

Critical Study of Farmers Suicide in Maharashtra- Causes and Remedies

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ABSTRACT: From last few years every other day we read news of farmers committing suicides. Farmers crisis since the 1990s has been one of the major problems we are facing today. Nearly above one lakh farmers have committed suicides since 1995. Poverty is intrinsically linked to sustainable development. Seventy percent of Indian lives in villages, most of whom derive their total sustenance from agriculture or a related activity. Their security is synonymous with agriculture security.

It is various perceived reasons for farmer's suicides in the region of Maharashtra. Farmers perceived debt, addiction, environmental problems. The main cause behind suicides found were indebtedness, low productivity, crop failure, low income, more expenditure than income and inability to fulfill requirements. Poor prices for farm produce stress and family responsibilities. Weak irrigation increased cost of cultivation. Private money lenders, use of chemical fertilizers and crop failure are the reasons for farmer's suicide. Several studies have been conducted by the government and social science organization to analyze the problems of farmer's suicides

From various information collected, it showed the solution such as Water management, special agricultural zone, multiple crop system, supportive sources for farmers, Weather risk management system, Providing effective loan schemes, scientific innovation and Agriculture modernization, Agriculture farmer training, Counseling to farmers self reliance and capacity building among farmers. Monitoring and support system for unguarded farmers, support and counseling services transparent system for disbursement for relief packages in required to prevent farmers suicide in the near future. Central and state government has announced the relief packages to the suicide affected families in Maharashtra. NABARD is implementing agency of the package provided by central government. This research paper focuses on the causes of farmers suicide and effective remedies.

An attempt has been made in this article to address the issue of farmer's inconvenient condition leading to suicides and remedies to address the issue have been suggested.

KEYWORDS: Agriculture, Farmers suicide, financial problem, causes, remedies, sustainable development

I. INTRODUCTION

India is primarily agriculture country. The villages in India mainly depend on agriculture. It is very true to say that the prosperity of our nation depends upon the prosperity of villages. Farmers have a great share and prime role to play farming or agriculture remain backbone. Agriculture is the base of Indian economy. Indian farmers are known as *Baliraja* who provide the food to all, who sustain to whole world. India is fastest developing nation of the world. While measuring development of nation, development of industries and service centre is considered with development of basic infrastructural facilities and increase in employment opportunities, but for sustainable development of any nation only development of industrial and service sector is enough. In addition to this growth and development of agricultural sector is important. In India more than 60% of total population of nation in lives in rural area and agriculture and its allied activities are the main source of their income. Their overall development is depending upon agricultural sector. But government of India and concern state government will fully neglected to agricultural sector. This is not only affects on standards of living of rural Indians but also affects on economic development of country[1].

The success of agricultural schemes also depends on natural conditions also if natural conditions are favorable and production is good with high quality. Farmers are not ensuring that they will set good return of their products

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because high production also reduces their income as prices in market are fall down due to heavy supply of goods. Due to this various problems are facing by Indian farmers. Suicide is actually about the loss of hope that things can improve ever hope that things will be fine later[2].Farmers were always indebted someone has correctly said that a farmers is both in debt, lives in debt and dies in debt. I think this situation is in all over India not only in Maharashtra. But there were no suicides takes place in earlier days. The reason is that cotton fetched high prices than in 1972. It was called white gold of Vidarbha region even though yield was less. It fetched the same prices as gold. The first suicide here occurred in 1985[3].In the mid-west of the US suicide rates among male farmers are twice that of general population. In Britain, farmers are taking their own lives at the rate of one week. In India one farmers committed suicide every 32 minutes between 1997 to 2005.All over world the impact of an industrial approach to boosting crop yields has stripped many small farmers of their self sufficiency and thrown them into despair [4].In 2014 natural crime records Bureau of India reported 5650 farmers suicide[5]. The highest number of suicide was recorded in 2014 when 18241 farmers committed suicide [6].The farmer suicide rate in India has ranged between 1.4 to 1.8 per 100000 over 10 year's period through 2005 [7].Reporting in popular press about farmers suicides in India began in mid-1990s particularly by Pelagummi Sainath [8]. In 2000s the issue gained international attention and verify of Indian government initiatives [9, 10].

National crime record Bureau an office of the ministry of the home affairs government of India has been collecting and publishing suicides stabbing for India, since 1950s an annual accidental death and suicides in Indian reports. It started separately collecting and publishing farmer suicides statistics from 1995 [11].In 1990s India woke up to spate of society among farmers community. The first where suicides were reported was Maharashtra with particular reference to Vidarbha region.

