

# RISING CASES OF SUICIDES BY STUDENTS OF KOTA COACHING INSTITUTES – A CRITICAL REVIEW

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**Abstract-** The cases of suicides by the students of Kota Coaching classes are rampant. In a short span of five years, 56 students have committed suicide between 2012 to 2016. Experts say that most of the suicides are due to fear of failure and the burden of expectations from family. Around 35,000 students from different institutes of Kota have cleared the IIT-JEE this year. Recently, several coaching institutes jointly launched a round-the-clock helpline to offer counseling, track callers suffering from depression and provide assistance. The district administration also asked all coaching institutes to conduct a screening test for students seeking admission to coaching institutes and to give parents an assessment of their wards' chances of cracking the entrance exams.

**Index terms** Suicide by students, Depression, Pressure of Studies, Fear of failure, Burden of Parent's Expectations, Lack of interest in curriculum of studies, Lack of Infrastructure.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Fifty Six students studying in different institutes in Kota, Rajasthan committed suicide in the last five years (2012-2016). Most of them attributed to the fear of failure. Kriti Tripathi became the fifth suicide by a student this year (2016) in Kota, famous for its coaching institutes that train candidates for different entrance exams including the joint entrance exams (mains), considered among the toughest in the country. Students who clear the mains qualify for the advanced exams that secure them a place in the IITs. Experts say that most of the suicides are due to fear of failure and the burden of expectations from family. Around 35,000 students from different institutes of Kota have cleared the IIT-JEE this year. Recently, several coaching institutes jointly launched a round-the-clock helpline to offer counseling, track callers suffering from depression and provide assistance. The district administration also asked all coaching institutes to conduct a screening test for students seeking admission to coaching institutes and to give parents an assessment of their wards' chances of cracking the entrance exams.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Ashni Dhaor(2016)** Neighbours of a 17-year-old girl, Kriti Tripathy, who committed suicide a day after clearing the IIT-JEE have described her as a "bright and cheerful" youngster and said there was no indication she was suffering from depression or was under pressure to pursue engineering. She jumped off a five-storey building in Kota on Thursday, just a day after results of the IIT-JEE were announced. In a five-page note, Kriti said she was not interested in subjects such as physics, mathematics and chemistry. Kriti's family is based in the Vasundhara locality of Ghaziabad but had shifted to Kota where she had enrolled in a coaching academy. "I knew Kriti till

she completed her class 10 and shifted from here. She was very ambitious since childhood and said that she wanted to be an astronaut...She always scored high in school as well though she was not much into extra-curricular activities," said one of the neighbours who knew the family for the past 16 years. The 17-year-old had shifted to Kota after completing her 10th class from Bal Bharti School in Delhi. She scored 144 marks out of 360 in the IIT-JEE (mains). Her mother told a neighbor that Kriti was not happy with her score even though she cleared it. She expected to score more than 144 out of 360.

**Aabshar Quazi (2016)** A 17-year-old girl in Rajasthan cracked the IIT-JEE but committed suicide a day later on Thursday as she did not want to pursue a career in engineering. She jumped off a five-storey building in Kota, leaving a five-page note citing the reasons for ending her life. This is the fifth suicide by a student this year in Kota, famous for its coaching institutes that train candidates for different entrance exams including the joint entrance exams (mains), considered among the toughest in the country. Students who clear the mains qualify for the advanced exams that secure them a place in the IITs. Experts say that most of the suicides are due to fear of failure and the burden of expectations from family. Around 35,000 students from different institutes of Kota have cleared the IIT-JEE this year. Prima facie, the cause of suicide seems like depression and disinterest in engineering studies. In her suicide note she mentioned that her mother had admitted her in the science stream but she found no interest in subjects like Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry.

At least 56 students studying in different institutes in the city have committed suicide in the last five years, most of them attributed to the fear of failure. Recently, several coaching institutes jointly launched a round-the-clock helpline to offer counselling, track callers suffering from depression and provide

assistance. The district administration also asked all coaching institutes to conduct a screening test for students seeking admission to coaching institutes and to give parents an assessment of their wards' chances of cracking the entrance exams.

**Rakesh Goswami (2016)** It's not because of bad scores in JEE Mains. I was expecting worse. It's because I've started hating myself to the extent that I want to kill myself." Kriti scored 144 marks in the JEE Mains 2016 results declared on April 27, which was 44 marks higher than the 100-mark cut-off so her suicide set off speculation about the cause.

In the five-page emotional suicide note Kriti said, "I'm sorry. All the noise in my head and the hatred in my heart, hatred for myself, is maddening." "Most people around me will say that I would never kill myself and that I had no reason. They don't know what's going on inside me."

She said no one in the world knew her story. "Even all the people I know combined don't know the whole of my life story. I have a habit of keeping things to myself," she scribbled in a neat hand. In the note, the girl has urged the government of India and human resource development (HRD) ministry to shut coaching institutes as soon as possible. "They suck," she wrote. Kriti was strong and helped others come out of depression when they felt suicidal, the letter indicates. "Some might even say that she was so strong that we would never have imagined that she would do something like this... This is because I helped many come out of their depression and make a comeback. Funny, I couldn't do that to myself," she wrote.

