

**Increasing Suicidal Rates in Kashmir Valley and its Portrayal by the Print Media****Naseema Akhter<sup>1</sup>, Dr shobha kulshreshtha**<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Mewar University, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan<sup>2</sup>Research supervisor, Vice President Shri Venkateshwar University Gajrola, IndiaEmail: [rather.naseema1@gmail.com](mailto:rather.naseema1@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Increasing rate of suicides can be a concern to any society and over the years it has been noticed that this act is on an alarming increase in the valley of Kashmir. Such incidents not only need to be discouraged but reported in different media as well. Increasing Suicides and their mediocre level of media coverage in Kashmir have gathered widespread attention and concern. It is well documented that the Print media in Kashmir has failed to influence the social attitudes towards suicide and potentially the actions of vulnerable people. The present study was undertaken to understand the role of print media in minimizing suicidal rates in the Kashmir Valley.

The research sought to analyze the coverage of suicide news in some leading dailies of Kashmir. It engaged with the coverage, nature, number and quality of news reporting of suicide by leading Kashmir newspapers with a view to find out their contribution towards creating awareness about suicide and its prevention in the valley. The study evaluated the pattern of portrayal of suicide in five leading newspapers of Kashmir in order to understand how these newspapers have reported such issues in both rural and urban settings. The Research adopted a Mixed-Research approach by using both qualitative as well as quantitative research. The quantitative research findings indicated that among the five selected newspapers published in Srinagar city, the coverage on suicide was far below the other issues like politics, conflict, health, education, environment, sports etc. The qualitative research findings further supported the claim that issues about suicide rates are severely underreported in the leading five newspapers of Kashmir as opposed to politics, conflict, education, health, domestic violence and disaster management. However, despite the low coverage of suicides in these newspapers, the research also puts forward the claim that the published articles are informative and well represent the expert views of the valley presenting suicide as a grave issue in Kashmir. These cover the likely causes of suicide, its warning signs, trends in suicide rates and recent treatment advances.

The research also conducted a total of 15 case studies aiming at identifying the causes for the committed suicides and the newspaper coverage given by the five selected dailies in five major districts of the valley (Srinagar, Budgam, Anantnag, Baramulla and Kupwara). A total of 16 psychologists, sociologists, psychiatrists, police officials, social activists, religious scholars, editors and journalists associated with different newspapers in Kashmir were also interviewed under the research process. A questionnaire was also distributed among college and university going students which was later analysed on Likert 5 point scale. It has been widely realized that the Journalists often fail to play their role in saving lives of people through their information and resources, despite possessing the knowledge of the obvious potential of their actions. The research thereby highlights the urgent need to direct attention and energies towards this grave issue of the region which must be given importance by the relevant parties.

**Keywords:** Suicide, Kashmir, awareness, journalism, media etc.

**INTRODUCTION**

Suicide is a widely known dangerous situation, an act of ending one's own life so as to escape or terminate the pain and suffering caused by worldly interactions. It could be considered as an extreme result of mental health issues. Thus, it is a problem requiring attention so that it could be controlled and

prevented. It is one of the major issues which are handled by the public health departments all over the world. Unfortunately the control and prevention in case of suicides is much easier said than done.

Suicide is a major problem in the Indian context. It has become a severe mental health problem affecting the young population of this country.

Many states in India record a greater than fifteen percent rate of suicide. An important demographic observation in this regard has been that a majority of suicides in India are committed by the younger population mostly below thirty years. Around thirty seven percent of people committing suicide in India are below the age of thirty. According to some estimates there are at least five lakh suicides taking place in India every year, thus becoming a major national level problem requiring urgent action. (Vijaykumar,2007).

### **Association of suicide with media coverage**

The topic dealing with the association of media portrayal and suicidal behaviors is widely researched since decades and is still not saturated with studies undertaken even today. Many of the studies have argued that the media is just one of the various socio-environmental factors which could motivate suicidal behaviors (Schmidtke and Häfner, 1989) and that the effect of it is perhaps lesser as compared to other psycho-social risk factors contributing to the intent of suicide (Velting and Gould, 1997). But one cannot avoid the fact that it is a substantial cause playing a part in the social reality assembly, particularly in the case of exposed and susceptible individuals.

