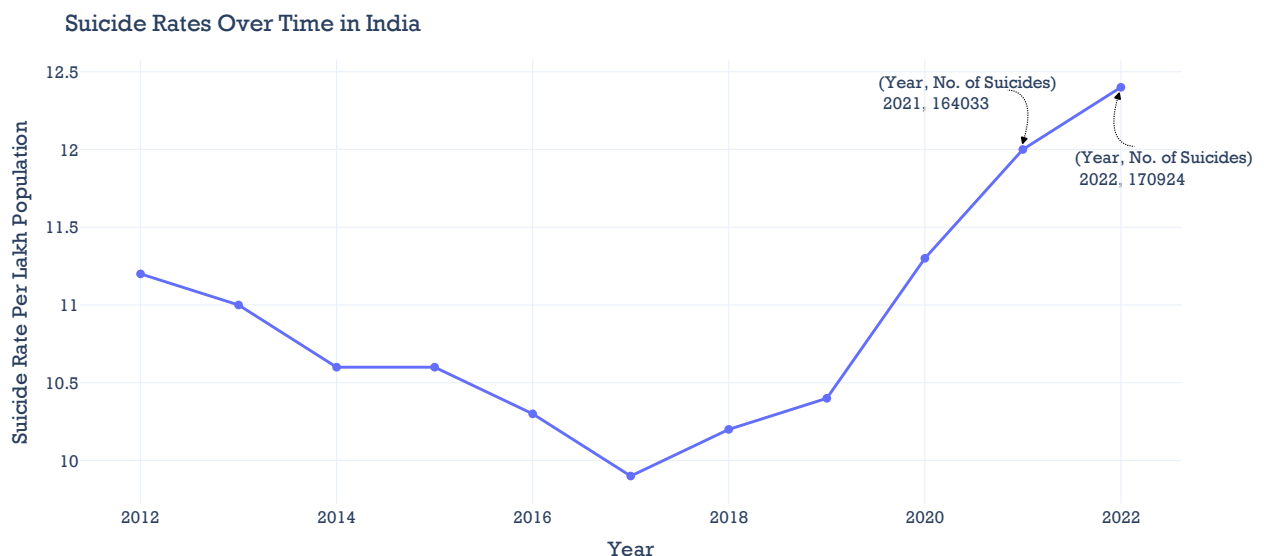


Fig.1: The suicide rates in India for the last decade.

From Fig.1, it can be seen that since 2018 there has been an increase in suicide rates in the country. In 2022, the suicide rate was 12.4 per Lakh population (100000) an increase from 12 in 2021.

On investigating the data for 2022 (Fig.2), major reasons for suicide cases in India can be attributed to Family problems, Illness which includes AIDS, Cancer, Mental Illness etc, Drug Abuse, Love affairs, Unemployment, Marriage related issues etc.

Fig.2: The major causes for Suicide in India grouped by Gender 2022

One other thing that can be noticed in the above figure is the significant proportion of Male victims across various causes. This can be mostly because of the societal pressure on men as primary breadwinners for the family, low reporting rates of mental health because of the social stigma that such men are perceived as weak etc.

