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## The Incidence of Suicide in Pakistan Day by Day, Especially the Educated Youth Trying to Commit Suicide in 2022 - 2023

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**Abstract:** *The focus of this study the Incidence of Suicide in Pakistan Day by Day, Especially the Educated Youth Trying to Commit Suicide in 2022 2023 is to provide understanding for human nature, the societal impact of suicides, to explore the trend and causes of suicide, and to create awareness about this sensitive and unlawful act. The main theme is a try to stop this inhuman act by helping the needed people by approaching the related authorities. This report is an effort to stop this sinful act by explaining the bad effects because this act can never eliminate the problems but on the other hand give rise to them. This whole effort can only bring about change, if everyone really wants to help others and contribute to get rid of this evil and unlawful act. This study discovers that suicide is an indication of the problems in the lives of many people such as financial, social or medical. The most common underlying disorder is depression, 30% to 70% of suicide victims suffer from major depression, no matter which strata of society they belong to. A suicide attempt is often a cry for help that ends in tragedy. The research paper is an analytical study of adverse effect of criminalization of Attempt to Suicide in Pakistan in Section 325 of PPC 1860. Criminalization of attempted suicide is one of the major reasons that have made people reluctant to get help for the psychological problem that causes such act. This study aims to provide significant reasons for decriminalizing attempted suicide in Pakistan. Quantitative and Qualitative research method was used to gather, analyse and abridge the data. This paper focuses on the problem of criminalization of attempted suicide and tends to provide a new framework in the replacement of existing one. It is pertinent to mention that committing suicide is an illness not a crime, so the one who attempts to commit suicide must be treated as a „patient“ not as a „culprit“. The existing law provides punishment for the person who attempted suicide but failed, this represents the harshness of the state as it prescribes „punishment“ for the person suffering from mental disorder, instead of „treatment“. The analysis includes problems of criminalizing attempted suicide and challenges of the applicability of relevant law as well as negative impacts of it. Moreover, this paper deliberates upon the introduction of new practice in law. According to this practice, state institutions will provide rehabilitation/treatment to those persons who attempted suicide but failed under the law. Suicidal behavior is one of the serious*



*consequences of depression. Depression disrupts the daily life functioning including ability to think properly, planning, problem solving and decision-making. This happens because of excessively experiencing the negative emotions. Dialectical behavior therapy sessions were planned including skills training for emotional stability, obsessions and impulse control. Evaluation of the behavior at the end of this intervention had fruitful outcomes and better change in the patient's condition. Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale was used to measure the change after ten sessions, once a week of one hour each.*

**Keywords:** *Suicidal Attempt, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Emotion Regulation, Distress Tolerance, Depression, Mindfulness, Interpersonal Effectiveness.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The overall sense of helplessness and frustration is not only evident in our society but we have come to a point where the implications of it are taking a toll on us. The bomb is fast ticking and we are silent spectators just waiting and watching. We know the problems yet we remain aloof to them simply distancing ourselves from them as if it's about other people and not us. Even after 56 years of independence we as a nation are bogged down by major issues such as lack of justice, providence of basic amenities such as water, electricity, lack of infrastructure, demons such as unemployment and poverty, lawlessness to name a few. Physical frustration leads to emotional and mental frustrations and then finally people commit suicide to get rid of these problems. These issues are yet to be looked into, understood and answered. Life is a precious gift of God and every mankind is bound to observe its sanctity. But several reasons and mental disorder have taken the force from mankind to observe the sanctity of life and as a result they take their lives by committing suicide. By definition, Suicide refers, to the act of killing oneself, most often as a result of some mental illness.