### **Impact of print media in Kashmir valley region**

As described earlier, the Kashmir valley is a conflict torn region. There is also absence of uninterrupted electricity due to the shortage of power generation, weather conditions and conflicting situations. Thus, the electronic and the internet media are interrupted every now and then. In such a situation, the only uninterrupted source of information in the Kashmir valley is the print media which is possibly omnipresent. Hence, reporting in newspapers should be done responsibly because as far as the Kashmir valley situation is concerned, the newspapers could be thought of as an influencing medium. Some major newspapers in the region namely Greater Kashmir, Kashmir Monitor, Rising Kashmir and others have a significant presence on the selected social media platforms. These are well reputed and established newspapers of the region that have connected social media tools to their online newspapers and therefore have expanded their outreach and possibilities of reaching out to people in the remote areas as well as outside the Kashmir Valley region. The aim of the

current systematic study is to observe and provide an overview about the role of media impacting suicides in the region of Kashmir valley in India.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The study is undertaken with the following research objectives:

1. To analyze the coverage of suicide news in some leading dailies of Kashmir.
2. To study the coverage, nature, number and quality of news reporting of suicide by some leading newspapers in Kashmir, with a view to find out the contribution of these newspapers in creating awareness about suicide and its prevention in the valley.
3. To study the pattern of portrayal of suicide in five leading newspapers of Kashmir in order to understand how these newspapers have reported the issues related to suicides in both rural and urban setting.
4. To analyze the role of newspapers as a tool to curb increasing suicidal rates in Kashmir and hence their impact in stopping suicides in the valley.
5. To suggest recommendations on the basis of findings.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Coverage of suicide news in some leading dailies of Kashmir:**

- i. Suicide is a social evil and a threat to the whole mankind in the world. Kashmir valley has witnessed steep increase in the suicide rates due to the unemployment and marital discord. Suicides are on a rise in Kashmir with even teenagers at an early age of 14 are attempting suicide. Thus, this issue is becomes an emerging problem in Kashmir society. The people who commit suicide are commonly women. Not only teenagers, but also half-widows, widows and those who face domestic violence are at the risk of committing suicides in the Kashmir valley.
- ii. Akhter and Kulshrestha have cited few examples of the suicide news being reported in some local dailies of Kashmir. A news story about the suicide due to unemployment was given in Greater Kashmir and Rising Kashmir and it was found that the person ended his life by hanging. Another news

about a 16 year old person who committed suicide after knowing that he failed to pass the 10<sup>th</sup> class final examinations, thereby ending his life by jumping into the river was reported by Greater Kashmir. One more incident of suicide by Shamima, a 39 year old lady who ended her life by consuming poison after she was unable to bear the death of her husband who was killed by the security forces was reported by the daily Rising Kashmir.

Coverage, nature, number and quality of news reporting about suicide by some leading newspaper in Kashmir:

i. Shuja'at Bukhari, the editor of Rising Kashmir stated that the suicides in the valley re increasing day by day and there is immediate need to emphasize on this issue. He also said that the newspapers in the valley try to provide reports related to the suicides in the valley, but most of the suicides were attempted in the rural areas and families of the victim do not want to share the details about the event and therefore these reports cannot be mentioned in the newspapers. The other major concerns focused by the newspapers in the valley are long term conflicts and their impact on the life of the local residents. He also mentioned that these conflicts in the valley are one of the major reasons for the increasing cases of suicides

ii. Jehangir, (2007) observes that there is a sharp rise in the suicide cases that ranges from various reasons like unemployment to the marital discord given in news by various media. 61 suicide cases were reported within 12 months in 2006, but it got raised in year 2007 to 42 in five months only. The common reasons for suicides among young people in Kashmir valley are the failed love affairs, failure of examinations and marital discords. Out of 61 suicide cases registered by police that, 43 were young as well as middle aged women. Most of the women who committed suicide were fed up with the marital discord and negative opinions in their families. They are more sensitive and emotionally weaker beings. They have much lesser tolerance than men. Sometime the cases of suicide come as a result of drug abuse that includes anti-depressants that can lead to death. In such cases it is difficult to understand whether it is suicidal or an accidental case.

#### METHODOLOGY

Following methods were used to collect varied data during the course of the study:

#### 1. Comparative Analysis:

Five leading dailies of Kashmir viz. Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Images, Srinagar Times and Aftab were analysed over a period of six years from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015. The number of reports related to suicides was calculated for each newspaper over the stipulated period of six years. Besides a comparative analysis of the reports published about Suicides and other areas like Politics, Education, Health, Environment etc was done for all the five newspapers over the stipulated period of five years. The editorial and op-ed pages of all the five newspapers were also studied to find out the coverage given to suicide related issues through editorials and articles.

#### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

##### Media Coverage of Suicides: Comparative Analysis

Various archives of Newspapers in Kashmir valley were analyzed to check out the coverage given by these newspapers to the suicide incidents in the valley. For this purpose five leading dailies were selected by the researcher. Content analysis of these five leading newspapers being published from Kashmir was done for a period of 6 years starting from 1st January 2010 up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015. A comparative analysis of these five leading daily publications which included: Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Images, The Daily Aftab and Srinagar Times was done. Among the five selected newspapers, Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Images are English dailies and the remaining two are Urdu dailies. The dailies were identified on the basis of readership, reach etc. A comparison of the news reports and articles related to suicides highlighted in these newspapers was also made and presented in the form of tables and bar diagrams.

##### Comparative Analysis of five leading dailies of Kashmir; Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Images, The Daily Aftab and Srinagar Times from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

##### Frequency:

The tables below tabulate the total number of reports published in the different newspapers under study, along with the total number of reports published

particularly on suicides in these newspapers. The tables also calculate the percentage of reports devoted to suicides in the said newspapers. The data has been collected for the period 1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2015.

Table 4.1: Reports published in GREATER KASHMIR

Period of Research	Total number of reports published in the newspaper.	Total number of reports published on suicides in the newspaper	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	15200	109	0.71%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	16100	118	0.73%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	16545	196	1.18%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	18122	223	1.23%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	18545	231	1.24%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	19842	251	1.26%
TOTAL	104354	1128	1.08%

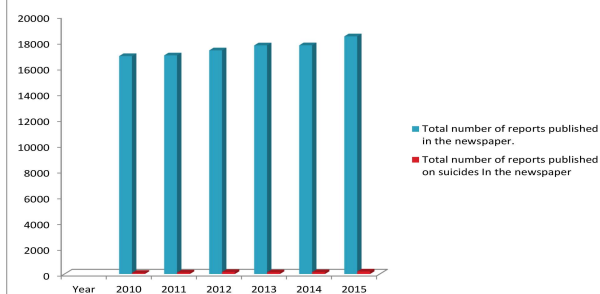


Fig. 4.1: The comparative report chart of "Greater Kashmir" from 2010-2015

### Inference:

Greater Kashmir has published a total of 104354 news stories during the six year period of the research, from 2010 to 2015. The number of reports has been on a continual increase from the start year till the year 2015. The initial year demonstrated a publication of 15200 reports, while the last year showed that the newspaper published a higher 19842 reports. Out of these 104354 reports, it has published 1128 stories on suicide which makes it to a meager 1.08% space given to suicide reports with respect to the total number of news stories published. However, a slight increase is visible in the reports on suicides as well over the five year period. The year 2010 saw the publication of 109 reports on suicides, while the year 2015 published more than double, i.e., 251 reports devoted to suicides alone.

Table 4.2: Reports published in RISING KASHMIR

Period of Research	Total number of reports published in the newspaper.	Total number of reports published on suicides in the newspaper	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	16200	108	0.66%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	18000	209	1.16%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	16920	267	1.57%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	18720	295	1.57%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	17280	297	1.71%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015-31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	16200	297	1.83%
TOTAL	103320	1473	1.42%

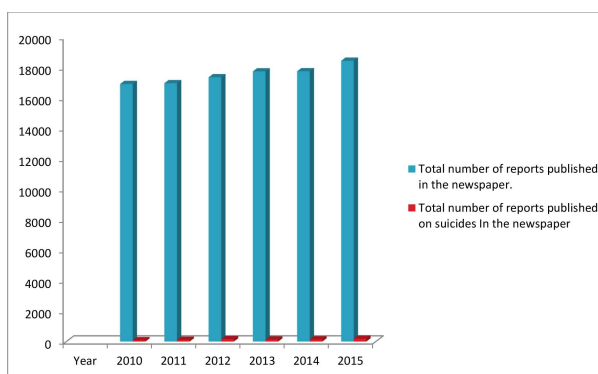


Fig.4.2: The comparative report chart of "Rising Kashmir" from 2010-2015

### Inference:

Rising Kashmir has published 103320 news stories during the six year period of the research. The newspaper does not demonstrate a continual increase over the time period, and in fact shows fluctuating results for the number of reports published with both the years 2010 and 2015 publishing the same number of reports (16200). Out of 103320 reports it has published 1473 stories on suicide which makes it to a meager 1.42% space given to suicide reports with respect to the total number of news stories published. However, as opposed to its fluctuating pattern of total number of reports (rising and decreasing), the number of reports published specifically on the suicides show a continual (but slight) increase, from 108 reports in 2010 to 297 reports on suicide in 2015.