State crime records bureau makes it evident that farmer as a professional category is suffering from this problem of high suicides rate 3.4 million cotton farmers occupy the Vidarbha region . The tragedy of farmers suicides in state like Maharashtra has been occurring regularly since 1997 [12].Farmers suicide incidence in India becomes critical issue from several state such incidences come before society. This suicide incidence becomes more challengeable to the policy makers and government. Such incidence were reported from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, M.P., West Bengal and also others but Maharashtra is leading state according to imminent Journalist [13].India's suicide rate of 11 per lakh people is roughly the global average. The highest rates are in Greenland (83 lakh), Lithuania (38 lakh) and South Korea (28.5 lakh). China's rate (22.2 lakh) is double India's. The Indian rate is lower than in rich countries with big welfare systems and very few farmers: Belgium (19), France (14.7), US (12.6), Japan (12.3), Germany (12.5) and the UK (11.8).[13]Total of 2,96438 have committed suicide in India since 1995 to till.According to NCRB in the year 1995 to 2016,60750 were suicide in Maharashtra.On average, 3,685 farmers in the state took their lives every year between 2004-13.Even accepting the 11,744 figure for 2013, that brings the national total since 1995 to 2016 2,96,438 farmers' suicides (NCRB ADSI reports 1995-2013) .From January 1 to June 2016, 2,053 farmer suicide cases have been reported, with Amravati division leading with 692 cases[14].

Over the past few years, Maharashtra has been topping the list of states in the country when it comes to farmers committing suicide. This is due to frequent droughts, crop failure, and non-realisation of prices for agricultural products are some of the reasons which drive farmers to take the extreme step.

In 2009, the state had seen 2872 cases of farmer suicides which rose to 3141 in 2010. The next three years had seen relatively better rains and subsequently the number of farmer suicides had seen a dip. 2011 had recorded 3337 cases, 2012 and 2013 had seen 3786 and 3146 cases of farmer suicides, respectively. The number of farmer suicides 2568 in 2014 and 2015 year the figure has touched 3228 by September end, according to data released by the state government Vidarbha and Marathwada have reported maximum number of suicides in the state. A total of 19 districts come under the above two regions. Districts of Yavatmal, Osmanabad, Beed have seen maximum concentration of such cases. There had been a spurt in cases of farmer suicides in March, April and May. August and September had also seen a rise in the number of cases. The various trends were due to the failure of the crop cycles of last year and this year. "Maharashtra has been seeing drought and unseasonal rains over the past years. Much of the crop had been wasted due to sudden rains. The rains had ruined the Rabi crop and lack of timely intervention by the state government had resulted in a rise in the figure in May. The subsequent lack of rains had prompted re-sowing in the state. "The second spurt in suicide cases started August onwards as the withdrawal of monsoons also failed to bring adequate rains.

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OBJECTIVES:-

- 1 To studies the causes (various reasons) for farmers suicide in the Maharashtra state
- 2 To study the concept of agriculture sector and to know the causes of farmers suicide.
- 3 To get the information about the farmers suicide now days.
- 4 To know the financial needs of the farmers
- 5 To understand the causes of increasing rural indebtedness
- 6 To suggest remedies.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research paper highlights the causes and remedies of farmers suicide. Information and data for this paper have been collected from the various secondary sources such as government website, research articles, magazines, journals national and vernacular news papers with NCRB reports etc.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSION

**Table: Farmer Suicides in Maharashtra
(1995 to 2015)**

Year	Farmers suicide						
1995	1083	2001	3536	2007	4238	2013	3146
1996	1981	2002	3695	2008	3802	2014	2568
1997	1917	2003	3836	2009	2872	2015	3228
1998	2409	2004	4147	2010	3141		
1999	2423	2005	3926	2011	3337		
2000	3022	2006	4453	2012	3786		

- Causes:** There are various economic, social, individual and environmental causes of farmers’ suicide in Maharashtra. The causes of this crisis are complex and manifold; they are dominantly related to public policy and economic strategy.
- 1 **Crop failure:** - India is a agricultural land 65% of family depends on rain the probability of farming committing suicide is more during bad rain years. Inspite of the farmers work the production of the crop low which is also one of the basic cause of farmers suicide
 - 2 **Indebtedness and low income:** -Some time existing social structure added by agricultural distress make the situation much worse. Rural farmers often become burdened with over debt. The farmers are indebted because of low income the farmers have to face many social and financial problems. Sometimes farmers have to work as tenant which is not sufficient to lead their life and aggrieved when they become unable to arrange dowry for daughter and sisters marriage much expenditure than income daily dispute in family inability to fulfill requirement of family members lead to farmers suicide
 - 3 **Prices of farm product:**-It is often seen that when sowing season for the kharif and rubi crops come the prices of the grains reach much more but when harvesting season comes the rate drops. Due to the manipulated pricing the farmers the loser. But they are helpless and they are burdened with debts and unable to meet their commitment due being forced to sell their products at the critically reduced market rate. The government does not seen to be paying attention to this vicious circle. Nobody has tried to fix the prices based on the cost of the agricultural production. It would be seen that in the last twenty years the prices of the farm product have relatively dropped as compare to the prices of other product
 - 4 **Natural Calamities:**-The effective agricultural production is mostly depends on favorable weather condition. Due to the global warming, deforestation and other manmade reasons natural condition has become more worsen and reasons like heavy raining, floods, droughts, delay in raining, heavy cyclones etc. farmers unable to take qualitative and quantitative production from their farm. Even all the condition are in favor of farmers and production is good in quality & quantity farmers don’t get proper return of their product in the market, as more supply of goods reduces demand and reduction in demands automatically reduces price of the same. Most of the time farmers are

