

Representation of Dalits and Tribal Communities in Psychological Autopsy in India: A Systematic Scoping Review

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Abstract : Dalit and tribal communities in India have the largest suicide rate; however, the current literature does not reflect this reality. While existing research acknowledges socio-cultural risk factors, it fails to discuss structural issues pertaining to marginalized communities in India. Furthermore, the language is framed in an individualistic manner which denies room for recognizing systemic violence and injustice among causative agents of suicide. We aim to examine the representation of Dalit and tribal identities and their experiences of marginalisation as a contributive factor of suicide, as well as discuss the epistemic injustice involved in its exclusion. Electronic searches of PubMed, PsychInfo, and Web of Science databases will be carried out from inception till January 2023 to conduct a systematic scoping review of peer-reviewed articles; it will include all studies involving psychological autopsy in India. A narrative synthesis will be performed to gain insight into the inclusion of the experiences of Dalits and Tribals, the absence of which indicates a lacking understanding of suicide in India. It is also expected to highlight the alienation of lived experiences and narratives of marginalisation from mainstream discourse on suicide that constitutes epistemic injustice. There is a complex interplay of psychological, socio-cultural, economic, and political factors for suicide in the Indian setting. But, political and systemic issues are often downplayed in suicide etiology, including casteist assault, rape, violence, public humiliation, and discrimination which deserves more research attention.

Keywords : dalits, marginalisation, psychological autopsy, suicide, tribals

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