

# Perceived Stress, Hopelessness and Thwarted Belongingness Predicts Suicidal Ideation among Youth of Kashmir

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**Abstract**—“Suicide is when people harm themselves with the goal of ending their life, and they die as a result”.(National institute of Mental Health). Suicide is a global issue; over 700,000 people lost their lives due to suicide. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among youth around the globe. (World Health Organization, [WHO], 2021). The state of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly Kashmir division has witnessed many atrocities since 1989. (H.A Wani et al., 2013). As a result mental and psychological health degradation has occurred. This mental and psychological affliction ultimately paved way for suicide among the people. The present study aims to assess suicidal ideation, inter-correlation between perceived stress, hopelessness, thwarted belongingness and suicidal ideation and thus assess the predictive power of factors under the study. The participants for the present study include youth of Kashmir between the age group of 15-19 olds. Results revealed that there is significant positive inter-correlation between the variables under the study. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis revealed that the independent variables significantly predict suicidal ideation. This indicates that the three factors under study have significant impact on suicidal ideation

**Keywords**—Perceived Stress, Hopelessness, Thwarted Belongingness, Suicidal Ideation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Suicide is one of the globally recognised problems; over 700,000 people have lost their lives due to suicide. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-29 age group in 2019 (World Health Organization [WHO],2021), paving way to unending affliction to families and impacting communities at different levels of human setup. In India, according to suicide rate had increased to 11.3 per cent and total number of suicide cases during 2020 was 153052. While in 2019 this rate was 10.4, increasing to 0.9 per cent in the year 2020. Daily wage earners are the top contributors of suicide in 2020 with 24.6 per cent, followed by housewives with 14.6 per cent. Self-employed persons contribution towards suicide is 11.3 per cent followed by unemployed persons with the contribution of 10.2 per cent. These are the top contributors of suicide in India. (National Crime Report Bureau [NCRB],2021). In Jammu and Kashmir 287 suicidal deaths were reported by in 2020. NCRB reported twenty causes of suicidal deaths including causes; “not known” and “other causes”. “Unemployment” was the highest contributor towards suicidal deaths in Jammu and Kashmir, 46 suicidal deaths occur due to the unemployment out of 287. In India employment is 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the age group of 18-30 years old. (National Crime Report Bureau [NCRB], 2021). Jammu and Kashmir has the second highest unemployment rate in the country at 46 per cent, (The Indian express 20<sup>th</sup> march, 2022)

Kashmir since 1989, suffers many atrocities, people of Kashmir has seen killings, rapes, and torture, forced labour, disappearances, property destruction, and human rights violation (H.A Wani et al.,2013) alarmingly degraded mental and psychological health of Kashmiri people. Recent abrogation of article 370/ 35 A (2019) and Covid-19 pandemic lockdown added largely to the already existing mental deprivation among the people of Kashmir. This prolonged mental affliction ultimately paves way for suicide among the people. Stress, depression, and hopelessness are the factors resulting from unemployment. These factors are associated with suicidal behaviour. Increase in the levels of stress and hopelessness increases the risk of suicide.

Previous studies have suggested that depression is a strongly related variable with suicidal behaviour, but it is not enough to predict suicidal behaviour accurately. Therefore, there is a need to identify other such related risk factors of suicidal behaviour, in order to prevent suicides. Researchers have explored many others risk factors of suicidal behaviour with different combinations. Among all these combinations perceived stress, hopelessness, and social isolation was found strongly related with suicidal behaviour. (Elliott & Frude, 2001; Mitchell, Crane, & Kim,2008; Zweig & Hinrichsen,1993)(K.Minkoff et at.,1973; Aaron T. Beck et al.,2006; Beck, Kovacs, & Weisman.,1975) (Raffaella Calati et al.,2018) Perceived stress, and hopelessness are assumed to be associated with suicidal behaviour; many studies have shown the relationship between perceived stress and hopelessness with suicidal behaviour. Stress perception and hopelessness are significantly related to thoughts of committing suicide (R. Vilhjalmsson.G. Kristjansdottir E. Sveinbjarnardottir., 1997) a longitudinal study on adolescents revealed that perceived stress is a strong risk factor of suicide ideation. Higher levels of perceived stress was found related to suicidal behaviour among depressed adolescents (Abdollahi et al.,2016). Perceived stress was found risk factor for suicidal behaviour among young adults (Anastasiades et al., 2017). Perceived stress, hopelessness and thwarted belongingness are well established risk factors for suicidal behaviour. However, there interrelationship is unknown.

## SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR

Suicidal behaviour refers to thoughts and behaviours related to an individual intentionally taking their own life. These thoughts include the more specific outcomes of suicidal ideation (thoughts or thinking about suicide). Suicide plan which refers to formulation of specific plots by an individual to end their own life; and suicide attempt which refers to engagement in a potentially self-injurious behaviours in which there is at least some intention of dying as result of the behaviour. (Rory & Matthew., 2017)

## PERCEIVED STRESS

Perceived stress can be defined as “The feelings or thoughts that an individual has about how much stress they are under at a given point in time or over a given time period”. (Anna C. Phillips., 2013)

## HOPELESSNESS

Hopelessness can be defined as negative expectations regarding the existing problems of an individual and the belief of an individual that existing situation will remain static and his problems are insoluble. Therefore, An individual desire to escape from existing situation (Beck, Kovacs, & Weissman., 1975; Beck, Brown, Berchick, Stewart, & Steerr., (2006)

## THWARTED BELONGINGNESS

The person’s detachment from his family, friends, society or other valued groups is a state of Social alienation for example, “*I am alone*”. Social alienation is the persuasive cause for suicidal behaviour. As per the theory, when an individual is socially isolated, passive suicidal ideation finds place in his mind. *Loneliness and absence reciprocal care* are two dimensions of *social alienation*.

### II. OBJECTIVES

- To assess the relationship between perceived stress, hopelessness and thwarted belongingness with suicidal ideation among the youth of Kashmir
- To study the effect of perceived stress, hopelessness and thwarted belongingness with suicidal ideation

### III. HYPOTHESIS

- H<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant positive correlation between perceived stress with suicidal ideation  
**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is significant positive correlation between hopelessness with suicidal ideation  
**H<sub>3</sub>:** There is significant positive correlation between thwarted belongingness with suicidal ideation  
**H<sub>4</sub>:** There is significant positive impact of perceived stress on suicidal ideation  
**H<sub>5</sub>:** There is significant positive impact of hopelessness on suicidal ideation  
**H<sub>6</sub>:** There is significant positive impact of thwarted belongingness on suicidal ideation

### IV. METHODOLOGY

#### Sampling technique

Data for the present study was collected using Google form.

#### Sampling description

The present study was carried out on the sample group of youth of Kashmir in the age group of 15-29 year olds. The sample was selected using purposive sampling. The data was collected across the Kashmir valley. Total number of participants in the study was 173 youth of Kashmir with male=91 and female=82

Table1: The Demographic Details Of The Subjects Participating In The Study.

<b>Age</b>	15-29	173
<b>Gender</b>	Male	91
	Female	82

### V. MEASURES

The data for the present study was collected by using self-report questionnaire, Perceived Stress Scale, to measure the levels of stress; Becks Hopelessness Scale was used to measure hopelessness and Thwarted belongingness was measured by using Interpersonal Need Questionnaire. For suicidal behaviour “Suicide behaviour Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) was used.

#### Description of tools

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Sheldom Cohen, 1994): was used to measure levels of stress: the scale consists of 10 items with 5 point likert scale 0-5, where 0 stands for “Never” and 4 stands for “Very often”. Item 4, 5, 7 and 8 were reverse coded. Items scores are summed to yield a total score that can range from 0-40 with higher score indicates higher perceived stress.

Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) (Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974: The BHS consists of 20 true-false statements that assess the extent of negative expectancies about the immediate and long-range future. Each of the 20 statements is scored 1 or 0. Of the 20 true-false statements, 9 are keyed FALSE, and 11 are keyed TRUE to indicate endorsement of pessimism about the future. The item scores yield to total score that can range from 0 to 20 with higher scores indicating greater hopelessness.

Interpersonal Need Questionnaire (INQ) (Van Orden et al., 2012): The 15-item INQ, which measures Perceived Burdensomeness and Thwarted Belongingness. First 6 items measures Perceived Burdensomeness on 7 point Likert scale and rest the 9 items measures Thwarted Belongingness on 7 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at all true for me) to 7 (Very true for me). Thwarted belongingness (9 items; score range from 9 to 63) and perceived burdensomeness (6 items; scores range from 6 to 42) in the present study we include only assessment of thwarted belongingness with 9-items scale among 9 items 1,2,4,7,8 and 9 were reverse coded and we exclude 6 items from the scale that measures Perceived Burdensomeness.

Suicidal Behaviour Questionnaire revised (SBQ-R) (Osman et al, 2001): The SBQ-R is a four item self-report questionnaire with 4 items. Each item tapping different dimension of suicidality, (Item one) measures the presence of life time suicidal thoughts and suicidal behaviours, (item two) measures frequency of suicidal thoughts over the past years.(Item three) measures communication of threat of suicide attempt to others and the (item fourth) measures likelihood of attempting suicide someday in the future. The possible score range for the SBQ-R is 3 to 18. Every item is with different response ranges.

