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## What's killing students in Kota

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**Abstract:** Kota is indeed a district in the state of Rajasthan, India. Earlier, Kota was primarily known as an industrial city, but over the last three decades it is well-known for its significant contributions to the field of education, particularly for preparing students for national-level competitive exams like IIT-JEE (Indian Institutes of Technology Joint Entrance Examination), NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test), and other engineering and medical entrance exams. The term "Suicide City" has been associated with Kota due to the alarming number of suicides and suicide attempts reported among students in the city. Many students face tremendous stress and anxiety as they are forced to study for long hours, sometimes neglecting their physical and emotional needs. This excessive academic pressure, coupled with the challenges of living away from home, can lead to feelings of isolation, depression, and even suicidal thoughts among some students. It has raised concerns about the overall mental health support system and the need for a more balanced and holistic approach to education. It is concluded that some student's failed to deal with new competitive environment, peer pressure, unable to fulfill parent's expectations. Some of faces many harmonal changes which trigger their stress. Parents's pressure and fear of failure is also leads to kill oneself. It is important to approach sensitive topics like suicide with care and consideration. The research paper aims to focus on the reasons for suicide attempts among students without directly addressing the resolution of suicidal tendencies. It is crucial to handle this subject with sensitivity and prioritize the well-being of those who might be affected by such research.

**Keywords:** Kota, suicide, parent's pressure, education, isolation.

### Intruduction

Kota is a city located in the state of Rajasthan, India. It has gained significant recognition as an educational hub, particularly for its coaching institutes that prepare students for various competitive exams. The city has become synonymous with academic excellence and has attracted students from all over the country. The education culture in Kota is unique and highly competitive. It is primarily known for its coaching centers that specialize in providing guidance for entrance exams like the Indian Institute of Technology Joint Entrance Examination (IIT-JEE), the All India Pre-Medical Test (AIPMT), and other engineering and medical entrance exams. These coaching institutes offer comprehensive study materials, expert faculty, and a rigorous learning environment to help students excel in their exams. Kota's education culture is characterized by its intense focus on exam preparation(1). Students often enroll in these coaching institutes immediately after completing their secondary education, devoting several hours each day to studying. The city is known for its disciplined and studious environment, with students often following strict study schedules. The coaching centers in Kota provide a wide range of facilities to students, including libraries, hostels, and other resources to create a conducive learning atmosphere. The competitive nature of the environment encourages healthy competition among students, and they strive to achieve top ranks in these entrance exams. The success rate of Kota's coaching institutes is quite remarkable, with a significant

number of students securing admissions in prestigious engineering and medical colleges across the country. The city is home to several engineering and medical colleges, which attract students seeking higher education beyond their entrance exam preparations(2).

In recent years, Kota's education culture has garnered attention, both for its achievements and the challenges it presents. The intense pressure and demanding study schedules can sometimes take a toll on students' mental and physical well-being. Efforts have been made to address these concerns by introducing measures to support the overall development and well-being of students. Overall, Kota's education culture is characterized by its emphasis on academic excellence, disciplined learning, and a competitive environment. It continues to attract aspiring students from across the country who are determined to achieve their academic goals and secure a successful future(3).

Suicide is the act of intentionally taking one's own life. It involves the deliberate and voluntary act of ending one's existence, typically as a result of overwhelming distress, despair, or a perceived lack of hope for the future. Suicide is a complex issue influenced by a range of factors such as mental health disorders, personal circumstances, social factors, and more. It is considered a serious public health concern and is often associated with profound emotional pain and suffering. It is important to approach the topic with sensitivity and seek professional help and support for individuals who may be struggling with suicidal thoughts or feelings(4).

As per reports by National Crime Records Bureau, NCRB, student suicides saw an increase by 4.5 percent as compared to 2021. Out of these deaths, 14 cases have been reported from Kota, Rajasthan - the coaching centre hub of India(5).

