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## Mumbai ranks 3rd among cities in suicide rate

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**Mumbai:** Going by the National Crime Records Bureau figures for 2006, Mumbai has one of the highest suicide rates among cities across India. Mumbai had recorded 1,195 suicides in 2006. Chennai and Bangalore are the only cities that have recorded a higher rate.

According to the available statistics, the overall figure for suicides in India went up to 1,18,112 in 2006 from 1,13,914 in 2005, an increase of about 3.7 per cent year-on-year. In fact, the total number of suicides steadily rose by 33.9 per cent during the decade between 1996 and 2006 — from 88,241 to 1,18,112. Since the population has grown in the same period at a lower rate of 20.2 per cent, the number of suicides per one lakh population is now much higher than it was in

ries in the country. In comparison, the most populous and the most backward of states, Uttar Pradesh, accounts for a mere 2.6 per cent (3,099) of the total number.

"Economic wellbeing is not always an index for a problem like this. If you look at the Western world, some very well developed societies like the Scandinavian countries have high rates of suicide," said psychologist Dr Bharat Shah.

High aspirations, rising levels of stress, and economic and health-related problems are some of the reasons for the rising suicide rate. Dr Yusuf Matcheswalla, psychiatrist with the Mumbai police, feels that the recorded figures only tell part of the story. "A lot of suicides are hushed up in Mumbai," says Matcheswalla. He adds that Mumbai clocks a higher rate of depression when compared to other metros. "While a leading psychiatrist in Delhi would treat 10 patients a day, in Mumbai, it's between 50 to 100," he says.

"High aspirations and low tolerance amongst families in Mumbai is a result of the 'chronic disaster syndrome' where life is an uncertain roller-coaster ride caused by riots, floods, blasts, crimes and a loss of jobs," says psychiatrist Dr Harish Shetty, who feels Mumbai is seeing globalisation at its best and worst.

The causes for suicides, as documented by the NCRB, indicates that 'Family Problems' and 'Illness' rank as the two main factors in 26.1% and 22.5% of the cases. 'Other Causes' (presumably indebtedness among farmers in Vidarbha and Marathwada and among those who are self-employed) account for another 24.5%.

The remaining categories in the break-up include 'Causes Not Known' (14.5%), Love Affairs (3.4%), Bankruptcy or Sudden Change in Economic Status (2.8%), Poverty (2.2%), Failure in Examination (2%) and Dowry Dispute (2%).

### STATEWISE DATA

Stats	Male	Female	Total
West Bengal	9,120	6,605	15,725
Maharashtra	10,510	4,984	15,494
Andhra Pradesh	8,863	4,413	13,276
Tamil Nadu	7,509	4,872	12,381
Karnataka	8,048	4,164	12,212
Kerala	6,583	2,443	9,026

the 1990s.

Statewise information shows West Bengal (15,725 suicides) and Maharashtra (15,494) currently rank as the two regions with the highest rate of emotional distress, closely followed by three well industrialised and developed states in the south — Andhra Pradesh (13,276), Tamil Nadu (12,381) and Karnataka (12,212). Between them, these five states account for 58.4 per cent of all suicides recorded across the 28 states and seven union territo-