



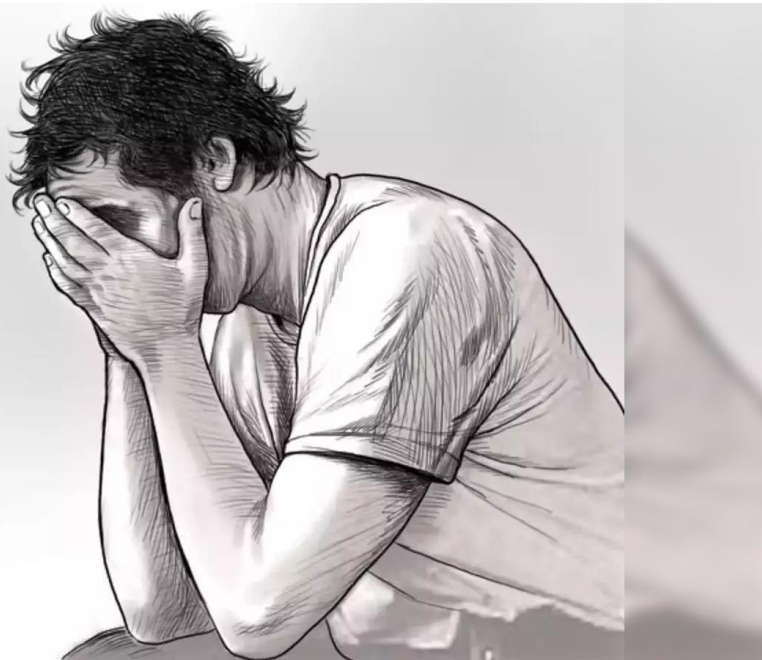
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WHERE THERE IS NO VISION, THE PEOPLE PERISH

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "THE ILL EFFECTS OF EDUCATION SYSTEM ". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "SOCIETY " SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

CONTEXT

This article appeared in the Hindu which is highlighting the **ill effects of our education system** which only focuses on rote learning and the rat race. This is being reflected in the Increasing number of suicides which are happening in Kota city. The reasons behind these suicides are increasing familial and peer pressure which forces a child to take such a step when not able to handle the pressure.



MORE ABOUT THE ARTICLE

In recent times, the corridors of Kota, Rajasthan, echoed with tragic tales of despair as two young souls chose to end their lives, succumbing to the immense pressure of competitive examinations. These distressing incidents shine a harsh light on the **relentless burden our youth face**, a burden that often proves unbearable. Every year, across the expanse of India, similar tragedies unfold, each one a poignant reminder of the silent suffering endured by countless young minds.

REASONS FOR RISING SUICIDES

The increasing rate of student suicides in India can be attributed to a multitude of factors:

1. **Academic Pressure:** The intense pressure to excel academically, particularly in a highly **competitive educational environment** like India, can lead to immense stress among students. The emphasis on scoring high marks to **secure admission in prestigious institutions or to meet parental expectations** can become overwhelming.
2. **High Expectations:** Expectations from family, teachers, and society to perform exceptionally well academically can create a sense of failure and hopelessness in students if they are unable to meet these expectations.
3. **Lack of Mental Health Support:** There's still a stigma surrounding mental health in many parts of India, and students might hesitate to seek help due to fear of judgment or lack of awareness about available support services.
4. **Isolation and Loneliness:** The competitive environment and focus on academic achievement can sometimes isolate students, leading to feelings of loneliness and alienation, which can exacerbate mental health issues.
5. **Financial Stress:** Financial constraints can also contribute to stress among students, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who may face additional pressure to perform well academically to secure scholarships or financial aid.
6. **Relationship Issues:** Relationship problems, whether with family members, friends, or romantic partners, can significantly impact a student's mental well-being and contribute to feelings of despair.
7. **Poor Coping Mechanisms:** Some students may lack effective coping mechanisms to deal with stress and adversity, leading them to resort to extreme measures like suicide when faced with overwhelming challenges.
8. **Social Media and Cyberbullying:** The rise of social media has introduced new challenges for students, including cyberbullying, which can have devastating effects on mental health and self-esteem.

PROBLEM IN THE COMPETITIVE NATURE OF SYSTEM

Coaching institutes in India can contribute to an erosion of the learning process in several ways, which can ultimately increase the chances of student suicides:

1. **Focus on Rote Learning:** Many coaching institutes prioritize rote memorization and **exam-specific strategies over deep understanding and critical thinking**. This approach can **undermine genuine learning and intellectual development**, as students may prioritize short-term memorization of facts and formulas. This **shallow approach to learning can lead to feelings of frustration, inadequacy**, and hopelessness, especially if students struggle to keep up with the pace or fail to achieve desired results despite their efforts.
2. **Pressure to Perform:** The intense competition and emphasis on exam results in coaching institutes can create an environment of extreme pressure and stress for students. The **constant pressure to perform well in exams, coupled with the fear of failure and disappointment from family and peers**, can take a significant toll on students' mental health. This **pressure cooker environment** can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and despair, ultimately increasing the risk of suicidal ideation and behavior among students who feel overwhelmed and hopeless about their academic prospects.

