

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the programme of suicide prevention initiated by the Samurdhi Authority. The major objectives of the study are two fold. On the one hand the study attempts to identify the demographic characteristics of suicide victims and the risk factors of suicide. On the other hand it attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme of suicide prevention undertaken by the Samurdhi Authority.

The survey method was made use of to collect data using two questionnaires. In the first questionnaire the social workers of Samurdhi Authority collected information from parents/caregivers or close relatives of 108 suicide victims (54 males and 54 females) between the ages of 15 - 34 who had committed suicide. In the second questionnaire information was elicited from 54 social workers regarding the programme of suicide prevention conducted by Samurdhi Authority.

Results of the age group, whether employed or otherwise civil status, ethnicity and religion, level of education appear to be factors that do not directly affect the act of committing suicide.

The present study also reveals that risk factors are plausible and may apply in different degrees to male and female suicide victims. It is important to be aware of risk factors that lead to eventual suicide in order to take early preventive measures.

The need for suicide prevention in Sri Lanka is emphasized. That the need is not only providing social work services to people at risk but also

constantly educating others and demonstrating how social work contributes to the setting of the overall function.

In addition the research findings, bring into focus theoretical considerations relevant for deep understanding of the need for prevention of suicide. A review of literature on different approaches to suicide prevention and programmes of suicide prevention is also presented.

This provides conceptual basis and overview of theory and the nature of strategies in suicide prevention at community level. Further the historical background of suicide in Sri Lanka and other countries and the strategies used for prevention of suicide are reviewed.

The statistical information related to the investigation reveals that this suicide prevention programme has performed an effective service for our youth. This programme of suicide prevention has been effective in bringing about a desirable change in social workers in respects of their knowledge attitudes and skills in suicide prevention.

The factors that obstruct the successful implementation of the programme of suicide prevention are also brought to light. Suggestions for the activities that could bring about a favorable check on the rising trend of suicide among the youth in Sri Lanka is brought to the light by the present study.

The study highlights the implications of the findings for the enrichment of suicide prevention at community level and for further research in this field.