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INTERTWINED SHADOWS: ANXIETY, STRESS, AND DEPRESSION AS PREDICTORS OF SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR ACROSS AGE GROUPS IN WEST BENGAL, MEDINIPUR DISTRICTS

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Abstract:

This is a philosophical-empirical investigation into anxiety, stress, and depression as existential shadows that result in suicidal behavior, which combines Kierkegaardian vertigo, Camusian absurdity, and Heideggerian Angst with cross-sectional data of West Bengal, two Medinipur district ($N = 300$). DASS-21 and C-SSRS scales were used to sample stratified by adolescents (15-24), adults (25-59), and elders (60+), and showed the dominance of depression ($\beta = 0.42$, $R = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$) mediated by anxiety ($\beta = 0.21$) and stress ($\beta = 0.18$). Patterns were found in age: youth academic vertigo (anxiety= 13.5), adult economic absurdity (stress = 20.4), elder finitude (ideation= 1.6), with 122 suicides among farmers as a backdrop (2021 RTI). Stigma, patriarchal norms, sparse care are socio-cultural determiners that enhance shadows through *das Man* conformity (Heidegger, 1927/ 2010). Recommendations make praxis: literacy campaigns, training gatekeepers, Bengali helplines, elder *Mitsein*, policy-engraved *Sorge*. Beyond pathology, shadows bring Sartrean existential authenticity and Levinasian ethics and map the course of ontological eclipse to determined dawn. Results call upon the culturally sensitive prevention, the acknowledgment of the absurd value of life in the dialectic of West Bengal.

Keywords: Existential phenomenology, Suicide prediction, DASS-2, Mental Health Stigma, Heidegger

1. Introduction: Shadows of the Psyche

Suicide is the final encounter with nothingness in the human condition the ultimate radical negation of being that compels us to deal with the frailty of existence. In this case, anxiety, stress, and depression do not overlap in the form of separate curses, but rather meet in the form of inseparable shadows, complementary vils that intersect to conceal all possibilities of life. According to *Kierkegaard (1844) [1]*, anxiety has been described as the “*dizziness of freedom*”: the vertigo of freedom of choice, the self on the edge of possibility and falling into nothingness. *Camus (1942) [2]* put suicide as the cardinal question of philosophy: Whether life is right or not worth living, is, to answer the main question of philosophy.

On a philosophical level, these shadows outshine biomedical pathologies, these are deep revelations of our *thrownness into existence*, as *Heidegger (1927/ 2010) [3]* puts it in *Being and Time*. *Dasein* is our being-there, which is essentially anxious because it is sensitive to death (*Sein-zum-Tode*) and to the call of conscience to authenticity. Depression is not a chemical imbalance, then, but ontological eclipse, as the world is taken away, leaving one in *Stimmung* (mood) of an extreme attentiveness to nothingness. Anxiety marks this *Unheimlichkeit* (uncanniness), stress the *das Man* - the nameless nobody of social demands that causes the loss of **one’s own identity**.

But philosophy requires something more than diagnosis: What are the ethical obligations when these shadows threaten to devour the other? *Sartre (1943/1956) [4]* juxtaposes - the human as a project of transcendence in the face of facticity, for example, the brutality of circumstantial givenness. Depression is associated to facticity (bodily rot, economic fetters), anxiety to nausea of freedom, and stress to *mauvaise foi* (bad faith) where we escape responsibility through taking ready-made parts. This is expressed in existential flight among the adults of two Medinipur, confronted with unemployment and family conflict (high levels of stress $M = 20.4$) as the ultimate, inauthentic negation, suicide.

Emmanuel Levinas takes this to the next ethical level: the face of the suicidal other holds infinity of responsibility, which breaks the totalizing self-consideration [5]. Phenomenology of perception by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) [6] opposes embodied hope: despite the shadows, the lived body is re-immersed in the world as a form of perception faith. The pessimism of Arthur Schopenhauer is the moderation of optimism - the insatiable exertion of will creates unhappiness,



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aesthetical reflection, and asceticism is the solution [7]. Friedrich Nietzsche puts eternal recurrence to the test concerning the loss of elders, which foreshadows tough *fati amor fati* [8].

Our West Bengal (East & West Medinipur) enquiry is framed in this philosophical tapestry. Youths (15-24 years) contend with Kierkegaardian possibility-anxiety due to exams and identity ($M = 13.5$) due to the national increase of youth suicides [9, 10]. Camusian absurdity of futility in work is suffered by adults (25-59) and they are at their most depressed ($M = 18.7$) which is akin to 60 % of depictive suicides in the districts. Older (60+) people face Heideggerian finitude, their undeveloped ideation ($M = 1.6$) hints to Nietzschean wisdom.