Table 4.3: Reports published in KASHMIR IMAGES:



Period of Research	Total number of reports published in the newspaper.	Total number of reports published on suicides in the newspaper	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	14200	123	0.86%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	16440	187	1.13%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	16876	197	1.16%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	18333	242	1.32%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	18441	252	1.36%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	18847	261	1.38%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103137</b>	<b>1262</b>	<b>1.22%</b>

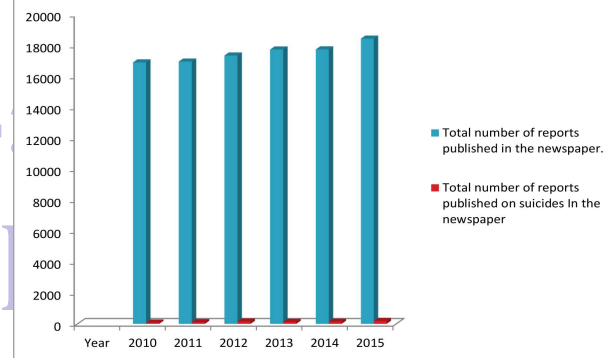


Fig. 4.4: The comparative report chart of "The Daily Aftab" from 2010-2015

#### Inference:

The Daily Aftab has published 77461 news stories during the six year period of the research, with 9000 in 2010 increasing to 14876 in 2015. Out of 77461 reports it has published 848 stories on suicide which makes it to 1.09% space given to suicide reports with respect to the total number of news stories published. These reports showed an increase from 123 in 2010 to 163 in 2015, with an exception of the year 2013 when the reports decreased from the previous year.

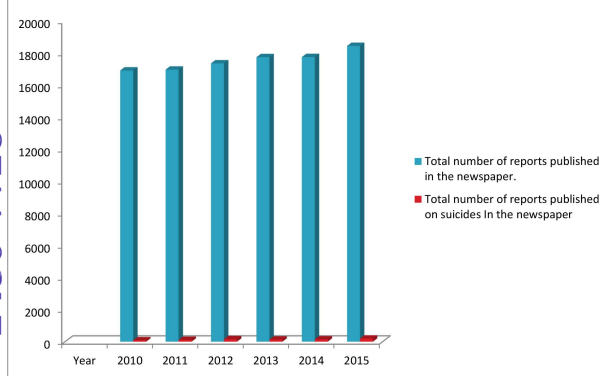


Fig. 4.3: The comparative report chart of "Kashmir Images" from 2010-2015

#### Inference:

Kashmir Images has published 103137 news stories during the six year period of the research. A continuous increase is witnessed in the total number of reports published, from 14200 in 2010 to 18847 in 2015. Out of 103137 reports it has published 1262 stories on suicide which makes it to a low 1.22% space given to suicide reports with respect to the total number of news stories published. The reports on suicide showed a continuous increase from 123 in 2010 to 261 in 2015.

Table 4.4: Reports published in the Daily Aftab

Period of Research	Total number of reports published in the newspaper.	Total number of reports published on suicides in the newspaper	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	9000	99	1.1%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	11223	131	1.16%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	13637	171	1.25%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	13982	133	0.95%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	14743	151	1.02%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	14876	163	1.09%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77461</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>1.09%</b>

Period of Research	Total number of reports published in the newspaper.	Total number of reports published on suicides in the newspaper	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	16920	87	0.51%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	16974	113	0.66%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	17364	157	0.90%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	17752	133	0.74%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	17759	142	0.79%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	18451	197	1.06%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105220</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>0.78%</b>

