



THE SILENT TRAP: the rat race to success



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In this fast, ever-developing, competitive world, people have entered into a Continuous chase of achievement or chase for material prosperity, a rat race that is never-ending and relentless. In this rat race for "success", we put ourselves into a vicious cycle to keep up to the expectations of the society and the people around us even though it may appear to be the route to fulfilment. Everything, starting from friends, family & relatives, education or jobs and even vacations are now seen as a competition to be won and people try winning it to outshine others. The intense pressure the children face to excel academically the pursuit of achieving top grades is akin to a high-stakes game, leaving students grappling with anxiety attacks, low self-confidence, depression, and loss of creativity and optimism, pushing young minds to the breaking point, this article sheds light on the narrowing consequences of this relentless, tiring race and calls for urgent reforms to priorities holistic development, mental health and nurturing environment for India's youth.

This burden of expectations, coupled with the perpetual drive to outperform colleagues, starts as early as a child enters the school premises. A young, budding,

developing mind is subjected to this and finds themselves trapped in this swamp, which is difficult to escape. Parents emphasise the importance of academic success, hoping for a bright future for their children. Still, they often forget that burdening these little minds may negatively affect their child's overall development. This pressure steadily mounts as they progress through various education stages, intensifying each year. This becomes a constant entity in their lives, permeating every facet of their existence.

In this environment, students face a challenge, which gives them no other choice but to accept it or to enter a trap of anxiety, stress, and depression, and they are often persuaded to take drastic steps like suicide & drug- abuse. They have the pressure to not only excel academically but also navigate a system that can be competitive and often unforgiving. This fear of falling short of not being able to keep pace or not meeting the expectations of parents and teachers drives many students to push their limits, which is often at the expense of their mental and emotional well-being.

The conventional mark-centred or grade-oriented education system significantly contributes to this. Examinations necessary for knowledge and skills are reduced to a mere "Numbers game" where the only measure of success is the score on a piece of paper. This leads to sacrificing holistic learning, personality development, and creativity.

A narrow focus on exam-oriented education stifles students' innate curiosity and creativity, suppressing their ability to explore, innovate, discover, and learn.

Transcultural Psychiatry

Students often can only pursue their talents or passions within the prescribed curriculum.

The educational landscape is slowly turning into a business sector where coaching is at a profit by promoting this practice of excellence and a competitive rat race environment. This has brought together both opportunities and challenges, contributing to the mounting pressure on the youth- The lure of these institutes, boasting top rankers and promising shortcuts to success. However, about producing, there are only so many that attract students and parents who invest their time, money, and efforts believing that the pursuit of academic excellence is the surest path to prosperity and thriving, independent lives.

However, behind this facade of guaranteed success lies a harsh, complex reality. The students face impounding pressures, a fresh, competitive environment, and rigorous, scheduled, gruelling hours. This affects mental and emotional health, resulting in a 1D approach to education rather than a multi-dimensional holistic aspect.

As students go through this constant phase of comparisons to peers, unrealistic expectations often lead susceptible students to a feeling of self-doubt, fear of failure, insufficiency, and inadequacy, leading to a myriad of mental health issues, most common being anxiety and depression. The lack of balance btw educational & personal life isolation, disconnection and results into a sense of neglect. This worsens when they start ignoring their physical well-being and happiness. This issue of depression and suicidal tendencies, ever-increasing at an alarming rate in India, paints a grey picture of the challenges the students face. This puts a heavy toll on their mental health, pushing them to the brink of despair and robbing them of their joy, energy, enthusiasm, curiosity and creativity. Loss

of purpose is another profound consequence of this pressure where students often forget to dream or aspire, being consumed completely by the singular goal of their academic success (achieving top ranks or high numbers)

Resentfully, many students in search of an escape from this rat trap, which baits them every time they try to get out of it, resort to the ultimate tragedy: SUICIDE. This highlights the deep despair & hopelessness that can overcome even the brightest young minds if pushed beyond limits.

Addressing this issue is a matter of concern and a moral imperative. It involves a holistic approach to promoting mental health, offering support systems, and improving education. Encouraging a well-balanced, proportionate approach to the overall development of the individual can help alleviate the problem. Ultimately, young minds' mental well-being is paramount to winning the race for success in a positive and meaningful way.