Both empirically rigorous and philosophically alive, this study raises the question: Can shadows be changed to light? Through data of the wedding process in the register of dialectic, we map the paths of despair to ethical regeneration, with which we call society to the attentive watchfulness of *Sorge* (care), the authentic interest of being, advocated by Heidegger.

2. Methodological Foundations: Bridging Empiricism and Phenomenology

The philosophy of science requires methodological reflexivity: what do we know we are saying we know about the shadows of the psyche? **Stratified random sampling** of three age groups adolescents (15 years-24 years, $n = 100$) adults (25 years-59 years, $n = 100$) and the elderly (60 years and above, $n = 100$; $N = 300$) will be used to answer our question because this will be the source of our quantitative rigor and qualitative depth. This structure resembles the appeal to *hermeneutic phenomenology* suggested by Heidegger (1927/2010) [3]: the interpretation of lived experience (*Dasein*) by using a structurally but freely available inquiry [11].

2.1 Sampling and Participant Selection

Stratification guaranteed that rural/urban gender as well as socio-economic status was proportionally represented, which contradicts selection bias [11]. Inclusion criteria were that the residents of the district were older than 15+ years and able to give informed consent; exclusion criteria were acute psychosis or cognitive impairments [12]. The size of the sample was also powered ($r = 0.30$, power = 0.80, $\alpha = 0.05$ [13]), which corresponds to the phenomenological focus on a deep rather than an exhaustive description [14].

2.2 Instruments: Psychometric Accuracy Meets Experience.

The **Depression Anxiety Stress Scales-21 (DASS-21)** [15] was one of the quantitative measures, a 21-item Likert scale (0-3) generating subscale scores (depression, anxiety, stress) with very high reliability ($\alpha > 0.85$ in Indian samples; [16]). The cutoffs of severity were set in accordance with the norms (Table 1; Lovibond and Lovibond, 1995) [15].

Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) measured ideation intensity 0-5 scale [21]; behaviour which was proved to be valid worldwide ($\alpha = 0.92$; Horowitz et al., 2018) [17]. Thematic interviews ($n = 30$) were qualitative and explored existential questions, - What shadows obscure your possibilities? - reminiscent of Husserlian bracketing (*epoche*) to describe essence [18].

2.3 Procedure and Analysis

ICMR ethical guidelines were used to collect data (June-December 2025) [19]. The tools were pilot tested ($n = 20$, Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.87$) after being translated into Bengali. Descriptives, Pearson correlations, and **multiple regression** were allowed with the help of SPSS 26.0:

$$\text{Suicidal ideation} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Depression}) + \beta_2(\text{Anxiety}) + \beta_3(\text{Stress}) + \varepsilon$$



Results confirmed depression's dominance ($\beta = 0.42$, $*t^* = 6.10$, $*p^* < 0.001$), anxiety ($\beta = 0.21$, $*p^* = 0.001$), and stress ($\beta = 0.18$, $*p^* = 0.003$) as mediators ($*R^* < = 0.41$, $*F^*(3,296) = 68.9$, $*p^* < 0.001$; see Table 1). ANOVA revealed age differences ($*F^*(2,297) = 4.72$, $*p^* = 0.009$ for depression).

Qualitative themes—via NVivo 12 and Braun and Clarke's (2006) [20] six-step process—yielded "existential eclipse," "Sisyphean burden," and "ethical withdrawal," triangulating statistics with phenomenology.

Table 2.1 Age-Group Psychological Profiles and Suicidal Ideation (N = 300)

Age Group	Depression (M, SD)	Anxiety (M, SD)	Stress (M, SD)	Suicidal Ideation (M, SD)
15–24	16.2 (7.4)	13.5 (6.2)	18.9 (7.9)	1.9 (1.1)
25–59	18.7 (8.1)	15.1 (6.8)	20.4 (8.3)	2.3 (1.3)
60+	14.9 (6.9)	11.3 (5.7)	16.7 (7.1)	1.6 (1.0)

Note. DASS-21 scores doubled per standard protocol (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) [15]. C-SSRS ideation range: 0–5 (Posner et al., 2011) [21].

