

**TITLE: - SUICIDE IN GUYANA**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Suicide is a prevalent issue in Guyana and which has been increasing over the past 3 years. Guyana is a land of many water but not a land of a very huge population; so if people keep committing suicide, what would happen to the country’s population? What would happen to the country’s economy? What would happen to our country?

A stabroek article in 2014, “suicide rate in the country still increasing”, states that, “suicide rate in Guyana continues to rise and the authorities seem incapable of doing anything to stop the rot.” With the aim of trying to have a stable and developed country, the researcher, researched on, what causes suicide? who are the victims of suicide? and ways to deal with suicide.

By being aware of the causes, victims and ways in dealing with suicide, a country would be able to use the knowledge to have a stable and developed country and also the information obtain from this research can be used in a social studies class when suicide is being taught.

Suicide: - is the act or an instance of taking one’s life voluntarily and intentionally especially by a person of years of discretion and of sound mind.

Population: - a group of people or animal of a kind that live in a place.

Developing country: - also called a less developed country or undeveloped country is a nation with an underdeveloped industrial base, and a low human development index relative to other countries.

Developed country: - an industrialized country, or “more economically developed country”, is a sovereign state that has a highly developed country and advanced technological infrastructure relative to other less industrialized nations. **1**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

In an effort to understand suicide; especially in Guyana, a number of sources were examined, which allowed us to have, a definition of suicide, the causes of suicide, the ways in dealing with suicide and also the group of people that commits the act.

According to Edwin Shneidman (1993) in his book, *Suicide as Psychache*, suicide can be define as, “concentrated, complicated, multidimensional, conscious and unconscious “choices” of the best possible practical solution to a perceived problem, dilemma, crisis or desperation.” This implies that suicide is the act of harming oneself.

Alex Lickerman (2010) oh his page, *reasons for people attempting suicide*, states that, “suicide is far more understandable than people think.” It also stated that people commit suicide because, they are depressed, psychotic, impulsive, cry out for help, have a philosophical desire to die, or made a mistake. These are the main causes of suicide worldwide, and tend to really make an impression on a country’s population.

The Guyana Times (2015), *Hindus commit majority of suicide in Guyana*, states that, “statistics obtained from the Mibicuri Community Developer, showed that Guyanese of East Indian Descent account for 80% of all the suicide in Guyana, which also account for the fact the Hindu commits majority of suicide in Guyana.” According to the National Research Agency, Africans is the second ethnic group that contributes to suicide worldwide.

The World Health Organisation (2013), states that, “to prevent oneself from committing suicide, they should reach out for help, avoid being alone, learn about the thing or things that triggers the thought of suicide, and most importantly they should avoid using drugs and alcohol.” By taking   
those measures into consideration, a country’s population may not be in jeopardy and lives could be save and given a second chance to be a useful resource.

Therefore, from the information obtain those sources, one would obtain the definition of the term suicide, the causes of suicide worldwide, the ways in dealing with suicide worldwide, and since its Guyana the researcher is interested in, the researcher would have obtained the information of who commits majority of suicide in Guyana.

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**DATA COLLECTION SOURCES**

The researcher gathered the data needed for his research through the use of primary and secondary sources. The primary source used were Printed Questionnaires, while secondary source used was the internet.

A questionnaire is a set or pre-set questions given to persons who make up the population of study. The questionnaire is appropriate because the data obtained were easy to summarize, compare and generalize; it also allows the respondents to take their time and not to feel embarrassed about their answers since their name does not have to be attached to the questionnaires; thus ensuring accurate data, and also its not time consuming, in this survey a questionnaire of 15 close ended question and 4 open ended questions were designed to gather information form respondents.

The secondary source used was the internet and was used throughout the whole research period to gather information and gain more knowledge of the problem statement that is being investigated.

In this survey two areas were taken into consideration; Rosignol and Kitty. Rosignol is a village in Berbice that has approximately 200 households consisting of age groups, religion, ethnic groups, occupation, etc, while Kitty is a village in Georgetown that has approximately 170 households that also consist of different age groups, ethnic groups, religion, occupation, etc. overall 40 males and 40 females participated in this research; where there were 20 males and 20 females from each village respectively.

This study was conducted systematically; where a questionnaire was given out at every nth household. In kitty, a questionnaire was given out at every 4th household starting from the first house in the village; a total of 40 questionnaires were distributed in Kitty. The same method was used to distribute 40 questionnaires in Rosignol as well.

This study was conducted in November, 2015, from (November 8th to the November 21st), it took two weeks to gather and process data. The respondents were given 3 days to complete the questionnaire and return them to the researcher.

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**PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

**PRESENATION OF DATA:-**

Figure 1: -

Figure 1 presents the percentage of respondents who thinks suicide in Guyana has been increasing or decreasing. The majority of respondents indicated as 92.5% say that suicide in Guyana has been increasing while 7.5% of the total respondents say that suicide in Guyana has been decreasing.

