

Agrarian Crisis In India-Its Causes And Effects

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ABSTRACT

Indian farmer who works without any prior training and coursework and without any eligibility criteria when enters into his work he faced many problems such as huge indebtedness, poverty, low standard of living, pessimistic outlook etc. the one of the major effects of these problems is agrarian crisis in india. farmers suicides are raising day by day. The five States — Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala and the top most states where farmers suicides is rising continuously. crop failure indebtedness, bankruptcy, government policies, vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy, pessimistic outlook, domestic affairs, drug addiction, old traditions etc are the major cause responsible for it. there is a great need to make a radical change in the outlook of the farmers towards agriculture to check this agrarian crisis.

Keywords: NCRB, farmer suicides, Maharashtra Farmer suicides data, Ministry of Agriculture, farmers eligibility criteria

INTRODUCTION

India is an agrarian country with around 60% of its people depending directly or indirectly upon agriculture. but still agriculture is treated as forced occupation. A person who have failed in any other occupation indulge himself in agriculture and called him a farmers. because there is no need of any pre course work or training and eligibility criteria to be a farmer, he learns only learning by doing, as a result many problems arises that is huge debt burden, crop failures, bad addictions etc. the effects of these problems is farmers have been forced to committed suicides. Farmer suicides account for 11.2% of all suicides in India. Activists and scholars have offered a number of conflicting reasons for farmer suicides, such as monsoon failure, high debt burdens, genetically modified crops, government policies, public mental health, personal issues and family problems. but farmers indebtedness and bankruptcy and farms regarding issues ie fragmentation and subdivision of land holdings is the root cause of farmers suicides.

Farming is only occupation which started without any pre training or course work. and learns from experience from generation to generation. a person who is not mentally prepare for farming starts his work and gets huge loss, effects of nature ie bad moonsons, crop failures etc makes the conditions more worst, this led to farmers make pessimistic and indebtedness. demonstration effects also raises expenditure, all these adverse conditions push a farmer towards vicious circle of poverty, drug addictions and committed to suicides.

The researchers said their study points to a vicious cycle of Indian smallholders forced into debt due to market fluctuations. and coffee that are highly susceptible to global price In 2014, the National Crime Records Bureau of India reported 5,650 farmer suicides. The highest number of farmer suicides were recorded in 2004 when 18,241 farmers committed suicide. The farmers suicide rate in India has ranged between 1.4 to 1.8 per 100,000 total population, over a 10-year period through 2005.

Historical records relating to frustration, revolts and high mortality rates among farmers in India, particularly cash crop farmers, date back to the 19th century. The high land taxes of 1870s, payable in cash regardless of the effects of frequent famines on farm output or productivity, combined with colonial protection of usury, money lenders and landowner rights, contributed to widespread penury and frustration among cotton and other farmers, ultimately leading to Deccan Riots of

1875-1877. The British government enacted the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act in 1879, to limit the interest rate charged by money lenders to Deccan cotton farmers, but applied it

selectively to areas that served British cotton trading interests. Rural mortality rates, in predominantly agrarian British India, were very high between 1850 to 1940s. However starvation related deaths far exceeded those by suicide, the latter being officially classified under "injuries". Death rate classified under "injuries", in 1897, was 79 per 100,000 people in Central Provinces of India and 37 per 100,000 people in Bombay Presidency.

For over a decade, farmer suicides in India has been a serious public policy concern. More recently, this has led to a shrill media outcry and much politicking. The government response to the crisis of farmer suicide has mostly been simplistic and sometimes aggravating. The main issue with offering "special packages" to deal with such a problem is that it is reactionary rather than preemptive long-term policy. Suicides are characterised by a prior history of difficulties and, in most cases, mental illness that renders the person vulnerable to suicidal behaviour, for which we need to have a deeper understanding of factors that trigger and contribute to suicides among different demographic categories. We study the data from the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) of India and disaggregate across demographics and leading causes of suicides.