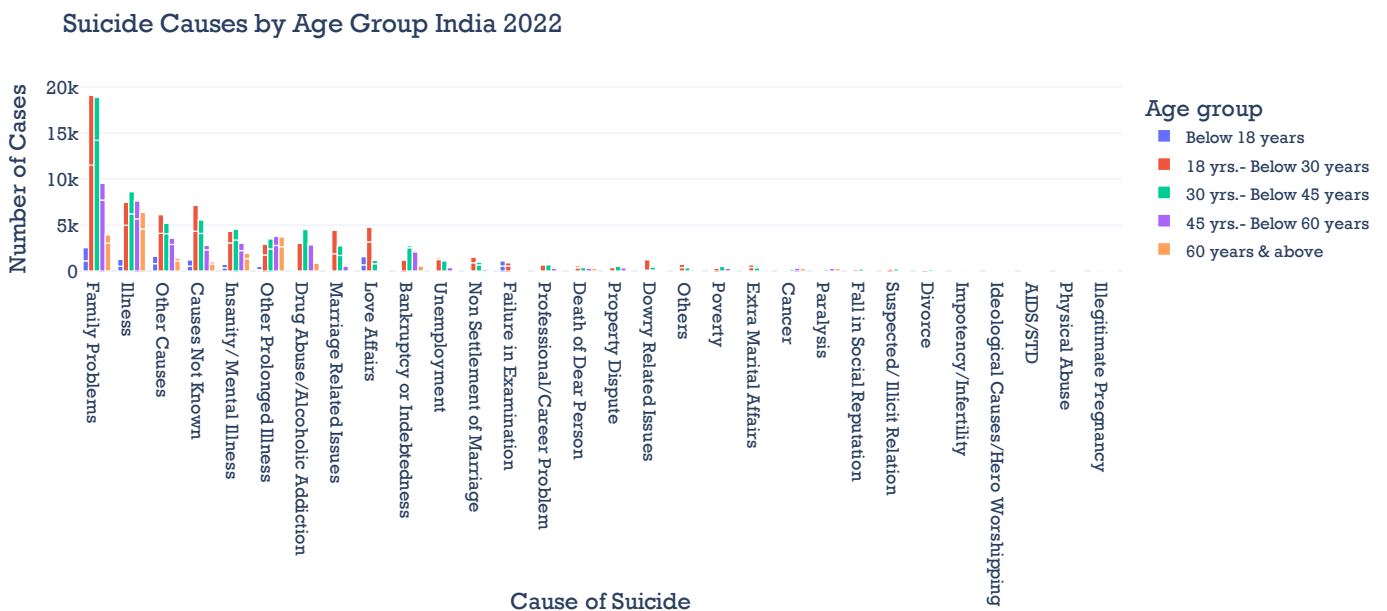


Fig.3: The major causes for Suicide in India by Age Group 2022

In Fig.3, The maximum number of individuals who committed Suicide fall into the age groups -18 yrs to Below 30yrs & 30yrs to Below 45 yrs, described using the red and green lines. This was expected as these

are life-shaping years for an individual which may include phases such as university exam preparation, job search, financial responsibilities, marriage etc.

Now, let's look at how different states of the country fare in the situation.

Heat Map of Suicide Rates Across Indian States 2022 (Per Lakh Population)

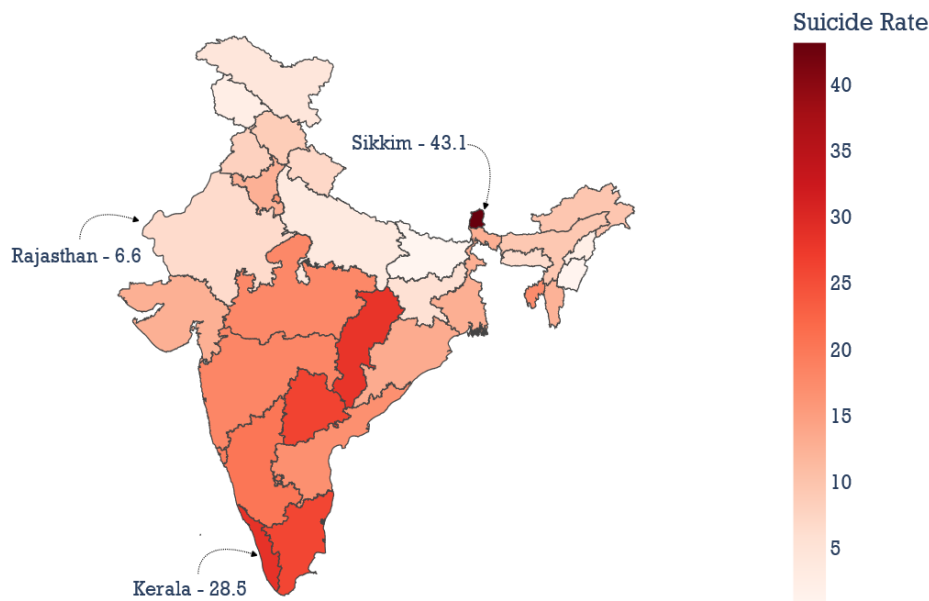


Fig.4: Heat Map of Suicide Rates Across India 2022

Sikkim has the highest suicide rate in the country with around 43 per 100000 population (Fig.4) . It is then followed by Kerala which has a rate of around 28.5. Though alarming, one could also say that these states have a better data collection system based on the drawbacks of the data that we discussed in the beginning.

Since Sikkim is a small state(less population), let's compare the cities in the state of Kerala with the rest of the major cities of the country.