Suicide is a misfortune and to some extent a mystery. As of late, pace of suicide has expanded in Pakistan and it has become a significant issue of the ongoing period. The surveyed pace of suicide in Pakistan as per World Health Organization (WHO) was 7.5 per 100,000 individuals, in 2012. In straightforward words, around 13,000 individuals ended it all that year. The gauge was 2.9 per 100,000 for example more than 5,500 took their lives, in 2016. Around 15 to 35 individuals end their lives in Pakistan consistently. Hanging, utilization of bug sprays and guns are the most widely recognized techniques for ending it all. Pakistan is among few countries in which attempted suicide is yet a culpable offense as it has condemned the suicide and its attempt under Section 325 of Pakistan Penal Code 1860 with either punishment or fine or both. It is relevant to make reference to that perpetrating suicide is an ailment not a wrongdoing as an individual who endeavors to end it all experiences mental issue like; sadness, tension, disappointment and he ought to be given treatment not discipline.

An individual who endeavors to end it all and comes up short ought to be treated as a 'patient' not as a guilty party of „failed suicide attempt“. This Research Project will provide a deep insight into the problem of „criminalizing suicide and attempt to suicide“. In addition, also provide a framework for omitting or repealing Section 325 of PPC by replacing the punishment with treatment/rehabilitation. Suicide is the act of intentionally causing one's own death. This act results from a complex interaction of biological, psychological, sociological,



cultural and environmental factors. This disastrous action has significant effect on global burden of disease, contributing yearly to 1.4% of the total burden with foremost role played by people aged between 15 and 35 years. Studies have demonstrated that, yearly, more people die by suicide than by violent conflicts. It's not possible to commit suicide without any prior ideation. According to Joe et al. 50% of planned suicidal attempts occur within one year of suicidal ideation. The range of ideation varies greatly from fleeting to detailed planning, from role playing to unsuccessful attempts. The greatest risk factor of suicidal ideation is stress which consequently leads to depression. It is also associated with pre-existing psychiatric disorders and disturbing life events. Considering the risk factors, medical students seem extremely vulnerable to suicidal ideation because of overwhelming stress put by curricular and noncurricular issues.

A range of studies have depicted that the degree of stress among medical students is higher than their counter parts studying other courses and consequently medical students have an increased frequency of depression and suicidal ideation. A number of studies regarding suicidal ideation among medical students have been carried out in the developed world, but this topic has largely been ignored in developing countries like Pakistan, Nepal and India. This is unfortunate as medical students in this region are not only overburdened by their educational issues but most also face the problems associated with being born and bred in less privileged backgrounds which would possibly potentiate the degree of stress upon their minds and subsequently suicidal ideation. In Pakistan, with the exception of a solitary study published in 2005, no research has been thereafter conducted on suicidal ideation among medical students. Treated as a taboo, this problem has never been suitably discussed. Such attitude is deplorable as it only leads to inattention of the vulnerable and furthers the assembly of suicidal ideation and the rate of suicide. The term suicidal behavior includes suicidal ideation, attempts and completed suicides. The suicidal process has been defined as starting with the first personal thought of taking or jeopardizing one's life and ending with the final act (Beskow, 1987). The need to study different types of suicidal behaviors is important as preventive strategies can address the problem at various levels of the suicidal process (Maris, 1992). Rates of suicidal ideation have been reported to range between 2.2% for Italian school children, to 16% in Chinese adolescents (Hesketh et al., 2002) and 27% for young Sudanese women attending a university (Goldney, 1998). Information on suicidal behavior including suicidal ideation and death in Pakistani adults is lacking.

### **Research Questions**

The importance of decriminalizing attempt to commit suicide has long been recognized by many. Though, there are numerous requests and bills that are still inundated by adjournments of the approving authorities. The 'criminalization' of attempted suicide prompts embarrassment, avoidance of looking for help and nonappearance of investment of authorities and limitations on creating earth shattering projects for the anticipation of suicide. The Lunacy Act of 1912 has outdated by the Mental Health Ordinance 2001. It has been a significant advance to give mental evaluation to the overcomers of suicide attempts. The Section 49 of the Ordinance identifies with Suicide and Attempt to Suicide and says: 'An individual who attempts suicide will be assessed by a fitting therapist and on the off chance that they are experiencing a psychological issue will be relieved properly under the arrangements of this Ordinance'. The research questions are as following:



- ❖ What are the reasons/motives of the people who attempts to commit suicide?
- ❖ Why there is a need to „decriminalize“ attempt to suicide?
- ❖ How state institutions can provide „Treatment“ instead of „Punishment“ to people who have failed to commit suicide?