We examine existing data on the suicide mortality rate (SMR), defined as the number of suicides reported per 1,00,000 population for categories such as farmers, housewives and students. We begin with farmer suicides and the state of Maharashtra, which had the largest number of farmer suicides for decades. We find that 76 per cent of all suicides there are concentrated within six districts, and nearly 60 per cent of the farmers who committed suicide own more than four acres of land. Indebtedness has been highlighted as the prime cause and leading public intellectuals have called for an end to the "debt deaths". The National Sample Survey data suggests that the debt burden, measured as the debt-to-asset ratio, declines with increase in asset-holding. So poorer households have a higher debt burden. This is true for both institutional and non-institutional debt. However, the suicide data reported by the state government indicates that the incidence of suicide is much higher for households with larger land holdings. Nearly 86 per cent of all farmer suicides in Maharashtra are committed by those with more than two acres of land.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are-

- To study the causes behind the continuing farmer suicides in India
- To analyse the bankruptcy and indebtedness of farmers as a root cause of farmers suicides

Suggestion to prevent farmers suicides rates

Explanation

The main reason behind farmer suicide is bankruptcy/indebtedness and family problems which claimed 1,163 and 1,135 farmer's lives respectively. According to figures from the Ministry of Agriculture, the total of number of suicides committed by farmers for agrarian reasons in the last three years stands at 3313. The five States — Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala — accounted for 3301 of them.

Causes responsible for farmers suicides;

Nearly half the suicide cases among farmers across India is from Maharashtra, recent data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows, which is also first of its kind. Rediff Labs explored the reasons behind farmer suicides in India using figures from the National Crime Records Bureau data for 2014.



1 Bankruptcy and indebtedness-According to Professor vakil 'Indian peasant born in debt,lives in debt,and died in debt' Indian farmers have been hugely indebted.they takes loans for productive and un productive purposes.as a result debt trap situation arises. It is significant that the dominant cause for taking loans was found to be for productive purposes. Chart 2 provides this information, and shows that the two most important purposes of taking loans were stated to be "capital expenditure in farm business" and "current expenditure in farm business". At the all-India level, out of every 1000 rupees taken as loan, 584 rupees had been borrowed for these two purposes taken together.

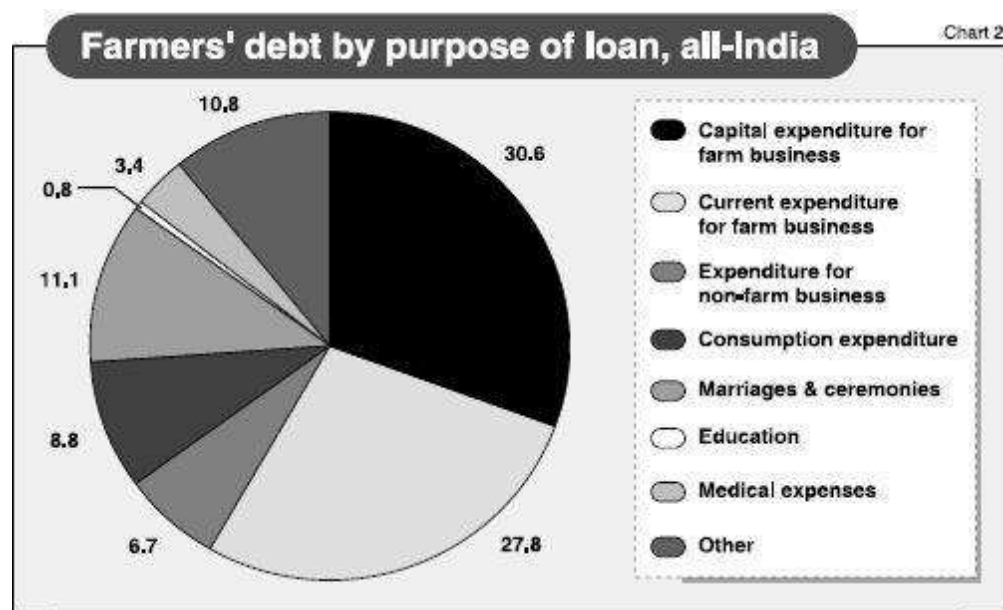
The highest such proportion was in Maharashtra, where 75.4 per cent of loans were taken for the purposes of productive investment on farms, whether in the form of capital or current expenditure, followed by Karnataka with 68.2 per cent. In Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh the proportion exceeded 60 per cent of the total amount of loans.

As such, this shift towards more emphasis on more productive loans would appear to be desirable, but the problem in the recent past has been that even such loans have been difficult to repay because of changes in production conditions, leading to a vicious cycle of indebtedness. So cultivation itself has become less economically viable over time.

The next important purpose of taking loans was for spending on "marriages and ceremonies", which however accounted for a much smaller proportion of total loans, at around 11 per cent. This purpose was most important for farmer households of Bihar (22.9 per cent) followed by those in Rajasthan (17.6 per cent).

This is relatively small and certainly runs counter to any perception that such unproductive expenditure is the dominant cause of farmers' indebtedness.