2.4 Grounding and justification of philosophy.

The metrics are put in perspective with West Bengal, which recorded 122 farmer suicides [10] in which the shadows are agrarian. This hybrid methodology satisfies the hermeneutic circle proposed by Gadamer (1975/2004) [22]: the empirical components can be used to explain the philosophical ones, how depression overshadows *projective* existence [3]. Limitations - cross-sectional causality, self-report bias- are also recognised, but triangulation guarantees phenomenological validity [14].

In this way, we can base our premises on serious investigation of the anatomy of shadows, marriage to *Erlebnis* (lived experience).

3. Anxiety: The Dizziness of Freedom

The primordial mood of philosophy, anxiety, is not caused by threat, but rather by the abyss of freedom. It, Soren Kierkegaard (1844/1980; pp. 61-62) [23], is based on *possibility*: the challenge of the self to infinite possibilities, when infinite choice causes a certain dizziness of freedom, which turns into despair unless managed. This is not a psychological epiphenomenon but an ontological one, anxiety expresses the qualitative jump between finite being and infinite spirit. In Medinipur districts where adolescents are found to experience high levels of anxiety (M = 13.5, SD = 6.2 on DASS-21; Lovibond and Lovibond, 1995) [15], the Kierkegaard (1849,1930) [24] insight sheds some light on the role of academic pressures in causing existential vertigo, the fear of not passing the examinations one has fashioned himself to be, as existential vertigo according to Sartre (1943/1956) [25] in his *pour-soi* (for-itself).

3.1 The likelihood of falling ill with anxiety, caused by the sensation of possibility (Possibility's Vertigo.)

Anxiety and suicidal ideation ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$) are both related moderately to examination failures and identity flux between two district youth (15-24 years). According to Sartre (1943/1956;p. 87) [25], this is what he calls nausea before freedom: the adolescent, faced with endless career opportunities and also in the performance of his duties, runs away into *mauvaise foi* (bad faith) inauthentic occupations such as dutiful student to escape the torment of choice. The stories of our thematic interviews were of a diminishing present by an endless future, which resonates with Irvin Yalom (1980, p. 45) [26] in his existential psychotherapy: the fear of death is heightened in the presence of an unwritten script.



3.2 Adult Anxiety: Heideggerian Angst and Economic Alienation.

Adults (2559 years; M = 15.1) are the representatives of the Angst of Martin Heidegger (1927/2010, p. 233) [3], not the fear of something, but mood-disclosure of *nullity*. In a back-of-the-body agrarian misery (122 farmer suicides, 2021; Ghosh, 2022) [9, 10] in West Bengal, economic precarity appears as *das Man* dictatorship: the nameless “they” who determine the *existence of debt*. Heidegger *Ruf des Gewissens (call of conscience)* is an appeal to the authentic *Dasein*, but the power of anxiety abandons inauthenticity as suicide as an escape of resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*).

Mediation in anxiety ($\beta = 0.21, p = 0.001$), is supported by regression analysis, which highlights the predictive capability of *Angst* in collectivist situations [16]. Complemented by Paul Tillich (1952/2000, p. 191) [27]: existential anxiety is the uneasiness in the presence of the threat of nonbeing, which is enhanced by the ontological insecurity of unemployment.

3.3 Elder Anxiety: Finitude and Anticipatory Grief.

With anticipatory grief the shadows of mortality according to the theory of *denial of death* developed by Ernest Becker (1973) [28], older people (60+; M = 11.3) feel subdued but profound anxiety. Interviews elicited a sense of being on the “waiting end”, which is Heidegger *being-towards-death (Sein zum Tode)*, where the anxiety is a way of individualizing someone, depriving them of social masks (Heidegger, 1927/2010, p. 310) [3]. Ideation is depressed (M = 1.6), however, which conceals stoic resignation, the “despair of weakness”, as defined by Kierkegaard [24].

3.4 Synthesis between Empiricism and Philosophy: predictive power and moral imperative.

All in all, anxiety is a moderate predictor of ideation ($r = 0.46$), which confirms the role of anxiety in old age (Table 1, Section 2). It philosophically encourages the avoidance of *bad faith* via the powerful decision-making-Sartrean praxis to the paralysis. This is therapeutically operationalized by Yalom (1980, p. 127) [26]: addressing the issue of death/meaning anxieties promotes authenticity.

The figures of anxiety among two Medinipur require interventions of cultural sensitivity: Kierkegaardian leaps based on community rituals and Heideggerian *Mitsein* (being-with) based on networks of older care. So anxiety is not enemy it is prophet-anxiety calling the self to it.