She felt she wasn't made for science. "You manipulated me as a kid to like science... I took science to make you happy," she wrote addressing her mother. "I had interest in astrophysics and quantum physics and would have done a BSc... I still love writing, English, History (sic)... and they are capable of exciting me in the darkest times..." Warning her mother to not do "the manipulative stuff" with her younger sister, who is in class 11, she wrote, "She deserves to be allowed to explore and chose among fields." Kriti also advised her sister to do what she loved. "...only what you love brings happiness and that is the only thing you can excel in..." Addressing her father, whom she calls "the best", Kriti wrote, "All the time spent with you is good memory and your company, cherished... I am sorry to leave you alone." She cautioned him against taking up alcohol – "I have heard people take to alcohol in grief. I don't want anyone to do that, especially dad."

### III. FINDINGS

- 56 students studying in different institutes in the city have committed suicide in the last five years,

reveals that all is not well with Kota Coaching Classes.

- Experts say that most of the suicides are due to fear of failure and the burden of expectations from family.
- Though she was a "bright and cheerful" student, not showing any indication of suffering from depression or pressure of study but the cause of suicide seems like depression and disinterest in engineering studies. In her suicide note she mentioned that her mother had admitted her in the science stream but she found no interest in subjects like Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry
- She did not want to pursue a career in engineering and was not interested in subjects such as physics, mathematics and chemistry but her parents imposed them upon her.
- She revealed to her mother that she was not happy with her score even though she cleared it. She expected to score more than 144 out of 360.
- Keeping in mind a large number of students' suicides have taken place in Kota due to pressure of studies, several coaching institutes jointly launched a round-the-clock helpline to offer counselling, track callers suffering from depression and provide assistance. The district administration also asked all coaching institutes to conduct a screening test for students seeking admission to coaching institutes and to give parents an assessment of their wards' chances of cracking the entrance exams.
- The immediate cause of committing suicide was not the bad scores in JEE Mains – she had cleared that. It was because she was not pursuing something not of her choice or something she was not interested in.
- She had a habit of keeping things to herself and did not express her true feeling to anyone as to what was going on inside her.
- She was so bugged up with the with the pressure of studies that urged the government of India and human resource development (HRD) ministry to shut coaching institutes as soon as possible.
- Though she was emotionally strong and helped others come out of depression when they felt suicidal, but she couldn't do that to herself.
- She felt she wasn't made for science but took science to her mother happy. She was not interested in the subjects like astrophysics and quantum physics and would have rather done a BSc. She loved writing, English, and History as they were capable of exciting her in the darkest times.
- She warned her mother to not do "the manipulative stuff" with her younger sister, and allow her to explore and chose among fields of her choice. She also advised her sister to do what she loved. She further wrote that "only what you

love brings happiness and that is the only thing you can excel in”

- In her suicide note, she admired her father but cautioned him against taking up alcohol in grief, reveals that she was a caring daughter and otherwise enjoyed good relationship with her parents.

### RECOMMENDATIONS / SUGGESTIONS:

- 56 students (studying in different institutes in the Kota) committing suicide in a short span of five years, reveals that all is not well with the atmosphere and curriculum of Kota Coaching Classes.
- Most of the suicides are due to fear of failure and the burden of expectations from family. It is, therefore, for the parents not to imposing their choices and burden their children with their own ambitious dreams. When it comes to the career, parents should rather let the child decide as to what he or she want to become or is interested in. Moreover the parents should rather make their children psychologically stronger and keep telling their wards that whatever be the results of the exams (success or failure), they are always with them and will support them under any circumstances.
- Parents and the Tutors of the Coaching Institutes should keep evaluating the psychology of the student and ensure that the wards are not undergoing any pressure of the studies and also not hiding any kind of depression. Outwardly, a student may look happy and cheerful but may hide or conceal his true feelings just to keep their parents happy.
- Parents should keep a watch on the activities of the especially when they have not fared well in the exam. They should take care that the child is not scolded for not scoring good and left alone for a longer period. Parents should rather keep consoling and reminding them of the hard work done by the child and that they are satisfied and happy about the results.
- Coaching institutes should also come forward and keep counseling the weaker students, especially those suffering from depression. They should also be provided required assistance.
- Coaching Institutions must conduct the screening test for students seeking admission to coaching institutes and to give parents the true feedback and assessment of their wards’ chances of cracking the entrance exams.
- Parents should know the psychology of their wards that they are not keeping things to themselves but rather express and share their true feelings with parents.
- Coaching Institutes should not clutter the classroom by accommodating too many students in a small classroom. They should also design the curriculum of studies in such a manner that it does not become monotonous and creates boredom.
- Most of the Coaching Institutions are also providing the boarding and lodging facilities to their students. They need to ensure that the rooms are spacious enough and lively with proper ventilation etc so that their place of stay itself does not cause any kind of depression.
- Local Authorities, granting the permission to run coaching classes should also keep inspecting these coaching institutions to ensure that the laid down norms are strictly followed by these institutions. The licenses of the errant institutions should immediately be cancelled.

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