A more worrying aspect that emerges is the significance of pure consumption loans these accounted for 8.8 per cent of all amounts borrowed by farmers at the all-India level, and as much as 13.8 per cent in Rajasthan. The persistence of such consumption loans is a sad comment indeed on the viability of cultivation, and on the lack of progress in improving basic survival conditions of agriculturalist families.



2 Family related issues-mostly indian farmers are illiterate and indulge in very unproductive activities.that raises their expenditure and they caught in debt trap.

3 Farming related issues-Indian farms are fragmented and . Small and fragmented land-holdings: If a father has 1 hectare land, the LAND would be divided in all his sons. This distribution of land does not entail a collection or consolidated one, but its nature is fragmented.The only answer to this ticklish problem is the consolidation of holdings which means the reallocation of holdings which are fragmented, the creation of farms which comprise only one or a few parcels in place of multitude of patches formerly in the possession of each peasant.uneconomical size.

Farms profiles in india

Marginal;land below one hectares(62%)

Small land between one and two hectares(19%)

Semi mediam;land between 2 and 4 hectares(12%)

medium farmers;land between 4and 10 hectares(6%)

large farmers;land more than 10 hectares(1%)

The total number of farmers' suicides in Maharashtra should be 4,004, which is almost 1,000 more than the 2013 figure. It's shameful if the government takes credit for 500-odd fewer suicides. The issue is getting complicated everyday in Maharashtra. Farmers are not getting proper prices for their produce, but input costs are rising. Maharashtra has recorded over 2,000 farmers' suicide until June this year. Over 800 farmers have killed themselves in Vidarbha and over 600 farmers committed suicide in Marathwada," Mr. Tiwari said.

Other causes- the other causes of farmers suicides are marriage related issues, property related issues, poverty, fall in social reputation, illness, other causes and causes not known which are 2390 among total suicides

The NCRB has collected data on the high numbers of suicides that point to a deep-seated problem in the agricultural economy of the country.

The study has identified 25 reasons, that range from poverty to marriage-related reasons, drug and alcohol addiction, and property disputes, of which Maharashtra tops in almost all the counts. The NCRB data also has an additional category for transgenders after they were recognised as the third gender by a Supreme Court order last year. The transgender column, however, remained nil throughout the study.

All the deaths have been recorded as accidental deaths at police stations, have been classified by the deceased farmer's land holding status.

In Maharashtra, 1,335 'small farmers' (who farm on land between 1-2 hectares) and 627 'marginal farmers' (who farm on land below one hectare) have taken the extreme step last year. There are 62 farmers with more than 10 hectare of agricultural land have committed suicide in the state.

After Maharashtra, the second highest farm suicides have been recorded in Telangana at 898 and Madhya Pradesh at 826. Failure of crops due to natural calamity such as unseasonal rain and hailstorms have claimed 294 lives in the state, listed as another reason in the report, again the maximum across the country. Drug and alcohol addiction have claimed 173 lives, the maximum across the country. Another reason for farmer deaths that the state tops is 'family problems' that stand at 671, followed by Madhya Pradesh at 208.

Maharashtra is by far the epicentre of the crisis, with over 10,000 recorded farm suicides between 2011 and 2013. This year, the Marathwada region alone has seen over 200 farmer suicides in just three months.

According to a report by the National Crime Records Bureau, as many as 16,632 farmers, including 2,369 women, killed themselves last year, constituting 14.4% of the total number of suicides in the country

More than 16,000 farmer suicides were reported across the country last year, representing a slight drop from 17,060 in 2006. But the broad trends of the past decade seem unshaken -- farmer suicides in the country since 1997 now total 182,936, according to a National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report 'Accidental Deaths and Suicide Report – 2007'. Maharashtra retains the dubious distinction of reporting the largest number of suicides (4,238) -- for the third time in four years -- followed by Karnataka (2,135), Andhra Pradesh (1,797), Chhattisgarh (1,593), Madhya Pradesh (1,263), Kerala (1,263) and West Bengal (1,102). These states were in the top seven list in 2006 too.

The five worst affected states -- Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh -- account for two-thirds of all such suicides -- 16,632 -- in the country. Together, they saw 11,026 suicides in 2007.

Maharashtra alone accounted for over 38%, despite registering a fall of 215 compared with 2006 figures. Of the Big Five, Andhra Pradesh saw a decline of 810 suicides, while Karnataka saw a rise of 415 over the same period. Madhya Pradesh posted a decline of 112. But Chhattisgarh's 1,593 reveals an increase of 110 over 2006.

