

Agrarian Crisis and Farmer's Suicide

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SUMMARY

A farmer cultivates agriculture, raises livestock, and provides food or raw materials. Indian agriculture relies heavily on farmers. Suicide is an activity that involves acts with the goal of causing one's own biological death as a result of socially defined historical motives. Farmer suicide has emerged as a serious socioeconomic concern in India, with significant implications for farmers' quality of life. Between 1997 and 2005, one farmer committed suicide every 32 minutes in India, according to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) (ncrb.nic.in 2017). According to the study, the farmer's financial situation, crop choice, irrigation facilities, loans and loan repayments are all factors that contribute to the farmer's mortality. Farmers faced non-productive, non-irrigated and very small land holdings, according to our findings. The primary reasons for the overburdened socially and economically conserving farmers are farming expenses and family problems such as daughter's marriages (Dilip et.al. 2015). The study found that the economic effects of suicides are fatal for the candidate's family, including loss of income, asset depletion and human capital loss, among other things (Kale et.al. 2014).

INTRODUCTION

Economic measures will not be enough to solve the problem. What is required are social and spiritual interventions to help farmers understand that suicide is not an option and that they must acquire self-confidence. Future generations should be mentally capable of facing life's challenges. Farmer suicide has emerged as a serious socio economic concern in India, with significant implications for farmers' quality of life. Between 1997 and 2005, one farmer committed suicide every 32 minutes in India, according to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). India's suicide rate of 11 per lakh people is about average for the world. Greenland (83 per lakh), Lithuania (38 per lakh) and South Korea have the highest rates (28.5 per lakh). China's rate (22.2 per lakh) is more than double that of India. The Indian rate is lower than that of wealthy countries with large welfare systems and few farmers, such as Belgium (19), France (14.7), the United States (12.6), Japan (12.3), Germany (12.5) and the United Kingdom (11.8).

Table 1: No of farmers' suicides in India between 1995-2016.

Year	Male	Female	Total	Year	Male	Female	Total
1995	8295	2425	10720	2006	14664	2396	17060
1996	NA	NA	NA	2007	14509	2123	16632
1997	11229	2393	13622	2008	14145	2051	16196
1998	12986	3029	16015	2009	14951	2417	17368
1999	13278	2804	16082	2010	13592	2372	15964
2000	13501	3102	16603	2011	12071	1956	14027
2001	13708	2576	16284	2012	11951	1803	13754
2002	15308	2663	17971	2013	10489	1283	11772
2003	14701	2463	17164	2014	10889	1471	12360
2004	15929	2312	18241	2015	11028	1574	12602
2005	14972	2158	17131	2016	10026	1432	11458

Source: ncrb.nic.in (2017)

Between 1995 and 2016, 319026 people in India committed suicide. The largest number of suicide cases (18241) was recorded in 2004, while the lowest number of suicide cases (8295) was recorded in 1995. In India, a farmer died every 32 minutes from 1997 to 2005. (UNCSD). Every day (2020) in India, a farmer (28) dies (downtoearth.org.in). Suicides in the agricultural sector accounted for 7.4% of all suicides in India. Suicides have been reported in Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, M.P., West Bengal, and other states, but according to the NCRB study, Maharashtra is the leading state. The number of farmers who committed suicide in Maharashtra differs by district. Despite the Konkan districts of Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg, Maharashtra's other regions are struggling with the issue of farmer suicide. According to the NCRB, the number of farmers who committed suicide in Maharashtra increased dramatically during the last twenty-one years. 69053 farmers committed suicide between January 1995 and December 2016. It's also worth noting that the total number of suicides statistics shows some variation. The table below depicts a growing trend in Maharashtra farmer suicides. The largest number of suicide cases (4453) was recorded in 2006, while the lowest number (1083) was recorded in 1995.

Table 2: Number of farmer's suicide in Maharashtra 1995-2016.