### **Objectives of Research**

- To furnish adequate reasons that people who attempts to commit suicide suffer from mental illness.
- To provide statistical data of people who attempted suicide suffering from mental illness.
- To decrease the ratio of Suicide in Pakistan.
- To „decriminalize“ attempted suicide by omitting Section 325 of PPC 1860.
- To provide a new legal framework in which treatment would be given not punishment.

### **Review of Literature**

A preliminary Literature review including Journals, Articles, Editorials, Books and statistics shows that past studies are primarily focused on understanding and modelling attempted suicide, past studies focused on reasons of suicide and only talked about preventing suicide. ‘A Handbook for the study of Suicide’ by Perlin, Seymour shows an insight view providing perspectives on the fundamental concerns of suicide study from the viewpoints of history, philosophy, literature, anthropology, sociology, biology, psychiatry, law and epidemiology. An Editorial ‘Suicide Prevention in Pakistan: an impossible challenge?’ By Murad M Khan has named Attempt to Suicide as „„Deliberate Self- Harm (DSH)““ and has talked about the fact that; criminalization“ of DSH has led to a shame, evasion of health seeking help and absence of participation of specialists and restrictions on developing ground-breaking programs for the prevention of suicide. He suggested the proposal of reviewing and repealing the law regarding Attempt to Suicide but has not prescribed an alternative solution. ‘Determinants of Suicide’ by Sadia Anwar provides the factors which causes people to commit suicide. The author Letha KS & Geetha N in their work ‘Criminalizing suicide attempts; can it be a deterrent?’ have also discussed the issues related to criminalizing attempt to suicide and other implications associated with it. Another Editorial ‘Decriminalization of suicide in Pakistan; Treatment not Punishment’ by Majeed MH, Amir Sherazi SA & Afzal MY has also revealed the sensitivity of „criminalizing“ suicide, but in this Editorial they have talked about suicide and not particularly attempt to suicide. The author „Dan Neville“ in his work ‘Suicide- from a Crime to Public Health in Decade’ has talked about the methods to be used to prevent people from committing suicide but has not provided the way for incorporating such methods. Limited progress has been made in „decriminalizing“ attempted suicide in Pakistan. In terms of preventing several approaches have been recommended like a Bill was moved in Senate, Journals were published depicting the seriousness of issue. All of these provided either reasons behind committing suicide or recommended rehabilitation. What is missing in the past studies is the comprehensive and structured approach in managing the issue by decriminalizing the attempted suicide and providing a solution to state/ legislators to incorporate a new provision in law which will provide treatment to people who attempted suicide rather than punishment.



### **Attempt to Suicide and its Reasons**

**Definition of Attempt to Suicide in General:** It is defined as an act in which an individual tries to kill oneself voluntarily and intentionally due to several underlying psychological reasons but fails. An unsuccessful trial of killing oneself is termed as Attempt to Suicide.

**Definition of Attempt to Suicide in Law:** According to legal definition it is defined as: “A significant but unsuccessful effort to commit suicide by the accused” is termed as an Attempt to suicide.

**Reasons of Committing Suicide** There are various reasons that force people to commit suicide. The reasons shift from individual to individual as every individual has its own problem that leads him to take his own life. In Pakistan it is easy for a citizen to take his own life then to suffer from the thousands of difficulties which he faces every day. The reasons are too many some of the main reasons of committing suicide are as follows:

- Unemployment
- Poverty
- Domestic Violence
- Societal Pressure
- Depression/Mental Illness

**Unemployment:** A person is out of work when he is capable and willing to work however state fails to offer him work for his maintenance. In a third world country like Pakistan unemployment is a major problem and a part of all generations faced it and are facing it. There are many students who pays a huge amount of money to get their graduation degree but in return there is no payback. As, in Pakistan there are less jobs and more candidates. Unemployment is a major issue which has been neglected by our governments since ages. This unresolved issue not only leads to crimes like; theft, robbery, dacoit etc. but also leads to frustration, in end force them to commit suicide, for those people who cannot even think of such heinous acts. Taking a gander at the current circumstance of Pakistan, where, populace is growing, fear mongering is at pinnacle and joblessness is raising and 60% of Pakistanis are living beneath the neediness line. All it builds the sentiment of powerlessness which further reason to wretchedness and suicide endeavor and ideation among the general population.