Maharashtra's 4,238 farmer suicides follows one-and-a-half years of farm relief packages worth around Rs 5,000 crore and a prime ministerial visit in mid-2006 to the state's distressed Vidarbha region. Between 2005 and 2007, Maharashtra also saw a plethora of official reports, studies, and commissions of inquiry aimed at tackling the problem. Farmer suicides in Maharashtra touched an all-time high of 4,453 in 2006.

In 2006, a UN report 'Extent of Chronic Hunger and Malnutrition' criticised the Indian government for the rising number of farmer suicides. The report said that economic growth through the 1990s had made India a more market-oriented economy, but had failed to benefit all Indians equally.

In March 2008, Finance Minister P Chidambaram announced a loan write-off for small and marginal farmers and made provision for Rs 60,000 crore; the amount was later increased to Rs 71,000 crore.

Experts say this still leaves out farmers' debts to private moneylenders. And, like numerous other state-sponsored programmes, the debt relief scheme is poorly implemented and reveals huge gaps in formal banking channels in rural India.

Last month, in a bid to mitigate severe farmer distress in several states, the central government decided to provide additional financial support of around Rs 765 crore to implement programmes in suicide-prone districts, as suggested by leading scientist M S Swaminathan.

As the farm crisis rocks the state assembly, there is no escaping the fact that the despair in Maharashtra's countryside is only deepening. The farmer suicide count in the six-month span from January to June this year stood at 1,300 cases, the state's revenue department figures show.

So in just six months this year, the farmer suicide toll has already touched 66% of the 1,981 cases recorded in the entire year of 2014. The figure has also crossed the 1,296 cases recorded in the state during the 12-month span of 2013.

The data suggests that the toll for 2015 is likely to cross the number of cases recorded in 2014.

Critics say the revenue department figures are an underestimation. Data on farmer suicides in the state from the National Crime Records Bureau has always been much higher. The bureau has also consistently reported that Maharashtra has the highest number of farmer suicides in the country.

Maharashtra records half of country's farmer suicide cases

Significantly, only 55% of the suicides recorded by the revenue department so far have been declared eligible for compensation. To be considered an "eligible suicide", the land has to be in the victim's name and there should be evidence of indebtedness. The government claims only these cases are linked to agrarian distress.

As the opposition pushes for a loan waiver for the state's farmers, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis is expected to make a statement in the assembly on Monday.

Significantly, the cotton belt of Vidarbha—from where chief minister Devendra Fadnavis hails—continues to report the highest number of farmer suicides. As many as 671 cases are from this region. This accounts for slightly more than half the number of farmer suicides so far. According to the NCRB, Maharashtra recorded 578 fewer suicides than 2013, when 3,146 farmers ended their lives.

Activists, however, criticised the NCRB for "manipulating" the data to paint a "rosy picture". "They [the NCRB] have deliberately divided the suicides under different heads. The report says 4,004 agriculture-related suicides were recorded in Maharashtra during 2014 and then subtracts agricultural workers from the number and gives 2,568 as the total figure. But even with 2,568, Maharashtra tops the country, and for the first time, the government has admitted that the landless farmers are also dying," said Kishor Tiwari, who runs Vidarbha Jan Andolan Samiti, a farmers' advocacy group.

"The total number of farmers' suicides in Maharashtra should be 4,004, which is almost 1,000 more than the 2013 figure. It's shameful if the government takes credit for 500-odd fewer suicides. The issue is getting complicated everyday in Maharashtra. Farmers are not getting proper prices for their produce, but input costs are rising. Maharashtra has recorded over 2,000 farmers' suicide until June this year. Over 800 farmers have killed themselves in Vidarbha and over 600 farmers committed suicide in Marathwada," Mr. Tiwari said.

Chattisgarh's entry

According to the data, 443 farmers committed suicide in Chhattisgarh during 2014, making it the State with the fourth highest number after Maharashtra, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh. The State has rarely figured in the list of farm suicides earlier. State Agriculture Minister Brijmohan Agrwal, however, termed the NCRB data "misleading and based on a wrong analysis."

"These numbers are wrong, and there are no such incidents in Chhattisgarh," he told The Hindu. He questioned the authenticity of the data and said: "I don't know how they [the NCRB] i sued it. As per our knowledge, there are no farmers' suicides in the State."