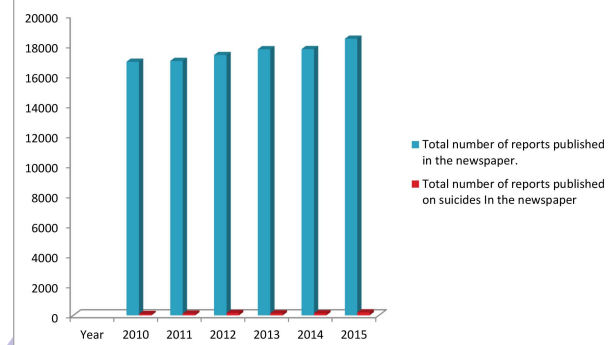


Fig. 4.5: The comparative report chart of "Srinagar Times" from 2010-2015

#### Inference:

Srinagar Times has published 105220 news stories during the six year period of the research. However,

only a slight increase can be observed from 16920 in 2010 to 18451 in 2015. Out of 105220 reports it has published 829 stories on suicide which makes it to a meager 0.78% space given to suicide reports with respect to the total number of news stories published. These reports on suicide showed an increase from 87 in 2010 to 197 in 2015.

#### RESULTANT SPACE:

The tables reflect the total number of reports published by Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Images, The DAILY Aftab and Srinagar Times on page No's 5 and 6 from 1st January 2010 to 31st December 2015 and the overall resultant Space given to Suicide reports during the six year period considered for the research.

Table 4.6: Reports published in Greater Kashmir on page no 5 and 6

Period of Research	Total number of reports published on page No. 5 and 6	Total number of reports published on suicides on page No. 5 and 6	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	3240	76	2.34%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	4320	87	2.01%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	4680	92	1.96%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	3240	93	2.87%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	2520	97	3.84%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	5040	101	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23040</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>2.36%</b>

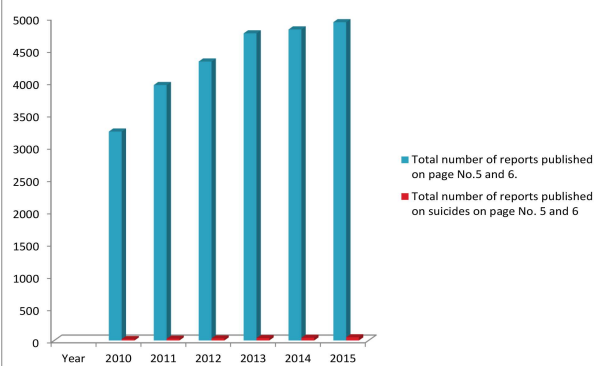


Fig. 4.6: The comparative report chart of "Greater Kashmir" from 2010-2015

#### Inference:

Greater Kashmir has published 23040 stories on page No. 5 and 6 during the six year period of the research. The reports increased from 3240 in 2010 to 5040 in 2015, but with a fluctuating trend across the five

years. Out 23040 of reports it has published 546 stories on suicide which makes it to 2.36% space given to coverage of suicide reports with respect to the total number of news stories published on page No. 5 and 6 on suicide.

Table 4.7 Reports published in RISING KASHMIR on page no. 5 and 6

Period of Research	Total number of reports published on page No. 5 and 6	Total number of reports published on suicides on page No. 5 and 6	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	3960	69	1.74%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	4320	78	1.8%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	4680	89	1.90%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	3600	97	2.6%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	4320	101	2.3%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	5040	113	2.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25920</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>2.1%</b>

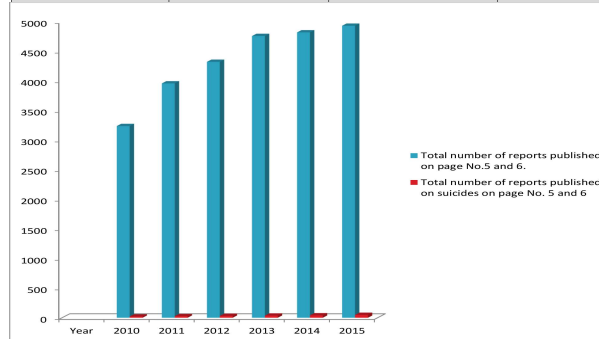


Fig. 4.7: The comparative report chart of "Rising Kashmir" from 2010-2015

#### Inference:

Rising Kashmir has published 25920 stories on page No. 5 and 6 during the six year period of the research. The increase from 3960 in 2010 to 5040 in 2015 is also accompanied with fluctuations across the other years. Out 25920 of reports it has published 547 stories on suicide which makes it to 2.1% space given to coverage of suicide reports with respect to the total number of news stories published on page No. 5 and 6 on suicide.

