

The extreme step

Suicide rates continue to remain high in India and the latest set of numbers throws up several disturbing facts.

By **Ramesh Chakrapani**

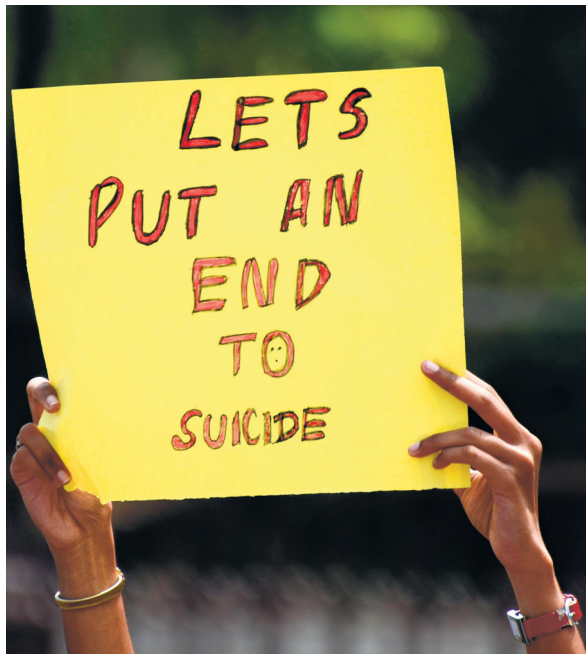
The figures are depressing, the causes alarming, and the statistics unacceptable in a country striving for progress in all spheres. In 2013, for the fifth year in a row, the number of suicides in India stayed above one lakh and was only slightly lower than the previous year, according to data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

A total of 1,34,799 people—men, women and children—took their own lives, for various reasons and using various means.

The numbers throw up several disturbing and intriguing snapshots of information and offer tremendous insights into

All-India figures

Year	Total no of suicides	Mid-year population (in crore)	Suicide rate (per lakh population)
2009	1,27,151	116.94	10.9
2010	1,34,599	118.57	11.4
2011	1,35,585	121.01	11.2
2012	1,35,445	121.33	11.2
2013	1,34,799	122.87	11.0



A student holds a placard to create awareness on suicide prevention during a campaign in Coimbatore.

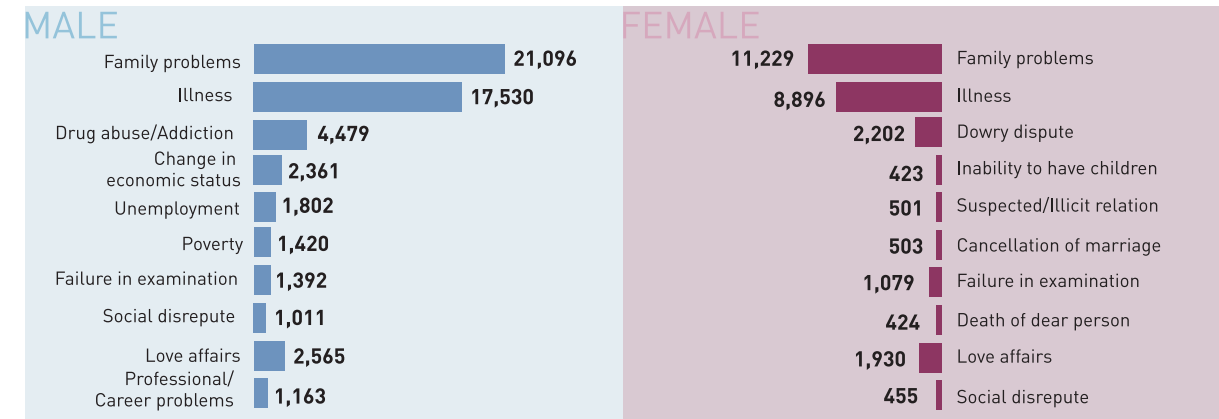
how civil society functions and what drives people to take the extreme step. The most shocking statistic that comes out of the data for 2013 is the fact that one in six victims is a housewife.

In close contention are the facts that 11,772 were farmers and 8,423 were students.

The prosperous and industrially advanced States of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu accounted for nearly a quarter of all suicidal deaths during the year, continuing a trend seen in 2012 and 2011.

Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala recorded a high incidence of people snuffing out their

Distribution by causes



own lives, and together, these seven States accounted for about 67 per cent of all suicides.

