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FARMER SUICIDES IN INDIA: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

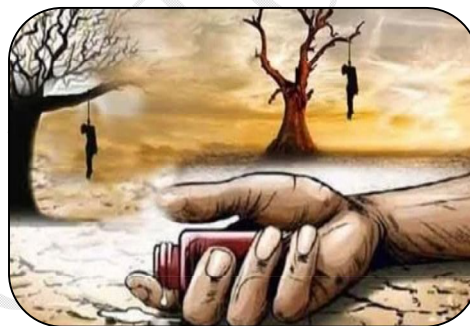
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ABSTRACT

Farmer sector is the main income for the rural people in India. It plays a significant role in their life. In India, small and marginal farmers account for 70%, according to the 2011 census of the Government of India. These small and marginal farmers took credit from banks and private money lenders. The non-repayment of credit led to a farmers' suicide. Farmer's suicide is a burning issue in India. Farmers are life savers then why they are killing themselves. Is there any nexus between farmers' suicide and government actions? In this way farmers suicide issues challenges and remedies has been discussed. Recently, farmers from various regions of the country marched to Delhi to register their protest against the government's neglect of their demands. Poor earnings of the farmers led to the never-ending distress in the farmer sector and this resulted in the increasing number of farmer suicides. These worrying realities call for an appropriate policy response.



KEYWORDS: Farmer sector, farmers' suicide and government actions.

FARMER SUICIDES IN INDIA

India is a country that is going through a phase of agrarian transition. While agriculture provides for about 58 percent of India's population (IBEF, 2018) there is one farmer suicide every thirty minutes. It is also very interesting to note that for the past twenty years the output prices of farm products have remained the same while there has been a substantial increase in the input prices for the production of the same (Sharma, 2015). This means that, while there

has been a rise in the inflation rate and subsequent rise in the cost of running a farm, the profits out of the same venture have not increased. It is, therefore, an inarguable conclusion that economic distress has led to farmers committing suicides. In fact, there is factual evidence to show that a large number of farmer suicides is indeed driven by economic distress (Kishore, 2018).

Manjunatha and Ramappa (2017) have categorically attributed the following reasons to the incidents of farmer suicides in India – (1)

social causes, (2) farm related causes and (3) debt related issues. While social causes include drug/ alcoholic addiction, illness, fall in social reputation, family quarrel, daughter's marriage and extra-marital affair which are of little relevance to the study; in terms of the farming related causes lack of access to expected credit, non-realization of higher output and prices and crop failure were the major reasons for suicides. These are factors where the intervention of a collective that brings farmers together could

intervene in building capacity to provide for a cushion for farmers to be able to handle the pressures of market forces and simultaneously create scope for the availability of credit for the respective farmers. Illustrated below is a figure that clarifies the various forward and backward linkages that a Farmer Producer company by virtue of being one provides. In providing these forward and backward linkages FPCs are able to address the issues of the lack of access to expected credit, non-realization of higher output and prices and crop failure.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ambedkar, D.B. (1918): "In short, strange as it may seem, industrialization of India is the soundest remedy for the agricultural problems of India. The cumulative effects of industrialization, namely a lessening pressure (of surplus labour) and an increasing amount of capital and capital goods will forcibly create the economic necessity of enlarging the holding. Not only will this, but industrialization, by destroying the premium on land, give rise to few occasions for its sub-division and fragmentation. Industrialization is a natural and powerful remedy, in this paper Ambedkar strongly suggested the ideas of Arthur Lewis theory of Theory of economic development.

Posani, B. (2009): Desperate indebtedness was found to be the common thread that ran through most of the reported suicides. Deeper analyses, however, reveal that indebtedness is only a symptom. According to this report the major causes for Agrarian Distress in India are small land holding, less institutional support, declining irrigation facility, relying more on monsoon, price shocks, credit squeeze, trader money lender Nexus and pervasive indebtedness. Indian agriculture today is 'the economic residue' that accommodates 'non-achievers', and that the principal motivation of the peasant today is to stop being a peasant Not an encouraging prospect, then, for the peasant movements, or the peasant.