Table 4.8 Reports published in KASHMIR IMAGES on page no 5 and 6

Period of Research	Total number of reports published on page No. 5 and 6	Total number of reports published on suicides on page No. 5 and 6	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	3240	26	0.8%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	3960	31	0.78%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	4320	54	1.2%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	3600	63	1.7%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	4680	71	1.5%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	4320	83	1.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24120</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

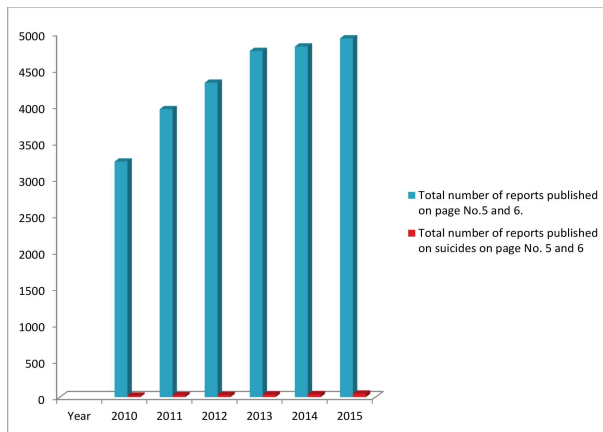


Fig. 4.8: The comparative report chart of "Kashmir Images" from 2010-2015

## Inference:

Kashmir Images has published 24120 stories on page No. 5 and 6 during the six year period of the research. The reports showed an increase from 3240 in 2010 to 4320 in 2015, with an exception of the year 2013 and 2015 wherein the number of reports on page 5 and 6 decreased from the previous year. Out 24120 of reports it has published 328 stories on suicide which makes it to 1.3% space given to coverage of suicide reports with respect to the total number of news stories published on page No. 5 and 6 on suicide.

Table 4.9 Reports published in THE DAILY AFTAB on page no. 5 and 6

Period of Research	Total number of reports published on page No. 5 and 6	Total number of reports published on suicides on page No. 5 and 6	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	2520	24	0.95%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	2880	27	0.93%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	3240	31	0.95%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	3600	33	0.91%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	3960	39	0.98%
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	3967	43	1.08%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20167</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>0.97%</b>

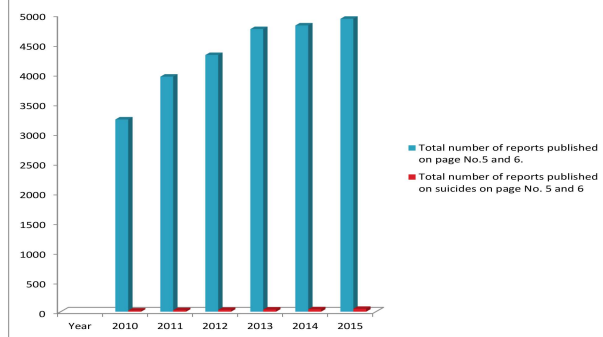


Fig. 4.9: The comparative report chart of "The Daily Aftab" from 2010-2015

## Inference:

The Daily Aftab has published 20167 stories on page No. 5 and 6 during the six year period of the research. These reports increased from 2520 in 2010 to 3967 in 2015. Out 20167 of reports it has published 197 stories on suicide which makes it to 0.97% space given to coverage of suicide reports with respect to the total number of news stories published on page No. 5 and 6 on suicide.

## Table 4.10 reports published in SRINAGAR TIMES on page no. 5 and 6:

Period of Research	Total number of reports published on page No. 5 and 6	Total number of reports published on suicides on page No. 5 and 6	Percentage
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2010- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2010	3240	21	0.64
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2011- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2011	3960	27	0.68
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	4324	32	0.74
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2013	4760	37	0.77
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	4821	41	0.85
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015- 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	4933	49	0.99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26038</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>0.79</b>

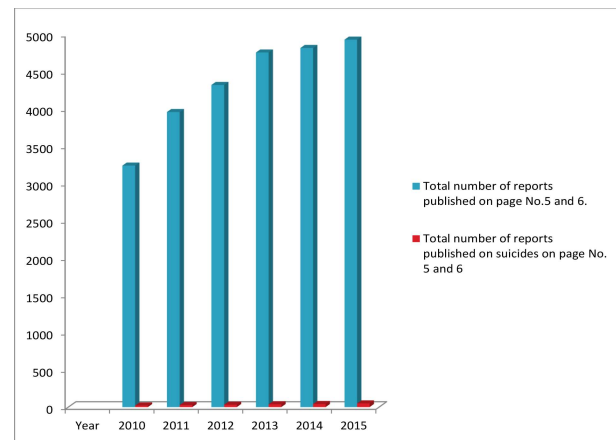


Fig. 4.10: The comparative report chart of "Srinagar Times" from 2010-2015

## Inference:

Srinagar Times has published 26038 stories on page No. 5 and 6 during the six year period of the research. These showed an increase from 3240 in 2010 to 4933 in 2015. Out 26038 of reports it has published 207 stories on suicide which makes it to 0.79% space given to coverage of suicide reports with respect to the total number of news stories published on page No. 5 and 6 on suicide.

