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## 'High aspiration levels leading to depression'

— By FPJ Bureau | Sep 11, 2014 01:10 am



**Mumbai** : Are Indians expecting too much from themselves? Are their aspirations too high? Is this leading to frustration and depression? These are the questions psychiatrists and researchers tossed up in discussions on Wednesday, which was World Suicide Prevention Day.

"In a society driven by aspirations and dreams, frustration rates are bound to be high which can lead to depression," said Prof S Parasuraman, director of Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).

Katy Gandevia, retired professor of mental health at TISS, said: "It is good to be ambitious but people should be realistic too. People should be aware of what they can do and what they cannot and in case they fail, they should not break."

Psychiatrists say that people in a developing country like ours are often caught up between what they watch on television and reality. This extreme disparity, they say, is difficult for some to deal with, which in turn make them suicidal.

The statistics seem to suggest this. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), India accounted for 1.35 lakh of the eight lakh suicides worldwide in 2012.

According to the recently released report, India's suicide rate was 21.1 per 100,000 people, which makes it among the top ten suicide-prone countries.

Urban anomie is also proving to be fatal for people living in big cities. The lack of emotional connect in a fast paced city life is something that most people cannot cope with, especially those who come from smaller towns to big cities for a better life. "Alienation and anonymity are some of the major causes for depression in cities where people more often than not don't know who their neighbours are," said psychiatrist Harish Shetty at a seminar on suicide prevention at Bandra's National College.

It is important for each one of us to take a moment to slow down and reconnect.

"To make eye contact and smile at the person next to us. It goes a long way in helping people cope with day to day life," he said.

Dr Arun John, director of Vandrevale Foundation which provides a 24-hour helpline for the distressed, said: "There are always signs, when a person is depressed it is important we catch on to these signs early on and reach out to the person. People should not shy away from contacting psychiatrists or just calling a helpline number when in distress.

### Helpline numbers:

- **Vandrevale Foundation:** 1860-2662345, 24-hour
- **AASRA** : 022-27546669, 24-hour
- **The Samaritans:** 022-32473267, Monday to Sunday (3 pm to 9 pm)
- **iCall** : 022-25563291, Monday to Saturday (10 a.m. to 10 p.m)

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