

One in five adults have felt suicidal: survey

Kyodo News

Nearly one in five people recently polled in a new survey said they had "seriously considered" committing suicide at least once in their lives, the Cabinet Office said Friday.

The ratio is particularly high among the younger generation, with 24.6 percent of those in their 20s and 27.8 percent in their 30s saying they had given serious thought to the idea of killing themselves, the results of the nationwide survey on 1,808 adults in February and March said.

The Cabinet Office said the result was "higher than anticipated" and that it was alarmed so many young people had been despondent.

The survey is the first of its kind in Japan. Overall, 19.1 percent said they had considered killing themselves, with the ratio standing at 21.9 percent for women and 16.3 percent for men.

Broken down by job category, the ratio reached a higher than average 25.8 percent among part-timers, the Cabinet Office said, speculating that weak job security boosted the figure.

According to the survey, 58.2 percent of the respondents said that they think movies and TV dramas often "beautify" scenes in which characters kill themselves and that this encourages viewers to commit suicide. About 42 percent of the pollees said they think suicide scenes appear either "very frequently" or "rather frequently," it said.

Roughly 76 percent of the respondents called for restrictions on suicide Web sites that teach people how to do themselves in or solicit people to take their

lives together.

Alarmed by the tens of thousands of people who kill themselves each year, the government decided last year to reduce the national suicide rate 20 percent by 2016 and set out several policy priorities, including support for heavily indebted people, to achieve the goal.

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