**Poverty:** Poverty is a condition in which an individual or community do not have the financial resources and basics for a least standard of living. Poverty in simple words is as situation in which the revenue level from employment is so little that basic human essentials can't be encountered. In Pakistan, more than 40 million people are living in a state of hopeless neediness. Destitution rate in Pakistan is urgently high as more than 62.50 million (43.1%) individuals are as of now living beneath the poverty line. In a country like Pakistan, poverty is one of the main reasons that lead people to take their lives. It is easy for them to take their lives, then to fight each and every minute for their survival. As a developing country, many of the Pakistan's population live in poverty and cannot have enough money to feed themselves or their offspring. The nation is governed by corrupt government officials with corrupt management. The nation is in profound debt and its assets are mishandled. Industries are closing down which results in an increase in unemployment. The government had botched to provide its people with the basic requirements of life. The situation of the



country has deteriorated so much in recent years that almost 60% of the people lives under the poverty line. People are deserted and see their starving offspring and thus choose death instead.

**Domestic Violence:** According to the definition of United Nations, violence against women comprises “any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”<sup>1</sup>. In Pakistan, patriarchal system is observed and domestic violence is considered normal for ages, as women are considered as a subordinate to their husband and she must do what he requires her to do. In our society, it is considered a private family matter so, this kind of observance has led to depression and many mental disorders in women, which they cannot even, discuss and silently take their lives. Committing suicide is considered by them as the only way to relief. An examination on suicidal patients in Pakistan depicted that the vast majority of the patients were hitched ladies and the primary wellspring of contention was questions with spouse (80%) and with parents in law (43%). In Pakistan 62% of the women are found to be suffering from depression due to domestic violence, out of which 9.4% of the depressed women tried to commit suicide.

**Societal Pressure:** Suicide passes on a social and moral significance in all societies. At both the individual and populace levels, the suicide rate has for quite some time been comprehended to associate with cultural weight. Everyone either male or female, husband or wife, boy or girl, faces societal pressure every day. It can be in any shape or any form but one common thing it causes is that it forces that affected person in such a bad way that he/ she nothing else as a solution. In our country, societal pressure/ parental pressure on students is too much, as every parent wants their children to core more than relatives” children. This comparison and urge of parents to see their child top in the field they want results in serious consequences.

**Depression; Mental Illness:** Depression; mental illnesses are a major psychological and social problem of Pakistan. Suicide in Pakistan is intensely linked with depression, which is not acknowledged and undertreated. As, in Pakistan in more than 90% of suicide, depression is implicated. It has been demonstrated that 90% of the individuals who endeavors to end it all experience the ill effects of psychological maladjustments. Assessments of reports by the legal sciences have uncovered that over the time of the previous two years, more than 300 deaths happened by suicides in Pakistan from 35 distinct urban communities. Men surpass the ladies by 2:1. The majority of the men who end it all are not hitched while on the opposite a large portion of the ladies who end it all are married. Realm is growing and so it is getting tougher to survive day by day. In this tussle for survival several people do not make it till the end. The studies have revealed that the mental state of psychiatric patients in the 1950s is the similar as the mental state of youngsters today.