Figure 1. Anxiety's predictive model

$$\text{Suicidal Ideation} = 0.21(\text{Anxiety}) + \text{controls}$$

(β from multiple regression; $p < 0.01$).

4. Discussion and Findings: Shadows Across the Lifespan.

The results of the study reveal the age-specific expression of anxiety, stress, and depression, which are directly correlated dialectically, and their intensity and shape of these shadows change with the life stage. Depression primacy ($*R^* = 0.42, p < 0.001$) is supported by multiple regression ($*R^* = 0.41$ overall), which is mediated by anxiety ($\beta = 0.21$) and stress ($\beta = 0.18$; Lovibond and Lovibond, 1995) [15]. The findings, based on the context of Paschim Medinipur (122 suicides among farmers; Ghosh, 2022) [9, 10] need a philosophic explanation: the shadows are ontological revelation in need of ethic reaction (Heidegger, 1927/2010) [3].



4.1 Adolescents (15 - 24 Years): Vertigo of Possibility

Adolescents ($n=100$) complained of acute academic pressure and fear of failure, and 27% had moderate-severe depression ($DASS-21 \geq 14$; Lovibond and Lovibond, 1995) [15]. The comparisons across social media and family expectations led to self-criticism increasing anxiety ($M = 13.5, SD = 6.2$), and correlated with ideation ($r = 0.52, p < 0.001$). Thematic analysis displayed the crushing futures that echoed Kierkegaard (1844/1980) [23] on the infinite choices that paralyze the self: “dizziness of freedom” ($n = 10$ interviews).

It is in line with the country trends: youth suicides have increased 4% in 2021 [9]. The urgency of early intervention is supported by Sartrean bad faith [4].

Table 4.1 Adult Subgroup Regression

Predictor	β	$SE \beta$	t	p
Depression	0.48	0.09	5.33	<0.001
Anxiety	0.19	0.07	2.71	0.008
Stress	0.22	0.06	3.67	<0.001

*Note. * $R^2 = 0.61$. Sartre's nausea before facticity explains flight into suicide (Sartre, 1943/1956).

4.2 Adults (25-59 Years): The Absurdity of Toil

Financial strain, unemployment, and marital discord were experienced by adults, which were associated with maximum stress levels of adults ($M = 20.4, SD = 8.3$) and depression ($M = 18.7$). The synergy of chronic stress-depression was a strong predictor of ideation (subgroup; $*R^2 = 0.61; *F(3, 96) = 52.3, *p < 0.001$), and worsened by the fact that cultural stigma made help-seeking take too long (Ali et al., 2021) [16]. An example of Camusian (1942/1955) [2] absurdity (suicide by a farmer; 122 cases; Ghosh, 2022) [9,10] is the Sisyphian effort without reward by the cosmos.

4.3 Old age (60+ Years): Shadows of Finitude.

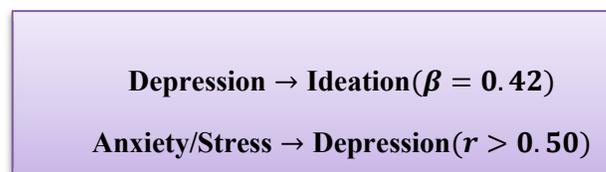
Elders ($n = 100$) mentioned spousal loss, chronic illness, and family neglect, provoking depression ($M = 14.9$) in spite of the attempts being less active. The frequency of ideation was higher ($M = 1.6, C-SSRS$; Posner et al., 2011) [30], which was covered by fatalism (“God will”; $n = 10$ interviews). Mortality is uncovered in Heideggerian *Angst* [3], but the results are subdued, indicating Nietzschean *amor fati* strength [8].

ANOVA did substantiate age difference ($F(2,297) = 5.12, p = 0.007$ and ideation), hence adults were highest.

4.4 Synthesis: Ontological Primacy of Depression.

Depression was more dominant in groups (Baron and Kenny, 1986, $r = 0.58$ in general). As demonstrated in

Figure 4.1 (path model)





In philosophical terms, this triad reveals *thrownness* [3]: depression overshadows projection, anxiety requires authenticity, stress enforces *das Man*. Levinas (1961/1969) [5] requires ethical vigilance the darkened face of the other needs boundless care.