Suicide Rates in Indian Cities 2022

Comparing the suicide rates of different cities/towns of Kerala Vs few major cities of the country.

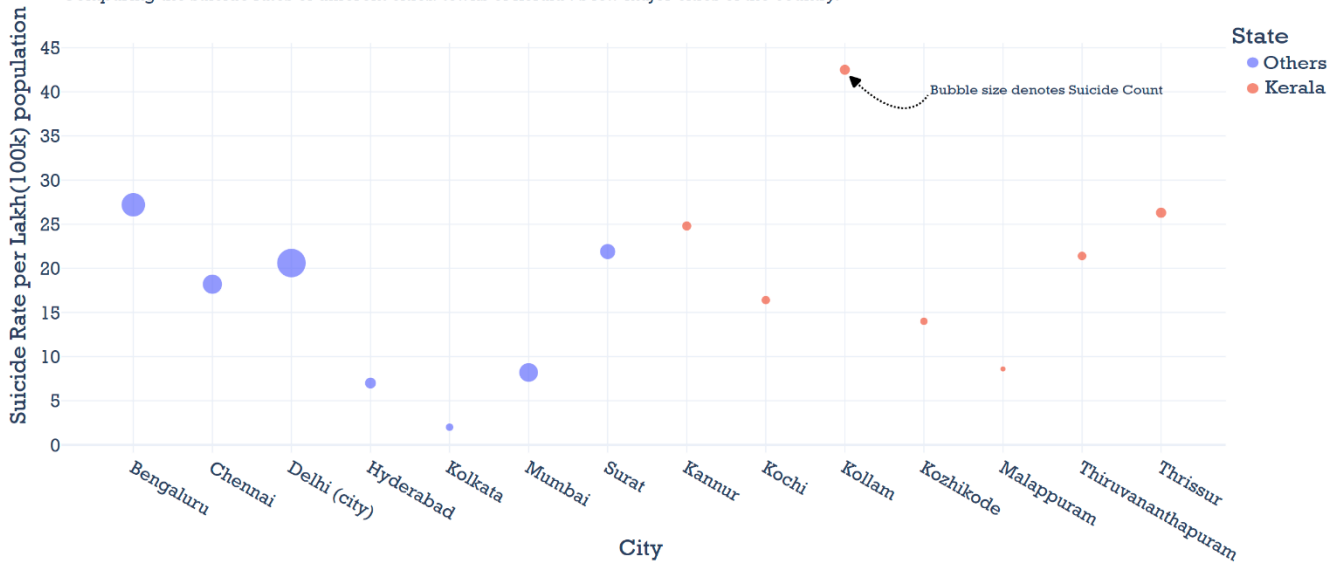


Fig.5: Suicide Rates Across Different Cities India 2022

From the above Fig.5, the cities of the state Kerala have almost similar suicide rates as the rest of the major metropolitan cities. However, the city/town Kollam has a very high Suicide rate of 42.5 per 100000 population, which is highest among the Indian cities.

Furthermore, let's look at the Suicide counts for Kerala and Sikkim with the rest of the states of the country among different sub sections of the society to get a larger picture.

Suicide Counts by Income Groups 2022

Comparing the suicide counts based on income groups of Kerala and Sikkim Vs the rest of the country (avg)