Year	Male	Female	Total	Year	Male	Female	Total
1995	978	105	1083	2006	4111	342	4453
1996	1767	214	1981	2007	3968	270	4238
1997	1600	317	1917	2008	3573	229	3802
1998	1938	471	2409	2009	2692	180	2872
1999	2050	373	2423	2010	2947	194	3141
2000	2492	530	3022	2011	3093	244	3337
2001	2945	591	3536	2012	3483	303	3786
2002	3155	540	3695	2013	3020	126	3146
2003	3381	455	3836	2014	3726	278	4004
2004	3799	348	4147	2015	2492	392	3228
2005	3638	288	3926	2016	2050	1002	3052

Source: ncrb.nic.in (2017)

Farmer suicide has increased significantly in the Marathwada region over the previous eight years. Between 2010 and 2017, 4516 farmers committed suicide in Marathwada. Between January 1 and March 25, 2018, 221 farmers committed suicide. The year 2015 saw the largest number of suicide cases (1133) and the lowest number of suicide cases (169). Beed district has the highest rate of suicide, accounting for 27.30 percent of all suicides in Marathwada. The following is a brief profile of farmer suicides in Marathwada:

Table 3: District wise number of farmers' suicides in Marathwada during 2010-2017.

Year Dist.	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Beed	79	73	91	98	152	301	222	207	1223
Jalana	04	06	06	08	32	83	76	91	306
Nanded	55	33	39	46	118	190	180	153	814
Latur	04	04	00	03	44	106	116	94	371
Aurangabad	02	00	02	04	56	144	151	139	498
Parbhani	22	23	35	17	70	104	98	125	494
Hingoli	02	05	03	02	31	41	49	56	189
Osmanabad	23	25	22	29	71	164	161	126	621
Total	191	169	198	207	574	1133	1053	991	4516

Source: Divisional commissioner office, Aurangabad.

Farmers' Suicide Statistics in India :

Suicides by	2019
Daily wagers	32,199
Male farmers	5,563
Female farmers	394
Male agri. labourers	3,749
Female agri. labourers	575
Total	42,480

Source: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>

State wise suicides in 2019 :

States	FARMERS	Agri. Labourers	TOTAL
Maharashtra	2680	1247	3927
Karnataka	1331	661	1992
Andhra Pradesh	628	401	1029
Telangana	491	8	499
Punjab	239	63	302
Madhya Pradesh	142	399	541

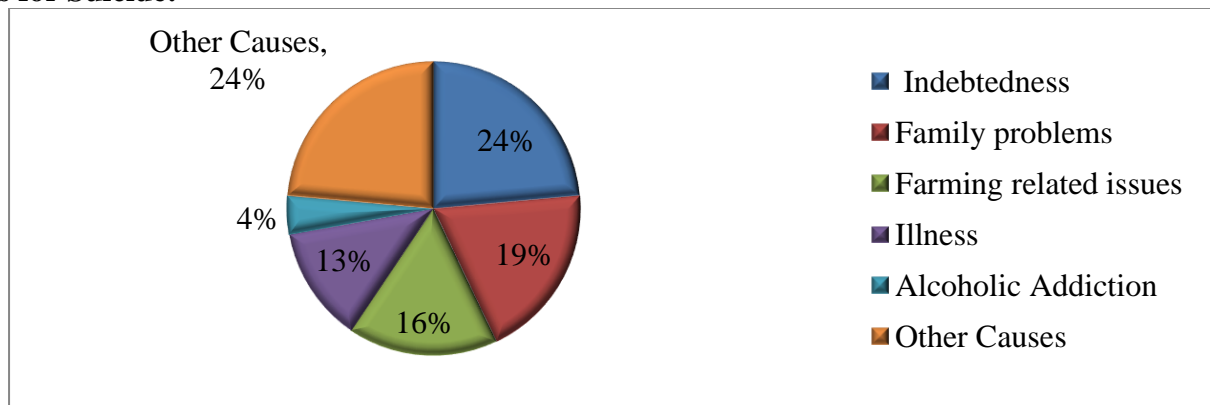
Source: NCRB, 2019.