#### 4.1.2. Comparative percentage of coverage by five newspapers under study:

Table 4.11 Comparative percentage of coverage by newspaper under study on page no.5 and 6

Name of the newspaper	Total no. of reports published on page No. 5 and 6	Total number of reports published on suicide on page No. 5 and 6	Percentage
Greater Kashmir	23040	546	2.36
Rising Kashmir	25920	547	2.11
Kashmir Images	24120	328	1.35
The Daily Aftab	20167	197	0.97
Srinagar Times	26038	207	0.79

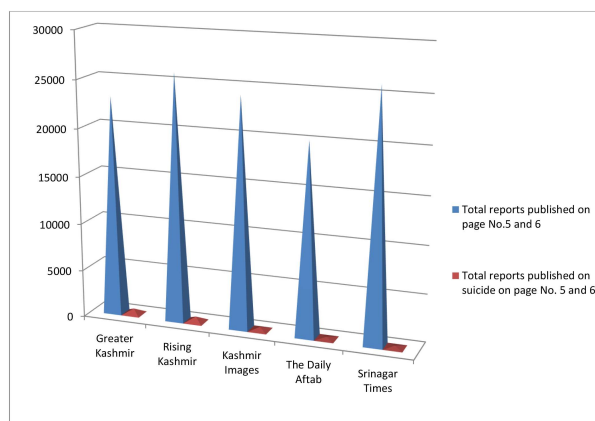


Fig.4.11: Comparative percentage of coverage by Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Images, the Daily Aftab and Srinagar Times from 2010-2015

It can therefore be seen<sup>n</sup> from the above table and chart, that the newspaper Srinagar Times published the most number of reports on its Page 5 and 6 (26038). On the other hand, the newspaper The Daily Aftab published the least number of reports on its page number 5 and 6 (20167). For the reports on suicide on these pages, the Rising Kashmir published the highest number of reports (547), while the Daily Aftab again published the lowest number of reports on suicide. The daily Aftab therefore has been found as the newspaper to have published the lowest number of reports and suicide reports on pages 5 and 6.

#### Findings and Analysis:

The objective of the study was to find out the portrayal of increased suicidal rates in Kashmir by five leading newspapers published from the valley which include: Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Images, The Daily Aftab and Srinagar Times. The purpose was to analyze the reportage given by these five dailies to the suicide issues in Kashmir. All the five newspapers have given a good

coverage to stories related to politics, conflict, health, education, environment, sports and other issues. However, there was a considerable difference in the coverage of suicide stories by all the five leading dailies of Kashmir. The evaluation of data also reveals that the limited efforts, inappropriate portrayal and reporting of increasing suicidal rates in Kashmir by the state's print media houses results in the failure of creating awareness among the policy makers. Suicide has been evolved into a serious societal epidemic in Kashmir and if the trend goes unreported may potentially trigger more future suicides. This project thus, investigates contemporary suicide epidemic through an analysis of the portrayal of suicide in the print media of Kashmir. The analysis of data presents considerable but surmountable challenge in highlighting the need of united and collaborative initiatives in this direction by the print media organisations in order to explore a mechanism which may result in the reduction of suicidal incidents. Appropriate dissemination of information and awareness are essential elements in the success of suicide prevention programmes and print media can play a predominant role in this regard. The extremely low, or rather minimal reports published on suicides is glaring given the rising number of suicides witnessed by the Kashmir Valley in the wake of the present scenario.