3. **Limited Personal Growth:** Coaching institutes often prioritize **exam-centric learning at the expense of holistic personal growth** and development. Students may find themselves trapped in a cycle of relentless studying, with little time or opportunity to pursue interests outside of their academic pursuits. The **lack of balance and fulfillment in students' lives** can contribute to feelings of emptiness and disillusionment, further exacerbating mental health issues and increasing the risk of suicidal behavior.
4. **Failure to Meet Expectations:** Despite their best efforts, not all students are able to achieve the desired results in coaching institute exams or entrance exams. The discrepancy between students' aspirations and their actual performance can lead to **feelings of inadequacy, worthlessness, and self-doubt**. Students may **internalize these feelings of failure and perceive suicide** as a way to escape the overwhelming sense of disappointment and shame associated with not meeting societal or familial expectations.
5. **Lack of social skills:** the proliferation of coaching institutes and their adoption of often draconian methods have proven overwhelming for many young individuals. Those who do manage to succeed in these fiercely competitive exams often do so at the cost of a normal adolescence or teenage experience. These "successful" candidates often emerge as **mere automatons, lacking essential social skills** and the ability to engage in meaningful communication beyond the confines of their exam-focused subjects.

TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Addressing the challenges posed by the proliferation of coaching institutes and their detrimental effects on students' well-being requires a multi-pronged approach:

1. **Reforming the Education System:** There needs to be a fundamental reevaluation of the education system to reduce the reliance on high-stakes entrance exams as the sole determinant of academic success. This could involve exploring alternative methods of assessment that focus on holistic development rather than rote memorization.
2. **Strengthening School Education:** Emphasize the importance of quality school education by improving teaching standards, updating curricula to promote critical thinking and creativity, and providing adequate resources and support for both students and teachers.
3. **Regulating Coaching Institutes:** Implement regulations to ensure that coaching institutes adhere to certain standards of quality, transparency, and ethical practices. This could include measures such as mandatory accreditation, regular inspections, and penalties for institutes found to be exploiting students or engaging in unethical behavior.
4. **Promoting Mental Health Awareness:** Increase awareness about mental health issues among students, parents, and educators, and provide access to mental health support services within schools and communities. This could involve integrating mental health education into school curricula, training teachers to recognize signs of distress, and establishing counseling centers in educational institutions.
5. **Encouraging Balanced Lifestyles:** Encourage students to pursue a balanced lifestyle that includes not only academic pursuits but also extracurricular activities, hobbies, and social interactions. Schools can play a role in promoting a healthy work-life balance by offering a variety of activities and resources outside of academics.
6. **Parental Education and Support:** Provide parents with resources and support to help them understand the importance of a balanced approach to education and the potential harms of excessive academic pressure. Encourage parents to prioritize their children's overall well-being and development rather than solely focusing on academic achievement.

7. **Promoting Alternative Pathways:** Encourage students to explore alternative pathways to success beyond traditional academic routes. This could include vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, or opportunities for apprenticeships and hands-on learning experiences.
8. **Advocacy and Policy Change:** Advocate for policy changes at the national and state levels to address the root causes of the coaching institute culture, including issues related to education inequality, societal pressures, and the commercialization of education.

By implementing these strategies in a coordinated manner, we can work towards creating a more balanced and supportive educational environment that prioritizes the well-being and holistic development of students.

Ankit Kumar

ACCREDITATION OF NHRC BY GANHRI POSTPONED

THIS ARTICLE COVERS “DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS”, AND THE TOPIC DETAILS “ACCREDITATION OF NHRC BY GANHRI POSTPONED”. THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE “INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS” SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The accreditation of the National Human Rights Commission, India (NHRC-India) by the U.N.-recognized Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) has been postponed for a second time within the span of a decade. This delay stems from concerns raised regarding issues such as political influence in appointments, the inclusion of law enforcement in investigations related to human rights abuses, and inadequate collaboration with civil society.