Case study

Total area of the district is **2610 Sq.Km. It Consist of 11 blocks; Gurdaspur ,Dhariwal, Kalanaur, Dorangla, Kahnuwan, Dinanagar ,Batala, Qadian, Shri Hargobindpur, Fatehgar Churian & Dera Baba Nanak.**

Location

The Gurdaspur district is the northern most district of Punjab state. It falls in the Jalandhar division and is sandwiched between river Ravi and Beas. The district lies between north-latitude 31⁰-36' and 32⁰-34' and east longitude 74⁰-56' and 75⁰-24' and shares common boundaries with Pathankot district in the north, Beas River in the north-east, Hoshiarpur district in the south-east, Kapurthala district in the south, Amritsar district in the south west and Pakistan in the north west.

All the Tehsils of the district namely Gurdaspur, Batala and Dera Baba Nanak are plain and similar to the rest of the Punjab plains in structure. The land scape of the district has varied topography comprising undulating plan, the flood plains of the Ravi and the Beas and the up land plain.

To its south lies an area of about 128 sq.kms which is highly dissected and is an undulating plain. Its elevation ranges from about 305 to 381 metres above sea level. It is travessed by a number of choas and has an undulating topography.

The flood plains of the Ravi and the Beas are separated from the up land plain by sharp river cut bluffs. They are low lying, with slightly uneven topography. Sand dominates in the soil structure of the flood plains, but it diminishes in both quantity and coarseness in the upland plain. The up land plain covers a large part of the district particularly .Its elevation ranges from about 305 metres above sea level in the north-east to about 213 metres above sea level in the south west, with a gentle gradient of about 1 metre in 1.6 km. This is the most important physiographic unit in the district.

Gone are the days when Punjab had earned the title of "India's bread basket." The state was viewed as the most dynamic and progressive state of the country, particularly on account of its success in the agrarian sector during the green revolution. Of all the states of India, Punjab's agricultural growth rate was the highest during the 1960s to the middle of the 1980s which was the first phase of the green revolution. Today's Punjab is the story of farmers' suicide, youth unrest and the storey of a dying civilisation. The Badal government has put the whole community of Punjabis to slow death. Farmers and the youth are the worst victims of this crisis. 15 farmers have committed suicide in the State within a span of 45 days.

employment, escalating indebtedness and ecological imbalance. One of the main consequences of this agrarian distress has been that the marginal and small farmers, who find it increasingly hard to sustain on farming, are getting pushed out from agricultural sector. These farmers are not being fully absorbed outside this sector Over the past decade, the state has experienced deceleration of its economy and has slipped in the ranking of the prosperous states in the country. The crisis in agriculture has manifested itself in the form of stagnating productivity, rising cost of production, decelerating income, shrinking due to the unfavourable nature and structure of the industrial sector in the state. As many as 6,550 industrial units have been declared sick and 18,770 units have shut down or migrated out of Punjab since 2007. Thus, a large chunk of 'reserve army of labour' is prevalent in the economy. It is estimated that about 75 lakh persons are unemployed in Punjab and the numbers are adding up each day. The picture is grimmer in rural areas. The situation has worsened to the extent that young farmers have become the victims of suicides.

Punjab Chief Minister Mr. Parkash Singh Badal said that he has personally taken the case of seeking special compensation for the extensive loss suffered by the cotton growers due to sudden attack of white fly with the Government of India (GoI) besides also securing a bailout package for the sugarcane growers and the mills.

Interacting with the media persons on the sidelines of the annual **Babehalli Chinjh** here today, the Chief Minister said that he was confident that the state government would get handsome compensation from the centre to help the beleaguered cotton growers of Malwa region. Likewise, the centre was also considerate to help the state in resolving impending sugarcane crisis in the state. Mr. Badal said that the state government was also taking special initiatives to pull out the sugarcane growers from this crisis viz-a-viz the mill owners besides ensuring smooth crushing season.

Suggestion to prevent farmers suicides in india;

- 1 Farmers should make educated .so they will become optimistic in life
- 2 An elibility criteria of farmer should be determined.
- 3 Farmer should make aware to live on the proverbs on 'cut your coat according to your coat'.
- 4 Government should be adopted a appropriate price policy for the farmers so that they will get optimum reward for their hard work.
- 5 A training and farming awareness programme should be started for farmers.
- 6 To check the fragmentation and division of holdings self employemnt programmes should be started in rural areas.
- 7 farmers should make to aware to avoid the unproductive expenditure like expenditures on marriges,false rituals,false demonstration effect etc.
- 8 Develop the banking habits among the small and marginal farmers.so that they save enough to meet their emergencies needs.
- 9 Farmers should make compensate during bad monsoon period,and during the times of other natural calamaties like earthquake,floods,famines etc.
- 10 farmers should give credit facilities to start a agriculture subsidiary activities life fishing,horticulture, floriculture ect to avoid the underemployment among them.

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