

14 suicides every hour in 2008

The Year Reports 1.25 Lakh Cases

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New Delhi: India reported 14 suicides every hour during 2008 — a year, which saw a total of 1,25,017 people of different ages take the extreme step due to various reasons, ranging from family problem and illness to bankruptcy and poverty. Though the year reported an increase of 1.9% over the previous year's (2007) total suicide figure (1,22,637), there was a marginal decline in suicide among farmers, a trend which has continued since 2006.

As compared to 17,060 farmers' suicide in 2006, the year 2007 witnessed 16,632 suicides which further declined to 16,196 in 2008. This decline is mainly due to lesser number of farmer suicides in Maharashtra, the worst state in terms of such incidents over the years. While 4,238 farmers in the state committed suicide in 2007, the figure for 2008 was 3,802 with the Vidarbha region being the focal point of this reportedly debt-driven act.

The other states with a history of a large number of farmer suicide —



Karnataka, with more farmer suicides, replaced Kerala in the list of top five states having the dubious distinction of reporting such acts over the years. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh — accounted for 64.6% of suicide victims in the age group 60 and above.

Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh — continued to see an increasing trend. According to the latest data, compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2008, Karnataka with more farmer suicides replaced Kerala in the list of top five states having the dubious distinction of reporting such acts over the years. A definite trend was also noticed among different states which, perhaps, speaks

volumes about the 'psychological state' of people than their actual difficulties.

Incidentally, it was not the comparatively poor states like Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh which witnessed suicides in higher numbers. The dubious distinction, in fact, went to the comparatively richer states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Poverty was surprisingly not the major instigator as more number of

people committed suicide due to family (23.8%) and health problems (21.9%) than love affairs, bankruptcy or sudden change in economic status, dowry disputes and poverty.

Analyzing the suicide figures for 2008, the NCRB observed that social and economic causes led most of the males to commit suicide whereas emotional and personal causes mainly drove females to end their lives. The overall male:female ratio of suicide victims for the year was 64:36. However, the proportion of boys:girls suicide victims (up to 14 years of age) was 49:51.

Among the states, though West Bengal had reported the highest number (13.3%) of suicides during the year 2006, its share went down to 12.1% in 2007 and declined further to 11.9% in 2008. Five states — Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh — accounted for 64.6% of suicide victims in the age group 60 and above. The number of suicides in 35 mega cities reported an increasing trend from 2004 to 2007. But 2008 saw a decline — 13,071 from the previous year's 14,336. Four metropolitan cities — Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai and Delhi — reported higher number of suicides. These four cities together accounted for almost 45% of the total suicides reported from the 35 mega cities.