### **A New Legal Framework; Treatment in lieu of Punishment**

According to the Section 325 of Pakistan Penal Code 1860, „ Whoever attempts to commit suicide and does any act towards the commission of such offence, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both“ (Mehmood M, 2018). Pakistan is one of the very few countries that have not amended this law properly as according to it suicide is still a crime in the eyes of law and state. All reported cases of suicide or any such attempts are thus automatically linked to law enforcement. In exercise, it is rare for this kind of FIRs to be registered in the police station, however harassing and extracting money from victims of tried suicide is not unusual. Criminalization of suicidal behavior is one of the key reasons that people do not seek help for the psychological problem that may have triggered the act. It is pertinent to mention that committing suicide is an illness not an offense as a person who attempts to suicide suffers from mental problem like; depression, anxiety, frustration and he should be given treatment not punishment. An individual, who attempts to suicide and fails should be treated as a „patient“ not as a culprit of „failed suicide attempt“. So, patients are treated not punished. The Laws of Pakistan direly need reforms as the circumstances are totally different from the colonial era. The Pakistan Penal Code was drafted in 1860 and the laws in it are still in use, though they are of no use at all. Likewise, Section 325 of PPC 1860 needs to be repealed, it provides punishment for the person who attempted suicide and failed. Instead of „penal clause“ a „Reformatory clause“ shall be introduced. In this, the persons who attempted suicide will be send to „reformatory“. A reformatory shall constitute;

- ✚ Counsellors
- ✚ Psychiatrists
- ✚ Legal aiders
- ✚ Pharmacists
- ✚ Educationists
- ✚ Trainers
- ✚ Financial aid

These reformatories will treat such persons as „patients“ and will work for their rehabilitation, mental health, right education. The counsellors will help them to see a better picture of society and will help them to be a productive citizen of the country. Most of the people in Pakistan commit suicide due to financial constraints and there are many people who are willing to provide financial aid. These reformatories will provide a proper channel to such aid providers and aid takers.

## **2. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Suicide is a main reason of death everywhere in the globe. It has become subtle and imperious psychological, anthropological and community health matter which must be undertaken. Pakistan being a developing country will see a surge in suicide rate in coming time. The compelling behavioral and social, economic causes that leads to suicide are present in developing countries to an amount significantly higher than in developed countries, and this incongruity will perhaps only continue to grow (Diekstra, 1993). Decriminalization of Attempted Suicide in Pakistan should be done immediately.



The suicide trend is growing in Pakistan due to the globalization, segregation and ebb and drifts in economy. Males mostly commit suicide owing to the financial, social and other accountable causes while females have high trend in the cases of attempted suicide and the causes are societal problems, domestic problems and failure in marriages. The government should take preventive actions to curb this situation. There is a requirement for enhancements in the measures like helplines so that people can share their complications and acquire remedy it drive able the people to contemplate formerly doing anything wrong and they would have somebody who will show them a healthier way to resolve their problem.

A dilemma has been faced by the people of Pakistan that suicide is becoming one of the major reason of the death of youngsters but there is no one to support them and will help them to show the optimistic approach of leading life instead of suicides. As an Islamic republic, it is the responsibility of the Government, mass media, spiritual professors, educators, communal workforces and politically elected leaders to think of shielding basic values. They should promote Islamic educations and organize for spiritual and moral teaching of the public. An inclusive health program is needed to decrease its occurrence. Moreover, the stigma linked with suicides will only regress if the social sector and the administration take an active role in increasing awareness of anti-suicide.

- Free access to suicidal compounds and drugs should be reduced by the authorities.
- The primary health care physician must be qualified appropriately to deal with patients who have early symptoms of depression.
- The family should provide support. The main factors for suicide are interpersonal conflicts and disturbed relations. It is the responsibility of the family to hear the victims, build power and by decreasing the conflicts.
- The hospitals must be prepared and equipped to deal with suicides more efficiently like separate poisoning treatment units etc.
- The impact of media on the lives of people is very profound. It is the duty of media to act in a responsible way and to present the issue of suicide by unfolding the factors which leads to the suicide and the negative effects of suicide.
- New infrastructures should be created by the government and the concerned authorities that will give employment to a number of jobless people, as one of the main causes of suicides is unemployment.
- Government should introduce medical centres, community centres, help lines and talk groups, counsellors who will provide help to the sufferers of psychological strain and suicide.
- All suicide victims must be taught resiliency and coping skills by trained technicians.
- Government should design and implement vibrant, effective and sincere youth policies.

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Authors have no conflict of interest.





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