

Supreme Court Expresses Grave Concern Over Student Suicides at Premier Institutions



The Supreme Court of India has voiced profound alarm over a troubling surge in student suicides, particularly highlighting recent cases at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur and Sharda University in Greater Noida. On Monday, July 28, 2025, a bench comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan critically questioned the institutions' handling of these tragedies, demanding expedited investigations and stricter adherence to legal protocols.

The Court's strong observations came while hearing a matter concerning student suicide deaths across educational institutions nationwide, a subject on which it had previously taken suo motu (on its own motion) cognizance. Regarding the recent suicide of a fourth-year mechanical engineering student at IIT Kharagpur, the fourth such incident at the institution since January 2025, the bench directly asked the institute's counsel, "What is wrong with your IIT Kharagpur? Why are students committing suicide? Have you given this issue any thought? What steps have you taken?" The Court described the day's proceedings, starting with these reports, as an "extremely sad note to begin the week."

Similarly, in the case of a female Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) student at Sharda University, who died by suicide after allegedly being mentally harassed by two faculty members, the Supreme Court expressed dissatisfaction with the university's response. While a suicide note was found, leading to the arrest of two individuals, the Court questioned why the university did not promptly inform the police and the student's parents, asking, "Was it not your duty to immediately inform the police and the parents?" The amicus curiae, Senior Advocate Aparna Bhat, informed the Court that in the Sharda University case, the First Information Report (FIR) was lodged by the deceased student's father, not the university, and noted protocol violations,

including the moving of the body by university staff before police arrival, which compromised the scene.

IIT Kharagpur's counsel informed the court that a 10-member committee has been formed, and a 12-member counseling center is operational, attempting to identify at-risk students. The institute has also launched a new mental health framework called SETU (Support, Empathy, Transformation, and Upliftment). However, the Supreme Court stressed that institutions must comply with directives to immediately notify police and parents in such incidents, warning of potential contempt proceedings for non-compliance. A Supreme Court-appointed national task force is currently working on a broader report concerning mental health challenges in higher education, with its preliminary findings awaited. The cases underscore the critical need for robust mental health support systems and strict adherence to protocol within educational establishments.