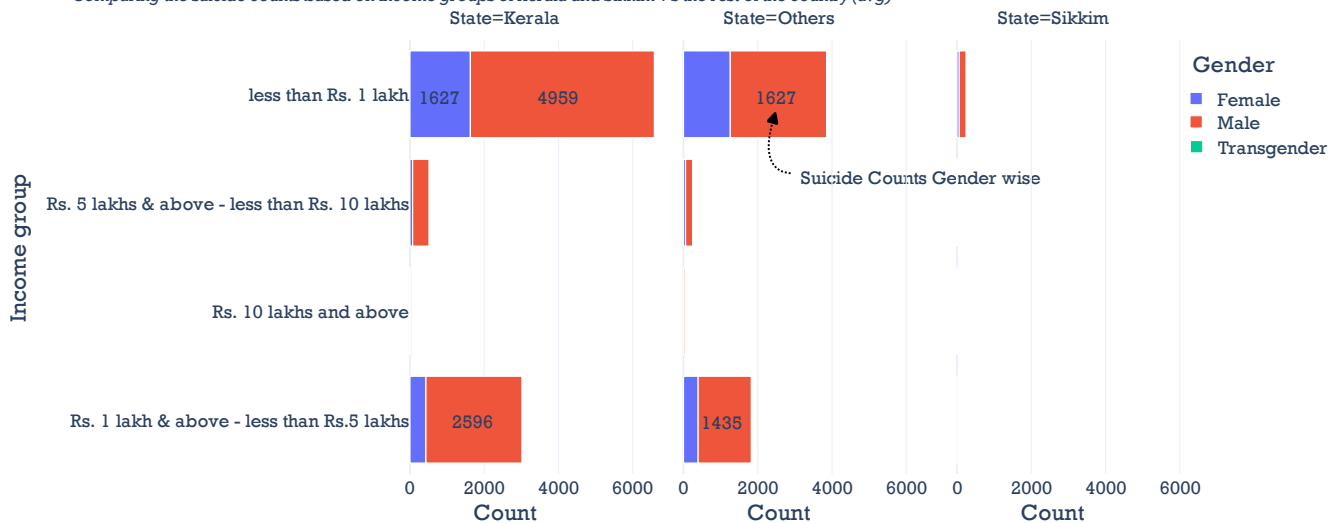


Fig.6: Suicide Counts Across Economic/Income groups by Gender India 2022

It's mostly the poor and the poorest individuals who earn an annual income of less than 1 Lakh Rupees and 1 Lakh Rupees to 5 Lakh Rupees respectively, who are more prone to committing Suicides. (Fig.6).

This can also be confirmed from Fig.7 where the individuals who are unemployed or are daily wage earners are the most affected.

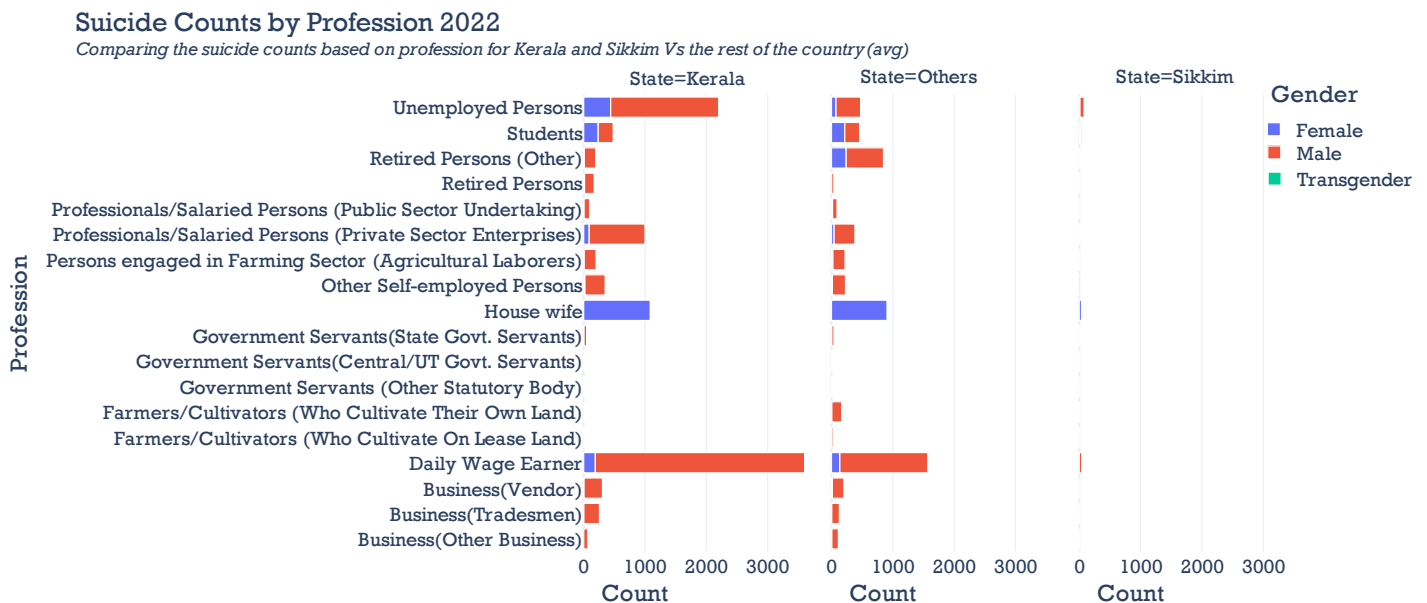


Fig.7: Suicide Counts Across Professions by Gender India 2022

It's also concerning to see the number of cases for Students, Private sector employees, and Housewives in the above figure.