REASONS BEHIND THE POSTPONE

- **Limited Representation and Inclusivity:** The GANHRI identified a lack of diversity within the NHRC’s staff and leadership. This homogeneity, they argue, hinders the commission’s ability to understand and address the specific needs of all communities within India.
- **Insufficient Protections for Vulnerable Groups:** The GANHRI expressed concerns about the NHRC’s response to human rights violations targeting marginalised communities, religious minorities, and human rights defenders. These groups often face unique challenges and require tailored protections.
- **Conflict of Interest in Investigations:** The GANHRI flagged the NHRC’s practice of involving the police in investigations of alleged human rights abuses by the police itself. This creates a conflict of interest, raising questions about the impartiality of such investigations.

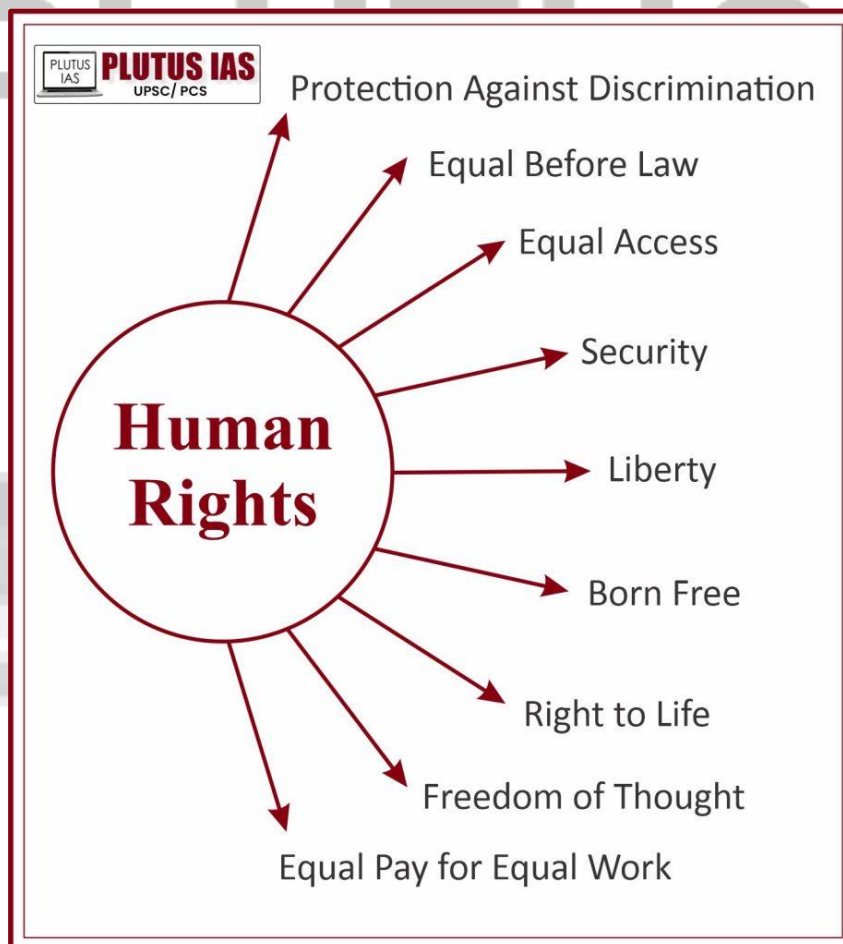
- **Restricted Collaboration with Civil Society:** The GANHRI feels the NHRC doesn't collaborate effectively with civil society organisations working on human rights issues. Civil society groups often play a crucial role in documenting human rights violations and advocating for reform. By limiting cooperation with these organisations, the NHRC might be missing valuable insights and opportunities to address human rights concerns.

PARIS PRINCIPLE AND THE "A" STATUS GIVEN BY GANHRI

- The Paris Principles, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, set out the essential criteria that National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) must meet to be considered credible and impactful.
 - The Paris Principles, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, delineate six primary criteria that National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) must meet to be considered legitimate and effective guardians of human rights.
1. **Mandate and Competence:** NHRIs should possess a clear and comprehensive mandate that empowers them to promote and protect human rights effectively. This mandate should encompass various aspects of human rights, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.
 2. **Autonomy from Government:** NHRIs must operate independently from the government and other state actors to ensure impartiality and effectiveness in addressing human rights issues. This autonomy includes financial independence and freedom from undue government influence in decision-making processes.
 3. **Independence Guaranteed by Law:** The independence of NHRIs should be legally guaranteed through statutes or constitutional provisions to shield them from political interference and ensure their ability to fulfil their mandate without fear of reprisal.
 4. **Pluralism:** NHRIs should reflect the diversity of society and be composed of members representing various sectors, including civil society, academia, and marginalized communities. This diversity fosters inclusivity and enhances the institution's credibility and legitimacy.
 5. **Adequate Resources:** NHRIs must be allocated sufficient resources, including financial, human, and technical resources, to effectively carry out their functions. Inadequate resources can impede their ability to investigate human rights violations, provide assistance to victims, and advocate for systemic reforms.
 6. **Adequate Powers of Investigation:** NHRIs should possess the authority to conduct impartial and thorough investigations into alleged human rights violations. This includes the power to subpoena witnesses, access relevant information and documents, and make recommendations for remedial action to address violations.
- NHRIs are expected to fulfil requirements including a broad mandate, autonomy from government influence, legally guaranteed independence, pluralistic

representation, sufficient resources, and investigative authority. **GANHRI**, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, evaluates NHRIs based on these principles, **classifying them as 'A' status (fully compliant), 'B' status (partially compliant), or lacking status.**