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Figure 2: -

Figure 2 presents the age of victims that are found committing suicide a lot in Guyana. The majority of respondents indicated as 80% say that individuals under the age of 20 years are most often found committing suicide. while 16% of respondents say that its individuals of 20-40 years, and 4% say its individuals over 40 years that are found committing suicide most often in Guyana.

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Figure 3: -

Figure 3 presents the religion of victims that found committing suicide a lot in Guyana. The majority of respondents indicated as 92.5% say that Hindus are most often found committing suicide. While 6.25% say its Christians and 1.25% say its Muslims, that are found committing suicide most often in Guyana.

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Figure 4: -

Figure 4 presents the ethnicity of victims that are found committing suicide in Guyana. The majority of respondents indicated as 83.75% say that “East Indians” are mostly found committing suicide, while 12.5% say its Africans and 3.75% say it’s the mixed race, while for Portuguese, Amerindian, European, Chinese, no respondents voted for them.

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Figure 5: -

KEY:-

Cause 1:- They are depressed

Cause 2:- They are impulsive (abuse drugs or alcohol)

Cause 3:- They are psychotic (their mind telling them to do it)

Cause 4:- They have a philosophical desire to die

Cause 5:- They have made a mistake and can’t live with the guilt

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Figure 5 presents the causes of suicide in Guyana. The majority indicated as 31.25% say that the main cause of suicide in Guyana is because “They are depressed”, while 25% say it’s because, “They are impulsive”, 18.75% say that. “They have a philosophical desire to die”, 17.5% say, “They are psychotic” and 7.5% say it because, “They have made a mistake and can’t live with the guilt”.

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Figure 6: -

KEY:-

Solution 1:- Reach out to them

Solution 2:- Always have them occupy

Solution 3:- Help them to learn about the thing or things triggering the thought

Solution 4:- help them to stay off drugs or alcohol if they are using it

Solution 5:- others

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Figure 6 presents the solutions or ways to deal with individuals with suicidal thoughts. The majority indicated as 43.75% says that one of the best ways to help individuals cope with suicidal thoughts is to, “Help them to learn about the thing or things that’s triggering the thought”, while 25% says that we should, “Reach out to them”, 15% says, “Help them to stay off drugs or alcohol if they are using it”, 13% says, “Always have them occupy” and 3.75% says, “others”.

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**ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Based on findings of the study it can be deduced that Suicide in Guyana has been increasing and is being committed mostly by teenagers. Out of 80 persons being questioned, 80% said that individuals under the age of 20 are found committing suicide, while 16% said its individuals within the age range 30-40 and 4% said its individuals over 40 years.

The majorities of suicide being committed are by East Indians; indicated as 83.75%, while 12.5% said its Africans and 3.755 said it’s the Mixed race. Also the majorities of individuals that commit suicide are from the Hindu religious background; indicated as 92.5%, while 6.255 said it’s Christians and 1.25% said it’s Muslims.

When the respondents were questioned about what causes individuals to commit suicide; the majority indicated as 31.25% said it’s because, “they are depressed”, while 25% said it’s because, “they are impulsive”, 8.75% said, “they have a philosophical desire to die”, while 17.55 said, “they are psychotic”, and 7.5% said it’s because, “that have made a mistake and can’t live with the guilt.”

Also when they were questioned about the ways to deal with or reduce the suicide rate in Guyana, the majority indicated as 43.75%, said that, “help them to learn about the thing or things that’s triggering the suicidal thought”, while 25% said, “reach out to them”, 15% said, “help them to stay off drugs or alcohol if they were using it”, 13% said, “always have them occupy” and 3.75% stated other ways to deal with suicide.

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**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

In my research, two villages “Rosignol” and “Kitty” were chosen to be studied for suicide because over the past years most of the suicide being committed in Guyana came out from those villages. According to the respondents from those villages, suicide has been increasing over the past year and is being committed mostly by East Indian Teenagers who came from the Hindu religious background.

According to the data recorded for the survey being carried out in the two villages, the main cause of suicide in Guyana is due to individuals being “Depressed”. Thus when they are depressed; any dilemma that they are caught in and can’t handle it, their only urge would be to end their life, thus suicide.

Also to deal with suicide in Guyana, the respondents said that the suicidal victims should learn about that thing or things that are triggering the suicidal thought in their head. Thus when they learn about what’s triggering the thought, they would be able to overcome the thought of suicide and do things to avoid being tempted, therefore a reduction in the suicidal rate in Guyana.

There are other races and religion involve in suicide in Guyana as well such as the Africans and Mixed race and the Christians and Muslims. There are also many other reasons for individuals committing suicide such as, “can’t live with the guilt of a mistake they have committed, they have a philosophical desire to die, they are psychotic, and even because they are impulsive, etc”, and other ways to deal with the case of suicide are, “always have the individuals occupy, reach out to them, help them stay off drugs, counsel them on importance of their life, take them to religious institutions, etc.”