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unable to recover cost price of their product. Due to these reasons agriculture becomes an assured loss making business. But the marginal & small farmers of India don't have another option for earning. They again & again put their all efforts in the agriculture. Continuous losses turn them to become insolvent and frustration of the same forces them to commit suicides.

- 5 **Increase in cost of production:** Agriculture sector in India requires huge manpower for ploughing, digging, soil maintenance etc., for insecticides, pesticides, cutting, transportation and selling of products requires money. In addition to this hybrid seeds are also requires for good quality & quantity of product, which are very costly and not affordable to marginal and poor farmers. Increase in cost of production which forces to farmers to commit suicide.
- 6 **Cruel circle of money lenders loan :-** for the production of agro product farmers are always in great need of short or long term loans similarly there is also great need of money for farming related activities like taking bore well, pipeline setting purchasing seeds, bees, tractors and others related things to the farm. But there are lot hindrances and impediments while sanctioning such lone amount to the farmers by bank finalizing all the related documents is almost like an ordeal. So most of the farmers at the critical time traditional source of money as like savkar, money lenders come to their help and sanctions loan immediately but charges interest at the very high rate even after accepting all such adversities a natural calamities make a great sabotage to the farm and finally the farmers are totally collapsed because not a single agro product is encased. At last they are left with no option. The continuous pressure from money lenders for the payment of loans and their inability to repay the lone complete, farmers to commit suicide.
- 7 **Illiteracy, Traditions & Culture:-**Due to illiteracy and inadequate knowledge, farmers do not believe in importance of education. Lack of education skills their decision making skills. Lack of money and perception capacity, They are cultivating land in traditional method if farmers fail to perform all these tradition and cultural activities they become frustrate and turn towards suicide.
- 8 **Agricultural marketers:** - The product farm farmer takes to the market the agricultural betrays the farmer and they have to sell their crop in the lower rate.
- 9 **New changes:** After the green revolution and innovation of new technologies new hybrid seeds, insecticides, pesticides and farm cultivation technologies makes farming more easier and production is increased considerably. But these technologies and innovations are so costly and not affordable to poor small and marginal farmers.
- 10 **Income inequality in economy:-**Today, the person who is rich is becoming rich and one who is poor is becoming poor therefore the valley of reciprocal economy is increasing day by day so the farmers are turning to suicide.
- 11 **Costly modern agriculture technique:-** After the green revolution and innovation of new technologies new hybrid seeds, insecticides, pesticides and farm cultivation technologies makes farming more easier and production is increased considerably. But these technologies and innovations are so costly and not affordable to poor small and marginal farmers.
- 12 **Other Causes:-**lack of basic infrastructural facilities like safe drinking water, inadequate health facilities, transport facilities, proper food, cloth and shelter affects on psychological and physical condition of the farmers. Sometimes they become drug addicted and drunker. All these things attracted heavy diseases and turn them to die.
- 13 **Rehabilitation packages** e.g. Package of Central Government, Package of State Government, Lone Waiver Proposal, etc are not implementing in proper way to relief needy farmers.

Remedies to avoid farmers suicide:Natural and manmade calamities forces farmers to commit suicide. We cannot avoid natural calamities but we can give relief and control on manmade calamities by taking following remedies.

- 1 **Irrigation facilities by government:** - Integrate surface and ground water irrigation scheme and integrate line department on order to that the schemes are implemented efficiently. All districts to be covered under scheme of irrigation instead of traditional method for irrigation to agricultural production because of farmers are using traditional methods for irrigation, which consumes more water than actually requirements and farmers don't get water for irrigation as per their requirements in off rain seasons & in droughts. So irrigation techniques must be used to overcome on saving & fulfillment of required water for agricultural productions.
- 2 **Water management:-**

In most cases, it is not the lack of water but the lack of proper water management that causes water shortage. Improved modern methods of rain water harvesting should be developed.