Suicides in farm sector:

Suicides by	2016	2017	2018	2019	%Change over 2016
Farmers	6270	5955	5763	5957	-5%
Agri. Labo	5109	4700	4586	4324	-15%
Total Suici	11379	10655	10349	10281	-10

Source: Indianexpress.com

Reasons for Suicide:



Source: National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 2015

Reasons behind Farmers Committing Suicide:

1. Monsoon failure: India's weather is unpredictable, and rain does not always fall at the correct time. Permanent agriculture facilities are found in only 45.3 percent of fields. In recent years, severe famines have been documented. Some sections of the country are prone to drought, while others experience flooding. In Punjab, groundwater levels have decreased by 40-50 cm, forcing farmers to switch to less thirsty crops

2. Heavy debt burdens: To meet their demands, Indian farmers must borrow money from a variety of sources. According to the National Sample Survey Report 2013, only 56% of total growers borrow from formal sources and 44% from informal sources. Punjab farmers pay Rs 69355 crore, according to a study undertaken by Punjabi University in Patiala.

3. Farmers' lack of information: Farmers lack sufficient understanding about the quality of seeds and fertilisers to use, as well as how to operate new technologies.

- 4. Cropping pattern:** Farmers typically cultivate the same crop all year, reducing soil fertility. They should use numerous cropping patterns instead of just one.
- 5. Government policy:** Following the 1991 economic reforms, the emphasis shifted from agriculture to secondary and territorial sectors.
- 6. Import of foreign agricultural goods:** As a result of globalisation, other nations began to import items into our country, reducing the consumption of native output and, as a result, lowering demand and raising prices.
- 7. Alcohol addiction:** Interestingly, alcohol and drug addiction adds to a rise in suicidal behaviors among farmers in places such as Punjab and Haryana.
- 8. Inadequate Institutional credit facilities:** Institutional lenders are still unable to reach small and marginal farmers and meet their lending needs.
- 9. Outdated machinery:** Technology is rapidly changing nowadays. Due to financial constraints and a lack of understanding, farmers are unable to make rapid changes in the production process.
- 10. Small farm sizes:** The average size of land hoarding in India is 1.16 hectares, compared to 122 hectares in America.
- 11. Low agricultural productivity per worker:** a number of variables contribute to decreased agricultural productivity, including small farm sizes, outdated cultivation practises, old agricultural equipment, insufficient use of HYV seeds and concerns associated to disguised unemployment.
- 12. Poor marketing:** Farmers in remote areas are unable to obtain accurate market information on the values of their produce. They are unable to sell their produce in urban marketplaces and must rely on the mercy of middlemen, who provide them a very poor price for their goods.
- 13. Agriculture production crash:** There are a variety of reasons for low production, including climate circumstances, crop disease and pests and the use of low-quality seeds.
- 14. Zamindar overexploitation:** Shahukars and zamindars demand excessive interest rates, ranging from 25 to 50 percent per year, and take a share of the produce for themselves, leaving farmers in the red. Furthermore, they are uninterested in the manufacturing of food grains.
- 15. Non-productive loans:** Many loans are taken out for non-productive purposes such as family functions, court cases and so on, and they take a long time to repay.
- 16. Ancestral debts:** Rural farmers are heavily burdened by ancestral debt, which they must pay as a matter of duty.
- 17. Defective marketing:** Due to inadequate roads and a lack of transportation, farmers have little choice but to sell their produce to market intermediaries, which limits their growth.
- 18. Poor soil quality:** Infertility is caused by soil erosion, water salinity, drought-like circumstances, floods, and excessive moisture content in the soil.
- 19. Negative issues:** Farmers sometimes commit suicide as a result of personal or family problems.
- 20. No other source of income:** Farmers' only source of income is agriculture, so crop losses cause them worry. They should develop additional sources of income to offset the impact of farm losses (Source: www.thetimesofindia.com).

Steps That Should Be Taken By In Order To Minimize the Cases Of Suicide (Reccomendations To Government):

- 1. Crop insurance:** Institutional institutions should provide insurance against crop loss owing to any uncertainty, such as droughts, floods, or crop disease. It is one of the key reasons why farmers commit suicide.
- 2. Scientific agriculture:** Farmers should be trained on crop rotation, the use of high-quality fertilisers and modern procedures, among other things, in order to boost agriculture productivity.
- 3. HYV seeds:** HYV seeds should be sold at a discount to small farmers through cooperative organisations and village panchayats.
- 4. Credit facilities:** Mahajan and shahukar loans should be avoided, but institutional loans should be encouraged. Banks should not be unwilling to lend to small farms.
- 5. Establishment of cooperative societies:** Farmers should establish cooperative societies to pool their resources and protect their interests.
- 6. Land reforms:** Land reforms must be implemented. The zamindari system should be abolished and land ownership should be handed to those who are genuinely producing.