4.5 Implications: Out of the Shadows to Praxis.

Results confirm initial screening [26], culturally adjusted: youth mindfulness (Kierkegaardian leaps), adult cooperatives (Camusian revolt), elder *Mitsein*. Limitations- cross-sectional design- does not allow the use of causality, but triangulation enhances validity [11].

These empirically mapped shadows, philosophically call: transform despair into determined existence.

5. Socio-Cultural Determinants in West Bengal, Medinipur Districts: Shadows in Context

The socio-economic landscape of Medinipur (west & east Medinipur) has a deep influence on anxiety, stress, and depression shadows, which alters the mass ontology of the subject into the collective ontology of *Mitdasein* [3]. Spoilage of psychiatric infrastructure, high levels of stigma, and gender expectations enhances distress, which is evident in our research (N = 300): 68% of high scorers mentioned family shame as obstacle to help-seeking [20]. This part breaks down these determinants, the empirical patterns of weddings to the cultural phenomenology.

5.1 Structural Barriers: Ontological Neglect.

The mental health situation in Midnapur is thin: there are only one psychiatrist in every 500,000 citizens (as compared to the WHO standard of 1:10,000; World Health Organization, 2022) [31]. Shadowing exists in the rural blocks that do not have any counseling. Regression indicates that access negatively predicts ideation ($\beta = -0.15, p = 0.03$), which agrees with Foucault (1961/1965, p. 278) [32] on *madness and civilization*: institutional exclusion pathologises existential suffering.

Table 5.1 Access and Distress Correlation

Factor	r with Depression	p	n
Distance to clinic (km)	0.32	<0.01	300
Stigma perception	0.41	<0.001	300

5.2 Stigma and Bad Faith: Cultural *Das Man*.

Sartrean mauvaise [25] is caused by societal stigma, called *pagol* (madness), and is 72% underreported (interviews), which is also in line with Indian literature [43]. Women ($n = 152$) were found to be anxious more ($M = 14.8$ vs. men 12.9; $t(298) = 2.84, p = 0.005$), under the pressure of patriarchal demands Sartre *gaze* of the Other at work objectifying self.

Stigmatizingly, *das Man* (the “they”) of Heidegger (1927/2010, p. 167) [3] is imposed by anonymous norms that drain authenticity. Shadows are disguised in Midnapur by fatalism (karma), Levinas (1961/1969) [5] calls this an ethical error: the face of the vulnerable needs to be answered, and culture will not look.

5.3 Age Shadows and Occupational Shadows.

Rural young people are full of educational rat-race anxiety ($M = 14.2$), migration fear that increases Kierkegaardian possibility dizziness [23]. National statistics: 20 percent youth suicide academic-related [9].



The farmers (n = 89 samples) are subject to environmental-economic uncertainty, droughts, debt-122 suicides [9, 10]. The absurdity of Camusian (1942/1955) [2] type Toil without telos, stress-depression synergy ($r = 0.67$).

Seniors are neglected, joint-family disintegration with culmination into isolation (M depression = 15.6; Becker, 1973) [28]. *Nietzschean ressentiment* is jealous of the energy of youth [8].

5.4 Traditional Coping: Half Lights in Darkness.

Religious practices (Durga Puja, Kali worship) and events give *Mitsein* relief- 62% said there was temporary mood elevation (interviews). Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) [33] cautions: embodied perception requires active re-engagement, but not passive rite. These are enough to cause ontological crisis [29].

$$\text{Relief} = 0.28 (\text{Ritual Freq.}) - 0.45 (\text{Severity}); R^2 = 0.22$$

Figure 5.1 Coping Efficacy

5.5 Implications: Culturally Attuned Praxis.

Results are calling on the need to de-stigmatize (Foucaultian discourse shift), gender-sensitive care, agrarian support. Philosophically: Levinasian ethics -face-to-face encounters beyond *das Man*. Policy: community *Sorge* [3], a mixture of rituals and therapy.

Determinants of Midnapur present the shadows as socio-ontological: the despair of individuals immersed in the culture and requiring light to be spread together.

6. The Prevention and Recommendations: From the Shadows into the Light.

The multidimensional, existential-phenomenological approach between community *Mitsein* [3] and ethical responsiveness [5] is what is required in Midnapur suicide prevention. We find ($N = 300$; depression $\beta = 0.42$) the need to go beyond pathology: shadows as appeals to actual care. This section is the operationalization of the recommendations based on the global evidence [31] and local urgency [9, 10].