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Most of the water from drainage is drained into the sea. Instead of draining the water into the sea, they can be desalted and purified and diverted to some tanks or lakes in nearby agricultural lands to be used for irrigation. The silt can be used as manure.

- 3 **Special agricultural zone or Camp:** Just like industrial zone there is need to establishmentspecial agricultural zones where only farming and agriculture related activity should be allowed. Some farmers are very expert in different crop production e.g. grape cultivation, lemon, orange, pomegranate etc. but due to the marginal farmers they unable to do their agriculture practice, so government should have to start agriculture camp on government land to perform the practice by paying salary to the skilled farmers.
- 4 **Multiple crop system:-**Cultivation of multiple crops it will profitable result to the farmers
- 5 **Supportive sources for farmers:-**Small farmers should be encouraged to acquaint and develop supportive sources along with farms.Encourage the farmers to adopt allied activities like dairy, fishery, poultry etc. with farming activities Adoption of Non-Farm activities with allied agricultural activities.
- 6 **Weather risk management system:-**Facilitating national weather risk management system that alerts farmers when there is a danger of extreme weather which destroy the many things of farmers but using this system it will help to minimize the losses in agriculture would go a long way in reducing losses in agriculture.
- 7 **Providing effective loan schemes: -** It is necessary to establish special system to provide the loan to farmers by government. Every Nationalize and co-operative bank including Agriculture co-operative credit societies must setup this system in their banks to provide loan to the farmers on time and as per their requirements. At the same time loans should be provided at low rate of interest. So that farmers should not be exploited and not discriminated by private moneylenders and creditors.
- 8 **Scientific innovation and Agriculture modernization** It has touched each field including agriculture. There are numbers of agriculture institute on our country. The distress of farmers should be analysed from each point like soil fertility crop, crop insurance. The scientific institution can play important role, quick and innovative solution can help to solve the problem of farmers.

It is also necessary to introduce farm techniques which guarantee a definite success; more number of youth participation in the agricultural field is possible. This can be attained only by implementing new technologies. Research efforts should continue, to produce crops with higher yield potential and better resistance to pests. Technological advancement in agriculture should be passed down to the small farmers. Where the existing crops would not do well under drought and weather conditions, the farmers should be helped to shift to the cultivation of crops that would be easy and economical to cultivate in adverse conditions. Scientists can find appropriate solutions.

- 9 **Export polices:-**The Government of India and Concern state governments always make bias and takes irresponsible decision in export of Agricultural products. They use to ban on export of agricultural products when their prices are high. This is resulted to more supply in local market and falling in prices, so farmers do not get proper return of their produces. So, the government should implement quota system for every farmer for export, to avoid these practices while framing export policies
- 10 **Agriculture farmer training:-**In order to solve the problems of farmers. We should train them in modern method of cultivation. They should learn to employ scientific method. Update our agriculture research and try improving our agricultural yield. Our farmers must be taught to use better seeds, proper manure and fertilizers and appropriate machines to improve the quality and output of one agricultural produce.
- 11 **Rehabilitation Package:-**For rehabilitation of distress farmers and their family members Central as well as State Government has announced the special packages in the State of Maharashtra. The Government is competent authority to make provisions, from time to time, take necessary steps for making provisions with respect to the incorporation, regulation and winding up of co-operative societies based on the principle of voluntary formation.

12 Sustainable Agriculture: - Chemical agriculture, which is being adopted by farmers it is not only highly expensive but also environmentally damaging and health hazardous. Sustainable agriculture with farm produced seeds, organic manures; non-pesticide management etc is proved to be cost-effective. Hence, Government should extend incentives, subsidies, credit and other support to sustainable agriculture to reduce farmer's expenditure on cultivation and to make agriculture profitable and sustainable.

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13 Counseling to farmers:-The problem cannot solve through economic package alone what is needed in social and spiritual interventions so that farmer realise that suicide is not the way out they should understand that they need to develop self confidence. The future generation should have the mental strength to face life challenges. Amma felt that counseling and education would immensely help farmers overcome this dire situation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The agriculture sector largely depends on rainy season. Rainy season plays critical role in the agriculture development of Maharashtra. On the basis of the result of the study it can be concluded that indebtedness, low productivity crop failure, more expenditure than income tension of daughter's marriage and continuous pressure from money lenders and banks persons for repayments etc. were the major causes of suicide of farmers. Farmers leaders and social leaders should come together and help the farmers and should reduce the rate of suicide. So it is necessary to implement income generating activities which may reduce the farmer suicide. It is necessary to encourage the farmers to adopt allied activities like dairy, fishery and poultry etc. with farming activities. In order to solve the problem of farmers suicide a holistic approach is necessary.

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