

## **Project Information Sheet**

**Research title: Non-suicidal self-injury in emerging adulthood: Role of identity formation in Indian and European context.**

### **Introduction**

Non-suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) among adolescents and young adults is getting increased attention around the world. NSSI refers to the intentional and direct injuring of one's own tissue without suicidal intent, and was recently included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-5 (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The alarming high rate at which adolescent NSSI occurs in both males and females underscores the need for a better understanding of how to effectively assess and treat these behaviors. Despite some understanding of NSSI among youth, substantial gaps and methodological limitations exist.

Research has also identified a strong association between the NSSI and suicide. For example, about 50-85% of people engaging in NSSI behavior also report a lifetime prevalence of at least one attempted suicide. NSSI is often considered to be a gateway to suicide because repeated engagement in the behavior may lead to increased pain tolerance, which in turn may increase the risk for suicide attempts. Considering the fact that about 8 lakh (0.8 million) people committed suicide in 2012 and suicide is the second most common cause of death in adolescents in India, research in NSSI may prove important to not only identify factors that increase vulnerability to suicide but also to develop more targeted, and cost effective intervention programs.

A recent study by Kharsati and Bhola (2014) was the first one to use the term NSSI in India. They reported a lifetime prevalence of almost 31% (18% higher than the global average) in participants from undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Bengaluru, India. However, further research is required to understand NSSI in India. The proposed research attempts to explore NSSI behavior in India.

### **Objectives of the current research:**

- To examine the lifetime prevalence, methods and functions of NSSI among college students in Mumbai.
- To compare the characteristics of NSSI between Indian and European/international community samples of emerging young adults.
- To investigate if the developmental process of identity formation predicts NSSI in an Indian context.
- To assess the linkages between NSSI and identity formation with developmental factors (e.g., relationship with parents/peers) and personality traits (like Big five personality traits).

### **Significance of the Research Project:**

- The research project will be first of its kind to explore the hidden and under-researched topic of NSSI in emerging adults in India.
- It will provide information about prevalence of NSSI and about influence of identity formation and other developmental factors on NSSI.
- It will provide colleges, universities, teachers, and parents with greater understanding of the NSSI behavior in India.

### **Benefits of the Research to College/University:**

- Dissemination of results to college/university.
- Results may also help the college/university to develop targeted interventions for their students.

### **Research Plan and Method:**

In order to meet the objectives of the proposed study, data will be collected by means of reliable and valid instruments, which are well known and used in the international field of NSSI and identity research. Students registered with various courses in TISS will be invited to participate in the study. Considering the logistic issues involved in collecting data via traditional paper-pencil tests and the sensitive nature of the proposed study, we will collect data for the current study from the emerging adults by administering **standardized questionnaires online**. **The students will receive link to the questionnaire on their TISS email id's**. The questionnaires may take about 25-30 mins. for completion.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality Issues:**

All information collected will be treated in strictest confidence and neither the college/university nor individual students will be identifiable in any reports that are written. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without any form of penalty. If a student requires support as a result of their participation in the survey steps can be taken to accommodate this (for further details, refer to the questionnaire URL).

### **Further information:**

For further information, the Principal investigator or the researcher can be contacted via email or Skype. A telephone call can also be scheduled via an email request.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.



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