7. Agricultural marketing should be enhanced: Agricultural marketing should be enhanced so that farmers may get the best price for their produce.

8. Farmer awareness: Farmers should be aware of current market prices for their products, as well as technical advancements.

9. Irrigation systems: Farmers should not rely solely on rainfall for their crops; they need also have alternative irrigation systems in place, such as tube wells and canals.

10. Population pressure: Only those persons who are actively working on the land should be employed. To put it another way, there should be no hidden work.

11. Increased cultivated area: There are a lot of farmers working on a little piece of land. As a result, the government should collect those small plots of land and allot one large plot of land to all of the farmers together.

12. Price stability: Farmers want to ensure a minimum price for their produce while production changes. As a result, the government must properly execute the concept of Minimum Support Price in order to give farmers with security.

13. Inadequate grading: Small farmers are unable to assess their produce based on its quality. As a result, they sell all of their products at the same price, regardless of quality, leaving farmers in the red.

14. Warehousing facilities: The government should provide farmers with suitable warehousing facilities where they can properly keep their produce so that it does not degrade (Vayu Tiwari, 2020).

Preventive Measure:

Role of Different stakeholders:-

1. Role of Farmers: Farmer needs to adopt IFS which help them to earn better and stable income. Farmer should practice timely repayment of loans instead of over burdening with heavy and large amount of loan. He should adopt alternative crop along with cash crop. Must engage with diversified farming more than specialized.

2. Role of farm universities: Strengthening outreaching activities of universities to transfer the efficient technology directly to farmers. University should propagate alternate crop plan with commercial crop. Should arrange time to time campaign, farmer fair and training program.

3. Media's Role: Broadcasting agricultural-related programmes on radio and television to raise awareness among farmers. Farmers must be aware of the negative consequences of suicide. Increase the coverage of the agricultural industry.

4. The Financial Sector's Role: Farmers' respect should not be damaged by recovery practises. The process of recovering a loan should not be made public. The downward and mild language was employed in the loan recovery process, rather than unparliamentarily words.

5. Family member's role: The family member should notice and study the reasons of depression closely. The farmer's mental state should be taken into account, and there should be no inciting conduct from family members. If someone is determined to be lying about suicide, he should be brought into the social circle and allowed to mingle. The farmer's family member should urge him to express himself freely in order to reduce his tension.

6. What the government can do: Crop insurance that is effective and covers all crops. Compensation for crop failure right away. Farmers are procured using ruminative prices. Bank credit to all farmers with sufficient financial resources. Provide ex-gratia and loan repayment assistance to all suicide victims' families in a timely manner.

National Initiatives to Address Agrarian Distress:

1. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY-2015).
2. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY-2016).
3. Prime Minister Rehabilitation Package (PMRP-2006).
4. Relief to farmers in input subsidy.
5. Soil health card - (2015).
6. Agricultural debt waiver and debt relief scheme (2008).

State Initiatives:

1. Maharashtra Bill to regulate farmer loan terms -2008
2. Maharashtra relief package -2010

3. Kerala Farmers Debt Relief Commission (Amendment) Bill (2012).

State-Wise Details of Compensation Paid to Victim HHs:-

S.No.	States	No. of victim HHs compensate	Total amount of compensation paid (in Rs. Lakh	Compensation paid per victim HHs (in Rs. Lakh
1	Maharashtra	2312	2312.0	1.0
2	Andhra Pradesh	47	233.0	4.9
3	Karnataka	1192	3920.0	5.0
4	Gujarat	1	0.1	0.1
5	Telangana	320	1440.80	4.5

(Comments on Draft Report by Centre for Management of Agriculture, IIM, Ahmadabad -2017).

CONCLUSION

The pressure on every available resource appears to be greater than ever before as a result of the population growth and growing demand. Farmers in India's low socioeconomic conditions, their illiteracy, ignorance, conservative outlook, and fatalistic mentality all push them into the most socially distressing situations, and as a result, they commit suicide in desperation or leave agriculture and pursue other opportunities. All of this makes our agriculture more susceptible to both man-made and natural disasters.

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