SUMMARY

The rising incidence of attempted suicide in the last two decades, often referred to as "epidemic" is documented in many countries. With the growing rate of suicide among certain subgroups, psychologists are increasingly concerned with the detection of suicide risk factors. Even though a number of studies have focused on various aspects of suicide, it is still an intriguing problem about which the amount of scientific knowledge is quite incomplete.

Number of attempts have been made to identify the social and psychological aspects of suicidal behavior. Much of this work, however, has been concerned with people who have actually attempted suicide. But it is a well known fact that attempted suicides which come to the notice of clinical workers form a very small proportion of the suicidal population. In addition to this unidentified group of attempted suicides, there is much larger group whose suicidal ideas somehow stop short of action. As Stengel (1964, p. 12) has put it, "There are few if any individuals to whom the idea of suicide has never occurred." Thus, identifying the correlates of suicidal ideation which is a prerequisite to threatened suicide, attempted suicide or committed suicide is obviously more important because the earlier the identification the
more feasible is intervention and prevention. It is of prime importance since the aim of the suicidologist is the eventual prediction of those who are most likely to consider self-destruction. The researchers in this specific area of suicide research have been more concerned with attempted or threatened suicide. The present study has included in its purview suicide ideation among University students so that it can help in the eventual prediction of those who are most likely to consider self-destruction. Moreover, the psychotic aspects of behavior, the elements militating against the individual's survival have not been given due consideration. Any investigation of suicide cannot afford to neglect the psychotic aspect of behavior in which a circumscribed transient thought disorder suspends the individual's capacity to comprehend the consequences of their actions. The present study has included in its purview psychosis proneness as a moderator variable since suicidal actions represent a conspicuous dislocation with reality.

The present study attempted to investigate the correlates of suicide ideation, separately among male and female university students scoring high and low on psychosis proneness.
Hypotheses

1. In the total sample, suicide ideation will correlate positively with depression, hopelessness, social desirability, psychoticism, extraversion, life-stress and cognitive rigidity.

2. Suicide ideation will be more markedly related positively to depression, hopelessness, social desirability, extraversion, life-stress, and cognitive rigidity in case of high psychosis prone subjects than low psychosis prone subjects.

3. There would be no difference in the correlates of suicide ideation among males and females.

4. Females will score higher on depression, hopelessness, social desirability, psychoticism, extraversion, and life-stress than males.

5. There will be no difference between males and females on creativity and field-independence-dependence.

Sample

Participants were 500 post-graduate university students. The sample of 500 university students comprised of 250 males and 250 females. The age of 250 males ranged from 18 to 28 years (M=21.77, SD=2.02), whereas for 250 females, the age ranged from 18 to 26 years (M=20.67, SD=1.53).
Tests

The following tests were used:

(A) Scale for Suicide Ideation (Beck, Kovacs, & Weissman, 1979);

(B) Beck Depression Inventory (BDI: Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, & Erbaugh, 1961);

(C) P Scale of Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975);

(D) Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (DAS: Form A, Weissman, 1978; Weissman & Beck, 1978);

(E) Hopelessness Scale (Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974);

(F) Torrance Test of Creative Thinking: Verbal and Figural Form A (Torrance, 1966);

(G) Embedded Figure Test (Witkin, 1966);

(H) Life Experiences Survey (Sarason, Johnson, & Siegal, 1978).

Administration of Tests

Administration of tests required six sessions. The tests were administered in uniform sequence, generally on six consecutive days. The testing sessions were conducted in the classrooms with adequate facilities for ventilation and proper sitting arrangements. The tests were administered to subjects in groups of 15 to
20 subjects in accordance with the instructions given by authors of the tests. However, Embedded Figure Test for measuring field-independence-dependence was administered individually.

**Scoring of the Tests**

As a result of scoring different tests, 18 measures as mentioned below were obtained:

a) four measures of figural creativity;
b) four measures of verbal creativity;
c) four measures concerning extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism, and social desirability;
d) one measure each of hopelessness and depression;
e) one measure each of impact of life events and dysfunctional attitude;
f) one measure each of suicide ideation and psychological differentiation (field-independence-dependence).

In addition to these eighteen measures, age was also included as one of the variables. Thus, in all nineteen measures were used for examining the structure of suicide ideation.

**Analyses**

The data were analyzed to obtain the following information:
(1) Frequency distribution, mean, median, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and reliability coefficients for different measures.

**Phase I**

(2) Intercorrelations among different variables separately for males and females were computed.

(3) Structural relationship among different variables separately for males and females.

**Phase II**

(4) Intercorrelations among different variables were computed separately for males and females scoring high and low on psychosis proneness.

(5) Structural relationships among different variables separately for males and females scoring high and low on psychosis proneness.

Separate analyses for males and females as well as high and low psychosis prone subjects were done keeping in view the importance of gender and psychosis proneness as significant moderating variables in identifying the correlates of suicide ideation.

**Conclusions**

This study found that psychosis proneness moderated the relationship between certain dimensions of
psychopathology, field-dependence and suicide ideation. The diagnostic inference which attribute suicidal behavior to underlying depression, hopelessness, cognitive rigidity and low sociability may be misleading if the psychotic aspect of behavior are not taken into consideration. It may be advisable to treat first the psychotic aspect of such behavior since amongst low psychosis prone subjects, the factors of depression, hopelessness, cognitive rigidity and low sociability are irrelevant from the viewpoint of suicide ideation. The psychotic aspect of behavior must be dealt with in the prevention and treatment of suicidal behavior. Any investigation of suicide cannot afford to neglect the psychotic aspect of behavior in which a circumscribed transient thought disorder suspends the individual’s capacity to comprehend the consequences of their actions. The present study being an initial attempt to assess the moderating influence of psychosis proneness needs additional research to unravel the complex relations among life-stress, cognitive rigidity, depression, hopelessness, and suicide ideation as influenced by psychosis proneness as a moderating variable. Indeed, such an understanding would seem to be essential to the development of effective treatment strategies for the suicidal client. In addition, gender differences should not be ignored by researchers working in the area of suicide ideation.

Further empirical support within the samples of different age and educational level is needed in order to demonstrate generalizability across these groups.