- An 'A' status indicates complete alignment with the Paris Principles and grants NHRIs specific privileges within international and regional human rights frameworks. NHRIs holding 'A' status enjoy speaking rights at the UN Human Rights Council, participation in UN treaty bodies, and leadership roles in NHRI networks such as ENNHRI and GANHRI.
- This status empowers them to actively contribute to international discourse and decision-making processes concerning human rights issues. Achieving 'A' status is a prestigious acknowledgement of an NHRI's credibility, autonomy, and effectiveness in advancing and safeguarding human rights, as articulated in the Paris Principles.



ABOUT GANHRI

- The Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) is an organization associated with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Serving as a global network, it brings together national human rights institutions (NHRIs)

from various countries with the aim of advancing the cause of human rights protection and promotion.

- GANHRI boasts a membership of 120 NHRIs worldwide. Its core mission revolves around unifying, advocating for, and enhancing the capabilities of NHRIs to align with the UN Paris Principles, which serve as fundamental standards for the effective functioning of NHRIs.
- Established in 1993, GANHRI serves as a platform for collaboration, capacity-building, and advocacy among National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) worldwide.
- GANHRI's primary objective is to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of NHRIs in fulfilling their mandates to promote and protect human rights within their respective countries. It provides a forum for NHRIs to exchange best practices, share experiences, and address common challenges related to human rights promotion and protection.
- One of GANHRI's key roles is to accredit NHRIs based on adherence to the Paris Principles, a set of international standards that outline the fundamental criteria NHRIs must meet to be considered credible and effective. Accreditation by GANHRI signifies recognition of an NHRI's compliance with these principles and grants them access to various privileges and opportunities for engagement at the international level.

WHAT IS NHRC AND ITS COMPOSITION?

NHRC, established on October 12, 1993, under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, amended in 2006, is an independent statutory body in India. It functions as a watchdog for human rights in the country, safeguarding rights such as life, liberty, equality, and dignity, as guaranteed by the Indian Constitution and international agreements enforceable within India's courts. Its formation adheres to the Paris Principles, adopted in Paris in October 1991 and endorsed later that year.

Composition:

- NHRC comprises multiple members, including a chairperson, five full-time members, and seven deemed members. Eligibility for chairmanship extends to individuals who have served as Chief Justice of India or judges of the Supreme Court.
- Appointments are made by the President upon the recommendation of a six-member committee headed by the Prime Minister. The term of office for the chairperson and members is three years or until they reach the age of 70, whichever comes earlier.
- The President retains the authority to remove the chairperson or any member under specific circumstances, subject to an inquiry by a Supreme Court Judge.

Divisions:

The commission operates through five specialized divisions: Law, Investigation, Policy Research & Programmes, Training, and Administration.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO NHRC

- **Mechanism of Investigation:** NHRC lacks a dedicated investigative mechanism, relying on Central and State Governments to probe human rights violations.
- **Time Limit for Complaints:** Complaints filed with NHRC beyond one year from the incident are not entertained, resulting in numerous grievances remaining unaddressed.
- **Decision Enforcing Power:** NHRC can only issue recommendations and lacks the authority to enforce its decisions or ensure compliance.
- **Underestimation of Funds:** NHRC is sometimes perceived as a post-retirement avenue for judges and bureaucrats with political affiliations. Insufficient funding further impedes its efficacy.
- **Limitations of Powers:** State human rights commissions lack the authority to demand information from the national government, hindering investigations into human rights violations by armed forces under national jurisdiction. NHRC's jurisdiction over human rights violations by armed forces is notably limited.

PRELIMS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Paris principles were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993.
2. GANHRI provides financial assistance to the nations to help them maintain their Human Rights.
3. In the 2023 resolution, GANHRI has included Climate Change in its charter as a factor that impacts Human Rights.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: B

MAINS PRACTISE QUESTION

Q1. In what ways does the involvement of law enforcement in investigations of alleged human rights abuses by the police create a conflict of interest within the NHRC's practices?

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