



SOCIO-ECONOMICAL PHENOMENON OF FARMERS SUICIDE IN MARATHWADA

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture is the largest economic sector and plays an important role in the overall socio-economic development of India. More than 50% of the farmers working in this sector are smallholder and smallholder farmers. They rely on loans from private lenders or from financial institutions to cultivate their land. They depend on farm income for their family expenses, children's education and marriage. Agriculture in India is in crisis and farmers in various parts of Marathwada in particular are suffering from indebtedness, crop failures, rising production costs, low quality of seeds, the effects of globalization, exploitation by moneylenders and entrepreneurs. Other causes are the main causes of their distress leading to suicide.

KEYWORDS: Agriculture , moneylenders and entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

The total geographical area of India is 329.6 million hectares, out of which net sown area is 146 million hectares 93.8 million hectares is dependent on natural rainfall and the rest is horticultural area. This shows that dryland farming is indispensable for Indian farmers. Crops grown in dryland agriculture include sorghum, pulses, oilseeds, cotton etc. Indian farmers rely mainly on timely rainfall, 'abundance of nature'. Rainfall in India is unimaginable. Failure of rains leads to crop failure.

In Telangana in Andhra Pradesh and Marathwada and Vidarbha in Maharashtra, the tendency of farmers to commit suicide has been recorded in the late 1990s. Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have been witnessing this tragedy since 1997. After India liberalized the economy and opened up markets for foreign direct investment.

Pesticides used by farmers could not control the pests due to adulteration which caused crop damage. In some areas, the peasantry was frustrated by poor quality seeds, crop losses and debt. Dissatisfied farmers committed suicide. 'Suicide' gradually spread to other states. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB 2007) report, 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India 2015', 52 farmers commit suicide every day in India.

'Suicide' gradually spread to other states, but it is more prevalent in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. These states account for one-third of the total population but farmers account for two-thirds of suicides. The suicides of farmers in these states are higher than those of non-farmers. Maharashtra is the state with severe agricultural crisis for many years. In the past, despite the farmers' agitation, there was no history of farmers committing suicide when crops or markets failed.



Table 1.1 Compensation Paid to Victims Family from 2010-2018

Sr. No	Marathwada Region	Total
1.	Reported Cases	1897
2.	Rejected Cases	1247
3.	Except Cases (Paid Compensation)	984
4.	Investigation Cases	46

Source: Department of Agriculture, Maharashtra

The above table describes about the compensation paid to victims family from the year 2010-2018 and it was observed that Marthwada region of Maharashtra has recorded 1897 cases of farm suicide during the year of 2010-2018, out of 1897 farm victims only 984 cases has recorded to get the compensation it means compensation is paid to only 984 victims the bases of thorough enquiry made by the committee. After duethorough enquiry the committee report compensation is paid in 984 cases, compensation has not been approved to 1247 cases, due to these victims are not fall under the guideline given for the recommendation of the committee.

Table 1.2 Type of the Family belongs to the Victim and Control Farmer

Sr. No	Family Type	Control Farmer	Suicide Farmer
1.	Nuclear	80	90
2.	Joint	70	60
Total		150	150

Source: Study

The above table 1.2 describes about the type of family holding by the farm victims and Control farm family and it was observed that out of 150 victims 90farm victims were belonging to nuclear families as well as 80 control farmers and only 60 cases wereliving in the joint families and same of the 70 cases of control farmers. There is an emotional and physicalsecurity to each of the members in the joint family system. More number of farm suicides in nuclear families isan indication that the nuclear family system has failed to provide the necessary security to its members in thefight against the personal destruction. The sense of insecurity drives the farmers' to suicide.