Saritha, G. (2015): reviewed that the between 1997-2007 21,174 farmer's suicide reported in India, the major reason is indebtedness. In their case study they figured out these following results, the outbreak of suicide in India is appalling and on average one Indian farmer committed suicide every 32 minutes during the past period 1997to2007 and as many as 48 farmers' suicide per day in India between 2002-2007. The farmer suicide in India as a clear indication of serve distress in the farming community. The causes for present agrarian distress vary from one to another state. But the genuine causes may be common in all states which include external trade liberalization and neo-liberal policy driven reforms in the economy have played havoc with the farm dependent population in the country. Indian state now acknowledges the fact that between 1993 and 2003, 1,00,248 farmers committed suicide in India..The most important factor is debt.

Vasavi, A. (2005): focused on the relationship between commercial crops and suicides. Since the key sources of non-institutional creditors have been agri-business agencies (who provide both inputs at deferred credit to agriculturists and loans), and the new money lenders and creditors¹³, including relatives and friends who draw on their urban salaries, these debts pose a double burden on agriculturists. For one, interest rates are exorbitant (ranging from 24 to 45 percent per annum) and secondly they are linked to their personal and social networks. Inability to pay is often met with ridicule, ostracism or public humiliation. As several reports and case studies highlight, many of those who committed suicide did so after experiencing such humiliation or facing threats of dispossession of their assets.

DATA COLLECTION

The data for the study has been collected from multiple databases which include the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India and the website of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The NCRB data was essential for the compilation of data about farmer suicides and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs was helpful in collecting data pertaining to Farmer Producer Companies. The nature of the data is secondary.

CAUSES OF FARMER SUICIDE IN INDIA

When contrasted with other creating economies, Indian agribusiness intensely relies upon storm, restricting harvest broadening by and large. In this manner hazards incorporate climate, seven days rainstorm or even a postponed storm, helpless soil richness, bugs, and plant illnesses, die capacity of yields and so on are the significant foundations for the agrarian misery in India. Further, environmental change and a worldwide temperature alteration cause successive occasions of dry spell and flood which further add to their misfortunes.

Land fragmentation

There is a tremendous tension of populace ashore prompted a swamp man proportion in provincial regions. The landlessness and the presence of negligible cultivating families are the consequences of many years of land discontinuity started after freedom. Divided land property bring about low efficiency and upset imbue of innovation and new cultivating methods. The landless or minimal ranchers come up short on the assets to one or the other purchase or rent more land or put resources into ranch framework to make up for the shortage of land. Furthermore, they additionally need sufficient admittance to institutional money.

Rising agricultural costs

Notwithstanding sponsorships on power, composts and so forth input costs have been rising quicker than deal costs, pressing the pitiful pay of the little ranchers and driving them into obligation. Moreover, employing workers and creatures has become costly and the decent expenses related with horticultural hardware like farm trucks and sub siphons have likewise been on the ascent. Likewise, little ranchers need more benefit to legitimize the expense of moving the harvest to government companies in towns. Most ranchers lean toward cash yields like cotton. In any case, they don't understand that the info expenses of such harvests are extremely high. In the event that the harvest fizzles, it causes a tremendous trouble. Besides, as horticultural costs rising, the rustic wages are discouraged brought about provincial pain causing movement towards urban areas.

Lack of institutional credit

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCCB) report obviously underlines that obligation is the single biggest reason for ranchers' self destruction. As the ranchers don't gain admittance to institutional credit, they move towards casual moneylenders who request excessive loan fees and thus the ranchers end up with immense obligation. Consumption on exorbitant social functions and wellbeing costs, which are not piece of ordinary family use, likewise power the ranchers to acquire particularly from casual sources

Problem with MSP

Government obtainment at the base help value (MSP) should secure the ranchers however it generally helps the enormous dealers. More than 70% of the ranchers in India only occasionally get MSPs for need of true market mediation. Besides, the Public Distribution System (PDS) doesn't have the ability to attempt acquisition tasks for 24 yields for which MSP is declared.

Agricultural marketing

Absence of enough virus chain and capacity framework and preparing limit bring about a tremendous post-gather misfortune. Vulnerability with the cost of the produce is a significant concern. Numerous ranchers keep on being helpless before the broker. Rural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) is additionally ominous since the ranchers need to sell their produce by means of sell-offs in directed business sectors constrained via cartels of authorized dealers. These cartels fix low buy costs, extricate huge commissions, postpone installments and so on APMC is a legal market board of trustees set up by a state government concerning exchange certain informed farming or plant or animals items under the APMC Act of the separate state government. However the motivation behind APMC Act is to

shield ranchers from the abuse of mediators and merchants, in any case, the authorizing of dealers brings about the restraining infrastructure and forestalls ranchers to partake in immediate and free showcasing. The worth chain in the horticultural area has been shifty i.e., somewhere around 1/3 of the retail costs paid by conclusive customers arrive at the ranchers, in contrast to 2/3 if there should arise an occurrence of milk.