The majority of the suicides were by men (67 per cent) and more than 80 per cent of all those who died were educated up to some level.

While 4,380 graduates ended their own lives, 716 of those who killed themselves had higher qualifications. Among the causes, family problems and illness ranked high, accounting for more than 38,000 cases.

Distressingly enough, failure in examination caused 2,471 people to take their lives, with 53.2 per cent of all suicides in Kota city in Rajasthan

—famous for its cram schools—being for that reason.

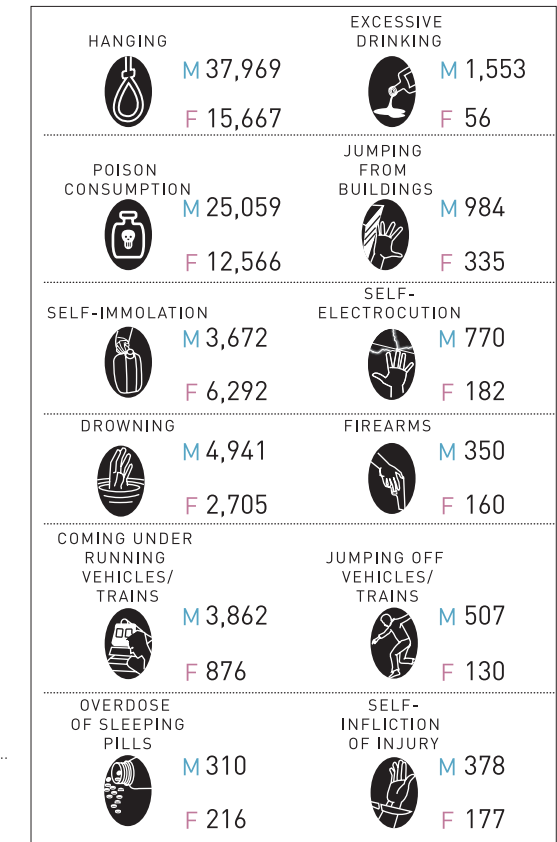
Among cities and towns, Asansol in West Bengal registered the highest jump—from 24 in 2012 to 819 in 2013. No reason was attributed to this.

Among mega cities, Chennai with 2,450 and Bangalore with 2,033 recorded the largest number of cases, followed by Delhi (1,753) and Mumbai (1,322).

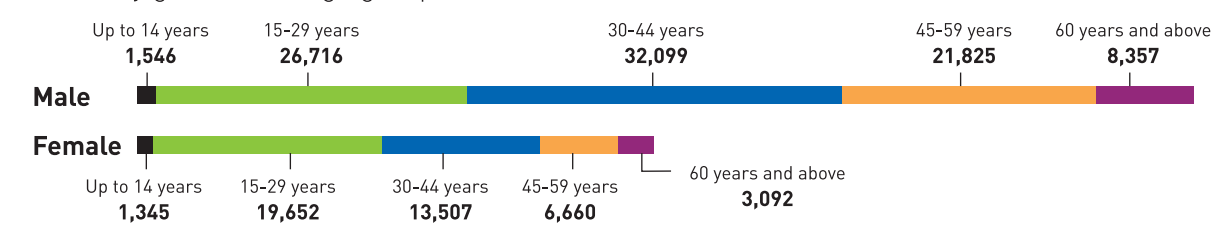
Some 270 suicides were due to physical/sexual abuse, while underage pregnancy was the reason for 153 cases.

A total of 2,202 women killed themselves because of dowry-related disputes.

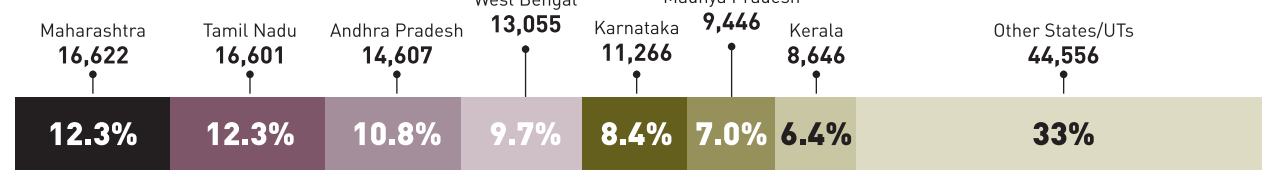
Distribution by means used



Victims by gender and age group



How the States rank



Educational profile of victims