### **Reasons to make suicidal attempt**

- 1. Fear of Failure**– It is a common concern among students, and it has a significant impact on their academic performance and overall well-being. Students often face high expectations from their parents, teachers, and themselves, which can create pressure to succeed. The fear of not meeting these expectations can lead to a fear of failure. Many students have perfectionist tendencies, striving for flawless performance in every task(6). This perfectionist mindset can intensify the fear of failure, as any perceived mistake or setback becomes magnified. A fear of failure can be closely tied to a student's self-esteem and self-worth. Students may worry that failing at a task or receiving a poor grade reflects negatively on their intelligence or capabilities. The competitive nature of academic environments and the constant comparison to peers can contribute to the fear of failure. Students may fear falling behind their peers or being judged by others for their perceived failures(7). Students may worry about the consequences of failure, such as disappointing their parents, negatively impacting their future opportunities, or limiting their career prospects. These concerns can intensify the fear of failure. Some students may struggle with resilience and coping skills, making it challenging for them to bounce back from failures or setbacks. Without effective strategies to handle failure, the fear of it can become overwhelming(8).
- 2. Stress in coaching**- Coaching often involves setting high expectations for student performance, whether in academics, sports, or other areas. In many coaching environments, competition is inherent, and students may feel the need to constantly prove themselves. The fear of failure and the desire to outperform others can create stress and anxiety. Students may experience performance anxiety when they are constantly evaluated and expected to demonstrate their skills in front of coaches, teammates, or judges. This anxiety can hinder their performance and increase stress levels (9).
- 3. Poor in Time management**- The coaching culture in Kota, known for its rigorous 365-day, 24/7 schedule, puts immense pressure on students. The institutions in Kota prioritize continuous studying, disregarding Sundays and holidays. Students are bombarded with assignments, practice sheets, and frequent exams, leaving little room for personal needs or leisure activities(10). As a result, students

often sacrifice entertainment, family interactions, and personal interests in their pursuit of academic success. Sleep and rest become compromised, leading to chronic stress among students. The demanding schedule takes a toll on their overall well-being(11). A survey conducted on studious and high-performing students preparing for competitive exams like IIT and AIPMT revealed that they dedicate the majority of their waking hours solely to studying. Even during meals, their breaks are limited to switching between different subjects. These students may spend 16 to 18 hours each day immersed in their studies. On the other hand, underperforming students allocate minimal time, typically 2 to 3 hours or less, to studying. Their remaining time is often spent with friends or on social media platforms like Facebook. The challenge lies with students who struggle to manage their time effectively. They attempt to balance their studies, personal errands, socializing, and other aspects of life, resulting in an overwhelming burden. Unfortunately, sports, physical activity, and positive recreation are typically absent from their routines. The combination of excessive academic pressure, lack of leisure activities, and the absence of physical exercise contributes to the development of stress, and, in some cases, it may even lead to depression. It is crucial for students in such environments to find a healthy balance between their academic pursuits and other aspects of life. Prioritizing self-care, managing time efficiently, engaging in physical activities, and seeking emotional support can help mitigate the negative effects of stress and promote overall well-being(12).

4. **Use of drugs, alcohol etc-** Tobacco use, including smoking and smokeless tobacco, is a significant health concern worldwide. Among students, the use of tobacco products can be influenced by factors such as peer pressure, stress, and curiosity. It is possible that some coaching students in Kota may engage in tobacco use. Alcohol consumption among coaching students in Kota can be influenced by various factors, including socialization, peer influence, and stress relief. However, it is important to note that the legal drinking age in India is 21, and underage drinking is prohibited. Educational institutions generally have policies against alcohol use among students. Substance abuse, including the use of illicit drugs, is a concern in many communities worldwide, and coaching students in Kota may not be an exception. Factors such as stress, peer pressure, and a desire for performance enhancement can contribute to drug use(13).
5. **Lack of motivation-** The relationship between student motivation, depression, perceived ability can be complex and may vary from individual to individual.
  - (i) Perceived ability and self-motivation: When students perceive themselves as capable and competent, it can enhance their self-motivation. Positive perceptions of ability can boost confidence and foster a sense of achievement, reducing the likelihood of depression. Conversely, if students doubt their abilities, it may hinder their self-motivation and contribute to increased depression.
  - (ii) Perceived ability and parent-motivation: If students believe they are not meeting their parents' expectations or perceive themselves as inadequate, it can negatively impact their motivation. Parent-motivated students who doubt their abilities may experience increased stress and depression, as they may constantly strive to meet external expectations(14).
6. **Parent's pressure-** Parents can sometimes unintentionally put pressure on their children, especially when it comes to academic performance and achievements. This pressure can indeed induce stress in students. Here are a few ways in which parents' pressure can contribute to stress in students:
  - a) Academic expectations: Parents may have high expectations for their children's academic performance and push them to excel in school. This can create a constant fear of failure and the need to meet or exceed these expectations, leading to stress and anxiety.
  - b) Comparison with others: Parents may compare their children's achievements with those of their peers or siblings. Constant comparison can create a sense of competition and the fear of not measuring up, which can lead to stress and self-doubt (15).
  - c) Overloading with activities: Parents may enroll their children in numerous extracurricular activities, believing it will enhance their chances of success. However, if these activities become overwhelming and leave little time for relaxation and personal interests, it can contribute to stress.