Private sector employees could be motivated by a lack of proper work-life balance, not enough vacations/pay/benefits, financial burdens, etc.

For students, it could be because of the constant pressure from parents and society to excel and the constant comparison amongst peers that may drain them mentally.

Fig.8 explores the Suicide cases by different sections of Education of individuals.

Suicide Counts by Education Level 2022

Comparing the suicide counts based on education levels of Kerala and Sikkim Vs the rest of the country (avg)

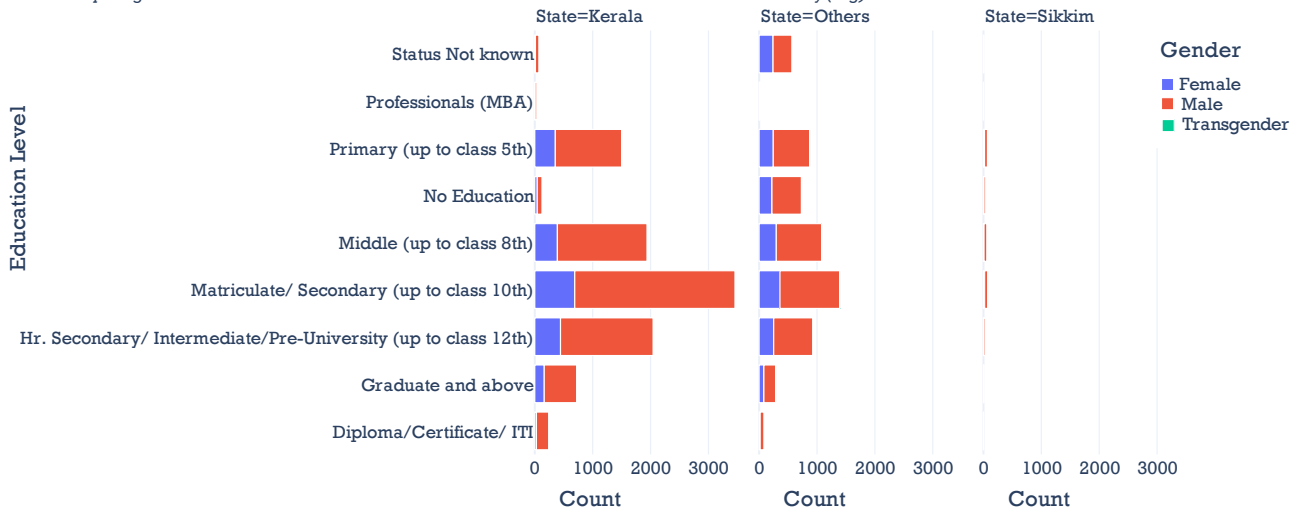


Fig.8: Suicide Counts Across Education Level by Gender India 2022

In Fig.7, we had looked at how the counts for Housewives were high, this could be for a varying number of reasons which may include – Domestic violence, Dowry related issues, Divorce etc.

Fig.9 explores the Suicide counts among different sections of society based on Marital status.

Suicide Counts by Marital Status 2022

Comparing the suicide counts based on marital status of Kerala and Sikkim Vs the rest of the country (avg)



Fig.9: Suicide Counts Across Marital Status by Gender India 2022

The above graph shows how married people are more prone to Suicide compared to un-married because of challenges and responsibilities in relationships, societal expectations etc.

The highlighted patterns demand a need for urgent attention through targeted interventions and policy reforms to address the crisis. Some suggestions as part of this article include:

- Spreading awareness about Suicide and Mental Health issues.
- Government should provide free therapy sessions for low-income groups.
- Introduce policies that promote work-life balance in workplace.
- Setting up counseling centers in schools, colleges, workplaces etc.
- Government should provide financial literacy programs for individuals to manage finances better and avoid distress.
- Policies to safeguard students and women.
- Normalising mental health issues in Men.

By addressing the issues found in this analysis report, we could see a drastic decrease in the number of Suicide cases leading to a healthier, happier and stronger Nation.