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**CONCLUSION**

This assessment was a study carried out in Rosignol village, Berbice and Kitty, Georgetown, which was about Suicide in Guyana, such as the causes, ways in dealing with suicide and also about the individuals that are most often found committing suicide.

From the data recorded, it can be concluded that suicide has been increasing in Guyana and it is being committed mostly by East Indian teenagers who came from the Hindu religious background. It was also brought to my attention that most individuals commit suicide because they are depressed and to help individuals with suicidal thoughts and help decrease the suicidal rate in Guyana, these individuals should learn about that thing or things that is triggering the thought in their head.

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**LIMITATION**

Data collection was limited due to administering questionnaires. The sample size was small and only applied to two villages out of the whole of Guyana. The reason for selecting those two villages is because most of the suicidal incidents have been coming out from them. Another limitation was the validity of information given from respondents.

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**RECOMMENDATION**

In order to decrease the suicidal rate in Guyana, the researcher recommends that:-

* Every village in Guyana should have a counselor, someone that is being respected in society and everyone is comfortable with sharing their problems with him/her;
* There should be a hotline, where individuals with suicidal thoughts could call and have a discussion with someone and be talked out of the thoughts about committing suicide;
* In every village a group should be establish, in which every member of the society can play a role, and it should highlight social issues, ways to handle depression, and even ways to make their village a better one, this group main aim is to keep certain individuals occupied at all time, having them always thinking about something;
* The individuals with suicidal thought should visit a religious institution, in which they would learn to appreciate their lives a gift giving to them from God, and would also learn to cope with the temptation of committing suicide.

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**APPENDIX**

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondents,

I am a upper 6 student of Queen’s College. The reason for me carrying out this survey is for completing my Caribbean Studies Internal Assessment (IA), which is base on the topic, “Suicide in Guyana”. This Internal Assessment is worth 20% of my overall percent for the Caribbean Studies Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE).

The following questions are therefore designed to obtain valuable information from respondents, which would assist me in completing this assessment with a lot of accuracy. Your responses are critical to the quality of this assessment and you would not be penalized for any answers given and also your name would not be attached to the questionnaire.

Your co-operation in completing the questionnaire would be highly appreciated, thank you.

Yours sincerely

…………………….

Kishan Crichlow

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INSTRUCTIONS: - PLACE A TICK IN THE BOX NEXT TO THE ANSWER YOU WISH TO CHOOSE, OTHERWISE STATE YOUR ANSWER ON THE (………….) LINES.

1. What is your gender?

Male Female

1. What age group are you in?

* Under 20 years
* 21-30 years
* 31-40 years
* 41-50 years
* Over 50 years

1. What is your religion?

Hindu Muslim Christian

Other: - …………………………………………….

1. How long have you been residing in Guyana?

* Under 5 years
* 5-10 years
* 10-15 years
* Over 15 years

1. Is suicide in Guyana increasing or decreasing?

Increasing Decreasing

1. Why do you think individuals commit suicide?

* They are depressed
* They are impulsive (abuse drugs or alcohol)
* They are psychotic (their mind’s telling them to do it)
* They have a philosophical desire to die
* They have made a mistake and cannot live with the guilt

Others:- …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

1. What age group commits majority of suicide?

* Under 20 years
* 30-40 years
* Above 40 years

1. Which ethnic group are the victims of suicide associated with?

* Amerindian
* East Indian
* African
* European
* Portuguese
* Mixed race

1. Which religion are the victims of suicide associated with?

Hindu Muslim Christian

Other:-………………………………….

1. Do you think suicidal victims would be open about it?

Yes No

Why:- …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

1. How can you help them to be open about it?

Please state:- …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

1. Is it possible for the suicide rate of Guyana to decrease?

Yes No

1. How would you help victims with suicidal thoughts?

* Reach out to them
* Always have them occupy
* Help them to learn about the thing or things that trigger the thought
* Help them to stay off drugs or alcohol if they were using it

Others:- ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

1. Do you think the government can play a role in controlling the suicide rate in Guyana?

Yes No

1. How do you suggest they help?

* Have workshops on suicide
* Have health workers visiting homes and teach about suicide
* Have banners and build boards place up at every village

emphasizing suicide prevention

* Have a hotline where victims of suicide can call in and be counsel

other:- ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

1. Would the country benefit from a decrease in suicide rate?

Yes No

How?............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

1. Is it possible for a community to deal with its suicide rate in the absence of government’s help?

Yes No

1. How do you suggest they do it?

* Form community groups that address different issues
* Visit homes in the community and talk about issues

Affecting them, in this case suicide

* Have an approachable person in the community who can

Counsel victims with suicidal thoughts

Others: - ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

1. Do you think committing suicide is the right thing to do?

Yes No

Why:-…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION**

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