- d) Future expectations: Parents may have specific career aspirations for their children and put pressure on them to pursue certain paths or fields of study. This can create anxiety about making the "right" choices and living up to their parents' expectations.
- e) Lack of support and understanding: If parents solely focus on academic achievements without considering their children's individual strengths, interests, and well-being, students may feel unsupported and misunderstood. This lack of support can lead to stress and a sense of being constantly judged.
- f) Unrealistic goals and perfectionism: Parents may set unrealistic goals for their children or expect them to be perfect in every aspect of their lives. This can create a tremendous amount of pressure to constantly perform at an exceptional level, leading to stress and a fear of failure(16).

## Conclusion

- 119 students studying in different institutes in the city have committed suicide in the last ten years, reveals that all is not well with Kota Coaching Classes (17).
- While fear of failure and the burden of expectations from family can certainly contribute to some cases of suicide, it is important to note that suicide is a complex issue with multiple causes.
- The initiative taken by the coaching institutes in Kota to launch a round-the-clock helpline for students is a positive step towards addressing the issue of student suicides and mental health concerns. Providing counseling services and tracking callers suffering from depression can offer much-needed support to students who may be experiencing academic or emotional pressure. Additionally, the decision by the district administration to ask coaching institutes to conduct screening tests for students seeking admission and provide assessments to parents regarding their chances of cracking entrance exams can help manage expectations and reduce the undue stress on students. It is crucial to recognize the intense competition and high expectations that students face when preparing for entrance exams. By implementing measures like helplines, counseling services, and assessments,
- Coaching institutes and the district administration can contribute to creating a more supportive and holistic learning environment for students. However, it's important to note that addressing the issue of student suicides requires a comprehensive approach involving not only coaching institutes and the district administration but also parents, schools, and society as a whole. Long-term efforts should focus on promoting mental health awareness, building resilience, and ensuring a balanced approach to education that takes into account the overall well-being of students (18).
- Study revealed that suicides are due to fear of failure and the burden of expectations from family. Parents had not given the permission to their children to go with their own interest as parents impose their choices and burden on their children with their own ambitious dreams.
- Parents scolded their children for not scoring good and left alone for a longer period. Parents have not been consoling and reminding them of the hard work done by the child and that they have been not satisfied and happy about the results.
- Batch reshuffling is a common practice in coaching institutes to balance the performance levels of students. Students may be reshuffled based on their academic progress, which can lead to changes in their study groups and peer support systems. This disruption can affect students' morale and add to their stress levels.
- Kota is renowned for its coaching centers that prepare students for competitive exams like IIT-JEE and medical entrance exams. The intense competition and the pressure to perform exceptionally well in these exams can lead to anxiety and stress. Test results, especially if they do not meet the expectations of the students or their parents, can further exacerbate these feelings.
- Being away from their parents and lacking a strong support system can add to the stress and loneliness experienced by these students. The absence of genuine friendships or individuals they can trust may further exacerbate their feelings of isolation. The intense and isolated environment



can increase the risk of developing serious mental health issues, including depression and anxiety, among these young students.

- Transition to coaching has been proved a challenge for the students. As it is associated with new independence, responsibilities and expectations. Coaching has a scenario that stimulates competence and goal attainment, thus this culture of competition generates excessive stress and anxiety.

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