Item one response range (1) Never, (2) It was just a brief passing thought, (3a) I have had a plan at least once to kill myself but did not try to do it, (3b) I have had a plan at least once to kill myself and really wanted to die, (4a) I have attempted to kill myself, but did not want to die, (4b) I have attempted to kill myself, and really hoped to die  
 Item 2 response range Never, (1) Rarely (1 time) (2) Sometime (2 times) (3) Often (3-4 times) (4) Very Often (5 or more times)  
 Item 3 response range No, (2a) Yes, at one time, but did not really want to die (2b) Yes, at one time, and really wanted to do it (3a) Yes, more than once, but did not want to do it (3b) Yes, more than once, and really wanted to do it  
 Item 4 response range Never, (1) No chance at all, (2) Rather Unlikely, (3) Unlikely, (4) Likely, (5) Rather Likely, (6) Very Likely

There are four items in the scale with different response ranges; therefore the scoring of the

Item 1 scoring:

If 1 is selected= 1 point, if 2 is selected=2 points, if 3 or 4 is selected=3 points, if 5 or 6 is selected=4 points

Item 2 scoring:

If 0 is selected=1 points, if 1 is selected=2 points, if 2 is selected=3 points, if 3 is selected=4 points, if 4 is selected=5 points

Item 3 scoring:

If 1 is selected=1 points, If 2 or 3 is selected=2 points, If 4 or 5 is selected=3 points

Item 4 scoring:

If 0 is selected=0 points, If 1 is selected=1 points, If 2 is selected=2 points, If 3 is selected=3 points, If 4 is selected=4 points, If 5 is selected 5 points, If 6 is selected 6 points

**VI. DATA ANALYSIS**

The data was analysed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 26. The frequencies of all the four variables were computed, and then Normality of data was assessed by taking Skewness and kurtosis into consideration, both Skewness and kurtosis was analysed through descriptive statistics, and the values were well within the range of +1.0. Furthermore, bivariate correlation was used to assess the relationships between the constructs (Perceived stress, Thwarted belongingness and Hopelessness with Suicidal behaviour) correlation analysis was followed by Multiple regressions and then followed by independent sample T-test.

Table2 Representing scale characteristics of Perceived Stress, Thwarted Belongingness, Hopelessness and Suicidal ideation

Measures	Items	Response range	N	Mean	SD
PSS	10	0-5	174	19.90	6.02
INQ	9	1-7	174	35.11	9.78
BHS	20	0-1	174	5.44	4.33
SBQ-R	4	0-6	174	5.85	3.74

**Reliability Analyses**

Reliability analysis was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha. The result of reliability analysis revealed measuring tools has high reliability for each of the constructs in the study results are shown in the table.

Table3

S.no	Measuring tools	Cronbach’s Alpha
1	PPS-10 items	.711
2	INQ-9 items (TB)	.741
3	BHS-20 items	.859
4	SBQ-R-4 items	.813

Table 4 Presenting Descriptive statistics for Perceived Stress among youth of Kashmir

Low	Moderate	High
<13	14-26	27-40

Table 5 Presenting Different levels of frequency distribution of Perceived Stress among youth of Kashmir

Low		Moderate		High	
f	(%)	f	(%)	f	(%)
25	14.36	127	72.98	22	12.64

Table 5 represents the frequency distribution of perceived stress among the youth of Kashmir in which 14.36 per cent of sample group falls under the low level of perceived stress, 72.98 per cent of sample group falls under the moderate level of perceived stress and whereas, 12.64 falls under the high level of perceived stress.

Table 6 Presenting Descriptive Statistics for Hopelessness Among Youth Of Kashmir

Minimal range	mild	moderate	severe
0-3	4-8	9-14	>14

Table 7 Presenting Different Levels of Frequency Distribution Of Hopelessness Among Youth Of Kashmir

Minimal range	mild	moderate	severe
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<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
74	42.52	62	35.63	30	17.24	7	4.02

Table 7 represents the frequency distribution of hopelessness among the youth of Kashmir in which 42.52 per cent of sample group falls under the minimal level of hopelessness, 35.63 per cent of sample group falls under the mild level of hopelessness, 17.24 per cent falls under the moderate level of hopelessness and the 4.02 falls under the severe level of hopelessness

**Table 8 Presenting Descriptive Statistics Of Thwarted Belongingness Among Youth Of Kashmir**

Low	Moderate	High
<29	30-40	>41

**Table 9 Presenting Different Levels of Frequency Distribution Of Thwarted Belongingness Among Youth Of Kashmir**

Low	Moderate	High			
<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
49	28.16	79	45.40	45	25.86

Table 9 represents the frequency distribution of thwarted belongingness among the youth of Kashmir in which 28.16 per cent of sample group falls under the low level of thwarted belongingness, 45.40 per cent of sample group falls under the moderate level of thwarted belongingness and whereas, 25.86 falls under the high level of thwarted belongingness.

