

High suicide rate in japan

Sociology



Although suicide is a historical tradition in Japan, suicide rates were never remarkably high. As explained in an Economist article entitled "Elusive but Not Always Unstoppable," suicide, or self-killing, has been traditionally viewed as the honourable response to dishonour or failure in Japan (para. 6). Today, however, there seems to be numerous other causes for suicide and, as a result, suicide rates have increased remarkably over the past ten years (Sakamoto et al., p. 676). Indeed, today Japan has the highest suicide rate of any developed and industrialised country. There are many reasons why this increase has occurred and it has had a serious effect on government and society.

There are many reasons for the increase in suicide rates in Japan but they are mainly economic and social. Japan is a very traditional and conformist society and it expects everybody to adhere to the country's traditions and fit in. Life is very difficult, even impossible for those who do not fit in and, quite often, the solution is suicide ("Elusive," para 6). Another cause of suicide is failure and positive societal attitudes towards suicide as a response to failure ("Death Be Not Proud," para 3). Japanese society has traditionally placed great value upon success, whether success at school or at work. It judges and evaluates people on the basis of their performance and those who are deemed failures, are looked upon as having shamed themselves and their families. Indeed, society is highly intolerant of any who fail and holds on to the traditional belief that the only honourable response to failure is suicide. Accordingly, school children who do not perform well at school or men who have lost their jobs, commit suicide as the honourable and expected response to the shame that their failure has placed on both them and their families ("Death be Not Proud," paras 3-4). Furthermore, according to <https://assignbuster.com/high-suicide-rate-in-japan/>

Hatakeyama et al., there is an immediate correlation between per capita income and suicide rates (p. 274). Individuals who feel that they have failed in their duty to provide for their family often commit suicide.

The increase in suicide rates in Japan has affected both society and government. As Samuels explains, the proliferation of the group suicide phenomenon has profoundly impacted societal attitudes towards suicide. More and more youngsters are surfing the internet in search of others who intend to commit suicide for the purposes of setting up a group suicide date. Between 2003 and 2005, almost 200 people committed group suicide with people they had met over the internet (Samuels, para 3). This has compelled society to rethink its attitude towards suicide and to offer counselling to individuals who are at risk of suicide. Ever-escalating suicide rates have also had an effect on government attitudes towards society. As mentioned in "Death be Not Proud," the Japanese government has set up hotlines and free counselling services for individuals who have suicidal thoughts and intentions (para 5). In other words, increase in suicide rates has affected both societal and governmental attitudes towards self-killing.

In conclusion, although suicide constitutes a tradition in Japan, increases in suicide rates have compelled society to re-examine its attitudes towards the practice. Japanese society, which once positively perceived of suicide as an honourable response to the shame of failure, is now re-evaluating suicide as the senseless waste of life. If the phenomenon is to significantly decrease, however, Japanese society should begin to realise that failure is not permanent and if people fail once, that does not mean that they cannot succeed in the future.

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