

## ICCP/SL/OP/301

### **Factors influencing suicide among teenagers: A case study from Ampara District, Sri Lanka**

Kabeer FSA, Rathnayaka K\*

*School of Social Work, National Institute of Social Work, Sri Lanka*

*[\\*kalindu@nisd.ac.lk](mailto:kalindu@nisd.ac.lk)*

**Background:** Suicide among teenagers in the Ampara District of Sri Lanka presents a critical public health issue, with alarmingly high rates of adolescent suicide surpassing the national average. This study explored the factors contributing to teenage suicide in this district, where cultural, social, and economic dynamics are unique and under-explored.

**Method:** This study was conducted using a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The study included 30 participants, including teenagers aged 15–19, their caregivers, and mental health experts, to gather comprehensive data on the contributing factors of suicide.

**Results:** The findings highlight four key factors influencing suicide risk among teenagers in Ampara: academic pressure, family dynamics, limited access to mental health services, and community support. High levels of academic stress, coupled with inadequate mental health resources, were found to be significant contributors to suicidal ideation. Family conflicts, compounded by cultural expectations, were also identified as critical factors, although open family communication provided protective benefits.

**Conclusion:** The study underscores the challenge posed by limited access to mental health care, with many teenagers facing logistical and financial barriers to obtaining help. However, positive peer relationships and community support systems were recognized as protective factors that helped mitigate suicide risk. The results emphasize the importance of addressing both structural and cultural barriers in suicide prevention efforts, advocating for improved access to mental health services and stronger community-based support systems to safeguard the mental well-being of teenagers in Ampara.

**Keywords:** Mental health services, mental health, suicide, teenage suicide, teenagers.