**Table 10 Presenting Descriptive Statistics of Suicidal Ideation among Youth of Kashmir**

Low	Moderate	High
<3	4-6	>7

**Table 11 Presenting Different Levels Of Frequency Distribution Of Suicidal Behaviour Among Youth Of Kashmir**

Low	Moderate	High			
<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
68	39.30	52	29.88	54	31.21

Table 11 represents the frequency distribution of Suicidal behaviour among the youth of Kashmir in which 39.30 per cent of sample group falls under the low level of suicidal ideation, 29.47 per cent of sample group falls under the moderate level of Suicidal ideation and 31.21 falls under the high level

**Table 12 Presenting Inter-Correlations of Perceived Stress, Hopelessness And Thwarted Belongingness With Suicidal Ideation Among The Youth Of Kashmir**

	PSS	HLS	TB	SI
<b>1.Perceived Stress</b>	1			
<b>2 Hopelessness</b>	.466**	1		
<b>3 Thwarted Belongingness</b>	.353**	.446**	1	
<b>4 Suicidal ideation</b>	.417**	.377**	.234**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11 represents the person’s correlations between hopelessness, perceived stress and thwarted belongingness with suicidal ideation. As can be seen in the table hopelessness ( $r = .377, p < 0.01$ ) Perceived stress ( $r= .417, p < 0.01$ ) and Thwarted Belongingness ( $r=.234, p < 0.01$ ) was found to be significantly and positively correlated with suicidal ideation.

Result revealed that all the three variables under the study have significant positive correlations with suicidal ideation, hence  $H_1, H_2$  and  $H_3$  stand accepted or supported.

**Table 12 Representing Multiple Regression Analysis Of Perceived Stress, Hopelessness, And Thwarted Belongingness With Suicidal Ideation**

Hypotheses	Regression weight	B	T	p-value	Results
$H_4$	PS → SI	.189	3.873	.000*	Supported
$H_5$	HLS → SI	.193	2.735	.007*	Supported
$H_6$	TB → SI	.011	.359	.720	Not supported

R	.217
F(3,169)	1884.343

Note. \* $p < 0.05$ . PS: Perceived Stress, HLS: Hopelessness, SI: Suicidal ideation. Whereas  $p > 0.05$ . For TB: Thwarted Belongingness

The dependent variable (Suicidal ideation) was regressed on predicting (independent) variables of perceived stress, hopelessness and thwarted belongingness. The independent variables significantly predict suicidal ideation,  $F(3,169) = 1884.343$   $p < .001$ , which indicates that the three factors under study have significant impact on suicidal ideation. Additionally, coefficients were further assessed to ascertain the influence of each of the factors on the criterion variable suicidal ideation.

$H_4$  evaluates whether perceived stress significantly and positive impact on suicidal ideation ( $B = .189$ ,  $t = 3.873$ ,  $p = .000^*$ ). Hence  $H_4$  was supported

$H_5$  evaluates whether hopelessness significantly and positive impact on suicidal ideation ( $B = .193$ ,  $t = 2.735$ ,  $p = .007^*$ ). Hence  $H_5$  was supported

$H_6$  evaluates whether thwarted belongingness significantly and positive impact on suicidal ideation ( $B = .011$ ,  $t = .359$ ,  $p = .720$ ). Hence  $H_6$  was not supported

## VII. CONCLUSION

Present study revealed that 31.2 per cent of youth in Kashmir tends to engage in suicidal behaviour, the result of present study is in line with the studies previously conducted by (Ahad & Shah.,2018) and (Shams UN Nisa.,2019). The studies conducted in Kashmir on the prevalence of suicidal behaviour among youth, which revealed the percentage of 28.3% (Ahad & Shah.,2018) and 29.3 % by (Shams UN Nisa.,2019), from 2018 to first half of 2022. There is an almost 3 per cent increase in suicidal behaviour. This increase might be attributed to lockdown due to abrogation of Article 370, 35A and the lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic (Greater Kashmir 26 July, 2021) To explore the inter-correlations of the variables under the study and to check the predictive power of independent variables with regards to dependent variable. The result revealed significant inter-correlation between Perceived Stress, Hopelessness, Thwarted Belongingness and Suicidal Behaviour. The By applying Multiple Regression Analysis it was found that perceived stress and hopelessness significantly predict suicidal behaviour. The result is in line with the previous study conducted by (Akansha G.,2014; Beck & Weishaar, 1990) whereas, thwarted belongingness was found insignificant in predicting suicidal behaviour. During clinical practices individuals possessing perceived stress and hopelessness should be assessed for suicidal behaviour. These studied factors should emphatically be considered in suicide control operations for significant outcome.

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