#### Comparative Analysis of Suicide related Articles/ Write-Ups in Five leading dailies of Kashmir; Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, The Daily Aftab And Srinagar Times with respect to different other issues from 01<sup>st</sup> January 2010 up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

The following table reflects the total number of Articles portraying various issues, published by Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Images, The Daily Aftab and Srinagar Times from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

Table 4.12: Comparative report chart of Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Images, the Daily Aftab and Srinagar Times

Newspaper	Politics	Conflict	Environment	Education	Health	Suicide	Domestic violence	Disaster management
Greater Kashmir	37%	22%	12%	09%	7%	2%	06%	05%
Rising Kashmir	33%	19%	14%	11%	09%	1%	07%	06%
Kashmir Images	39%	21%	12%	10%	10%	1%	04%	03%
The Daily Aftab	37%	24%	11%	09%	15%	1%	02%	01%
Srinagar Times	44%	30%	09%	06%	04%	1%	03%	03%



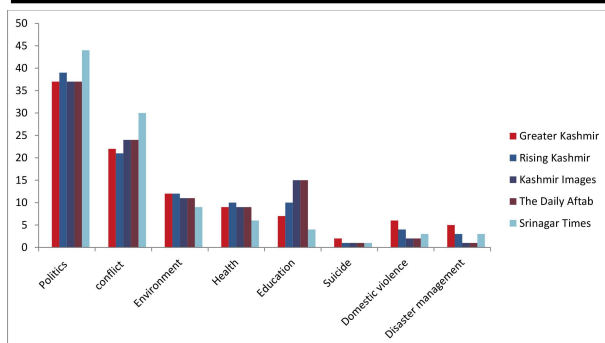


Fig.4.12 The comparative report chart of "Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Images, The Daily Aftab and Srinagar Times" from 2010-2015

### Findings and Analysis:

For comparative analysis articles which appeared on the editorial page of five selected newspapers were selected. The editorial page had articles on issues which were considered important for the period. The articles were analytical in nature, and carried the views and opinions of the experts or the editor of the paper on these issues. Articles related to politics, conflict, education, health, domestic violence and disaster management were given a good coverage. In all the five newspapers it was found that articles related to Political Issues got the maximum coverage, ranging between 33% and 44%. The second issue of importance in all the newspapers was related to Kashmir conflict which got the second highest coverage ranging between 19% and 30%; environment related issues got the third highest coverage ranging between 9% and 14%; followed by articles related to Health and Education which represented the fourth highest percentage in some papers ranging between 6% and 11%; Domestic violence got the fifth highest percentage in all the selected newspapers ranging between 2% and 7%, while as Disaster Management represented sixth highest percentage in terms of coverage ranging between 1% and 6% given by all the five selected dailies. While doing comparative analysis of these five leading publications it was found that suicide related issues got the seventh highest percentage in terms of the coverage given to this issue by these five Newspapers of Kashmir which represented a very minimal percentage. The percentage of reports published on the issue was extremely low for all newspapers, with a meager 1% reports on suicide. Only Greater Kashmir was noted to be slightly higher

at 2%. The articles were quite informative and represented the views of well known experts of the valley. These articles though in least percentage highlighted the suicide as a grave issue in Kashmir and also mentioned the reasons behind increasing suicidal rates in Kashmir. The articles besides highlighting the suicide menace also informed readers and viewers about the likely causes of suicide, its warning signs, trends in suicide rates and recent treatment advances. However, the overall importance allotted to the issue of suicides, by way of allotting space in the newspapers was astonishing.

### CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to find out the portrayal of increased suicidal rates in Kashmir by five leading newspapers; greater Kashmir, rising Kashmir, Kashmir images, the daily Aftab and Srinagar Times. The purpose was to analyze the Reportage given by these five dailies to the suicide issues in Kashmir. All the five newspapers have given a good coverage to stories related to politics, conflict, health, education, environment, sports and other issues. However, there was a considerable difference in the coverage of suicide stories by all the five leading dailies of Kashmir. It is very much clear that the newspapers in Kashmir have failed in highlighting the grave issue of suicides as compared to other issues which find a good space in these papers. The reportage of suicide incidents has remained limited to just covering a story about a committed suicide. During the research period of six years while doing a comparative analysis of the five leading dailies of the Kashmir valley, no follow-up regarding any suicide story was found. Newspapers as we know play a vital role of information dissemination to huge number of readers in order to generate awareness about different social evils prevalent in a society and their preventive measures which to a good extent leads to the elimination of such issues from the society. But in Kashmir the reportage of print media regarding increasing suicide rates has just remained confined to publishing a story about a committed suicide that too in the form of a single column story. Mere reporting of suicidal issues as a news story will no way lead to eradication of this growing social menace from the society.

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