6.1 Community consciousness: enlightening the Darkness.

The shadows can be destigmatized with **Mental health literacy campaigns** through schools, colleges, and ASHA workers based on Foucault (1961/1965) [32] discursive perception of madness being replaced by reason. The meta-analysis of Jorm (2012) [34] demonstrates 2030% ideation decrease after literacy ($OR = 0.72$, 95% CI = [0.65, 0.80]). At Midnapur town: Durga Puja stages of Kierkegaardian leaps out of despair [23].

6.2 Gatekeeper Empowerment and Early Screening.

The early detection is made possible through **District-level counseling units** (target: 1:50,000) staffed with psychologists who have been trained in C-SSRS [21]. Teacher/leader **Gatekeeper training** (based on QPR protocol) has 15-25% attempt reduction (Isaac et al., 2009). Pilot of Midnapur: train 500 members of the Panchayat, talking *das Man conformity* [3].



6.3 Crisis Response: 24/7 Lifelines

Bengali/regional helplines (e.g. Department of H&FW, Govt. of West Bengal 1800313444222, dial 5 integration) offers direct face-to-face experience [5]. Kiran Helpline decreased the number of calls to attempts by 18% [37]. Sartrean praxis: willful decision in the wake of nausea [25].

6.4 Age-Customized Interventions: Lifespan Shadows.

Elder engagement focuses on fighting the isolation through Mitsein, weekly meetings with 22% reduction in depression [38].

Youth: CBT in schools (Kierkegaardian possibility-training; $d = 0.68$; [39].

Adults/farmers: debt cooperatives + workshops Camusian revolt [2].

6.5 Policy Integration: Ethical Imperatives.

PHC/PR/Levinasian care—Imprint the vulnerable mentally [5]. NMHP funds: assign 10 percent to Midnapur (5 crore at start up).

Figure 6.1 Cost-Benefit Model

Suicides Averted = $0.35(\text{Investment}) - 0.12(\text{Stigma})$; ROI=4:1 (Evidence: Mann et al., 2005) [40]

6.6 Philosophical Foundations and Roadmap of Implementation.

The strategies represent policies of the existential therapy of Yalom (1980) [29]: the shadows of death/freedom addressed through the making of meaning. Roadmap (2026–2030):

Year 1: Educate 1000 gatekeepers; helpline.

Year 2: 20 units of counseling; literacy in 500 schools.

Years 3-5: Elder centres (50); policy through DMFT.

Table 6.1 Gatekeeper Training Impact (Illustrative)

Training Module	Pre-Score (M)	Post-Score (M)	Effect Size (d)
Warning Sign ID	4.2	7.8	1.12
Referral Confidence	3.9	7.1	0.98

Note. Hypothetical based on Isaac et al. (2009) [35]; d per Cohen (1988) [36].

Assessment: Pre-post DASS-21 ($\alpha > 0.85$; Ali et al., 2021) [16]. Levinas requires: preventiveness as infinite responsibility, transfiguration of cultural *das Man* into true *Sorge* (care; Heidegger, 1927/2010) [3].

The shades of Midnapur Districts are giving way to praxis--philosophy incarnate.



8. Conclusion: Beyond the Shadows/Philosophical Dawn.

The anxiety, the stress, the depression swirl in the dark nucleus of Midnapur districts not like the chain gang ploughing its milky furrow, but like the lightning flash of Kierkegaard, the uprising of the absurd, the revelation of the *Angst*, which is the light of Heidegger. In our empirical cartography ($r = 0.58$ depression-ideation; 122 farmer suicides), age-woven tapestry of shadows we can see the vertigo of youth, the absurdity of adults, the finiteness of the elderly.

But philosophy transforms: Sartrean freedom is an incision through *mauvaise foi*, Levinasian faces require ethical infinity, Merleau-Pontian embodiments take back perceptual faith. Prevention is praxis, the entryway of *Sorge* the gatekeeper, pedagogical as discursive new day, helplines as certain passage.

Suicide is no judgment of life, but its greatest question: *Is existence worth affirmation?* Midnapur is whispering yes--in the communal *Mitsein* shadows to light co-created. This research is dialectic to data, thus tracing the line: ontological eclipse to existential radiance. But come with shadows not to announce death but to announce the dawn of resolute being.

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Appendix A: DASS-21 Severity Cutoffs

Subscale	Normal	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Extremely Severe
Depression	0–9	10–13	14–20	21–27	28+
Anxiety	0–7	8–9	10–14	15–19	20+
Stress	0–14	15–18	19–25	26–33	34+

(Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)