Table 1.3 Suicide Reason Given by the Victims Family Members (Percent)

Sr. No	Reason	Percent	
		Control Farmer	Suicide Farmer
1.	Crop Failure	25.69	27.23
2.	Debt Burden	15.48	17.64
3.	Loss in Agriculture Activities	17.25	14.87
4.	Problem of Family	9.58	11.53
5.	Crashes of prices	13.35	9.28
6.	Daughter/Son Marriage	6.78	8.82
7.	Water Availability Failure	7.67	6.31
8.	Habitual	4.20	4.32
Total		100.00	100.00

Source: Study

The above table 1.3 describes about the suicide reason given by the victim family member and it was observed that, eight reasons for suicide are extensively listed. Based on the reasons listed; Victim and control family members were asked to list possible causes that led to farmer suicides. Compare the majority

of cases of victims with the latter half of the control family (27.23 cent) that crop failure is the leading cause of suicide, crop failure due to drought, flood or other calamity. However, crop failure affected families did more to control the farm. It is difficult to take this observation on its face value as there were controlled farmers in the same village and area who did not report complete crop failure. It depends on the victim's history and therefore the analysis of events in the victim's life is given above the table.

Table 1.4 Details of credit arrears: Victims' and control families

Land Size	Control farmers		Suicide Farmers	
	Institutional	Non-Institutional	Institutional	Non-Institutional
<1 Acre	15327	12600	5590	13980
1 – 2 acre	21589	32170	50210	66218
2 – 4 acre	21284	28680	26850	53207
4-10 acre	32699	32540	37820	49970
> 10 acre	623800	35871	45870	135894
All	123570	31790	36475	61230

The above table 1.4 describes about the details of credit arrears: Victim's and control families and it was observed that the families of the victims have reported money taken from the victims from various credit policies. There were four major sources that are usually taken by farmers - commercial banks, co-operative banks, regional rural banks and lenders. Out of these, the most preferred source of credit is regional rural banks, followed by lenders and commercial banks. Table 1.4 shows that the affected families borrowed more from lenders than from the control group. The amount taken from the families of the victims was higher than that of the control group. It appears from the table that moneylenders (including relatives) emerged as the main creditors to the affected families. Despite the fact that lenders charge very low interest rates (3 to 4 per cent per month), it is surprising that the families of victims are more inclined to borrow from lenders and informal sources. This can be done either through formal credit unions or after their repayment process. In other words, the preference for borrowing from lenders over formal institutions clearly reflects the fact that the opportunity to go through the process is as wide as the interest rate difference between formal and informal lenders. It was noted that despite the fact that formal credit institutions have a monthly instalment, the pressure to repay arises only at the end of the financial year. Coincidentally, at that time the farmer may have spent a large portion of his earnings or with various social or family responsibilities. Wedding of son/daughter and other festivals also come at that time. This increases the tension in the family and makes it inevitable to reach out to the lender.

CONCLUSION:

It was found that suicide is a form of violence on the victim's life through various 'events', 'actions' and 'triggers'. Therefore, there are many reasons why a person commits suicide from a farmer. Often these factors transcend socio-economic, behavioural and personal factors. Hence the question of the socio-economic environment of the victimized and controlled families, the above synthesis brings out some important factors related to the social and economic background. The breakup of the joint family has reduced the moral and physical support they have received in their existence. Family tensions and intolerance with the spouse are important factors for the victim's farm family, and often arise from the breakdown of the joint family. Social support and public participation always prevent such incidents due to the assurance received from the society from an individual. Similarly, a close intra-family relationship also boosts one's self-confidence and prevents a person from saying such a thing. Therefore, the socio-economic personalities of the victims and the families under their control say a lot about the conditions in which the individual lived and interacted with the society. This helps in reducing the mentality of a person about the failure of traditional institutions as well as at the time of the victim incident. A large number of victim families have noted the introverted characteristics of the victims. It also indicates that the victims

themselves are suffering from problems of an economic or social nature. In the absence of these supportive organizations and individuals, the growing financial problem reduces the intense emotion that leads to the abnormal tendency to reduce the crises that occur within one.

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