Ineffective government response

The public authority's reaction is centered around credit and advance, as opposed to pay, efficiency, and rancher flourishing. Credit waiver or the help with taking care of exceptional head and premium aides the cash banks, be that as it may, neglected to make solid and great types of revenue for the rancher.

SOLUTIONS OF FARMER SUICIDE IN INDIA

The corporate and NGOs (Non- Governmental Organisations) had adopted the drought-affected villages to help them to rehabilitate. Debt waiver was not a solution for avoiding suicides. The government had to take proactive measures for avoiding farmers' suicides (Sangalad and Huddar, 2011). The Gram Panchayats will have to identify indebted farmers and give suggestions on overcoming the crisis. In addition, they must help farmers in avoiding commission agents, traders, and middlemen. Thereby, the government can change its policy from 'corporate first to farmers first' (Rao, 2015). Surbhi et al., (2017) analyzed the farmers' suicides and recommended some suggestion to the government such as cropped diversification, improved marketing facilities, proper irrigation facilities, assurance of sale of agricultural produces and price stability. Anneshi (2018) stated that the farmers' suicides could be avoided by taking short term measures like organic farming, avoiding the private institutional credit, and organizing farmers into Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

The government had to focus on long term measures for controlling of farmers' suicides. They could provide irrigation facilities, cold storages, weather forecast information, and crop insurance (Thakur, 2018). Parvathamma (2016) stated that the adoption of new technologies would reduce pests and diseases from agricultural lands. The national commission had conducted a survey on farmers in 2004 constituted under the chairmanship of Professor M.S. Swami Nathan. The National Commission on Farmers (NCF) prepared four different reports. The final report was submitted in the year 2006. The report suggested for elder support through social security and health insurance in rural areas. It also suggested to ensure availability of quality seeds and other inputs on time and at right place, introduction of low-risk and low-cost technologies which can provide maximum income to farmers, to protect the farmers from price fluctuations by using price stabilization fund and to promote public awareness campaigns on suicides in villages (Swaminathan Committee on Farmers, 2006). These were the solutions that were suggested for mitigating farmers' suicides and agricultural crisis.

On vagaries of nature

Area explicit approach for water system with the distinguishing proof of appropriateness of water system offices needed to shield ranchers from the unfriendly effects of environmental change. It should be enhanced with convenient fruition of waterway water system projects and opportune guidance on the climate. Greater venture is required in agrarian R&D to foster more dry season and nuisance safe harvests, alongside better water system innovation. Innovative intercessions that update ranchers about planting and gathering time and augmentation administrations can assist with forestalling hardships. Sooner execution of interlinking of waterways will assist with tackling the water pressure in farming. Be that as it may, it should be carried out cautiously as it has natural expenses also. Yield broadening ought to be executed to diminish crop disappointment rates the nation over. Zero Budget Natural Farming can be executed which includes the uses of nature's standards in cultivating. It is the act of no-till, no substance use in cultivating. Peruse more around Zero Budget Natural Farming.

On land fragmentation

Long haul renting of farmland without pulling out the land proprietorship can be executed. This is in accordance with Niti Aayog's Model Land Leasing Act i.e., no adjustment of proprietorship, no tenure rights, and the land return to the proprietor on the expiry of the rent. Long haul renting can likewise work with the passage of the private area into horticulture. The private area can get crop enhancement, the presentation of high-esteem crops, automation, new cultivating procedures and innovations, interest in post-reap the board and handling, and greater business openings.

On input costs

The public authority arrangements ought to energize incorporated vermin the executives that consolidates, organic, substance, mechanical and actual intends to battle bothers with an objective to kill/significantly diminish the requirement for pesticides. The nearby manure industry needs help and the ideal conveyance of appropriations would work on their capital necessities, permitting them to oversee costs through interior sources rather than outside advances. State seed strategies ought to support contract cultivating, distinguishing proof of new genotypes for treating nuisance and sickness disorders, just as unfriendly climate conditions. Accuracy cultivating strategies like Systematic Rice Intensification (SRI) can assist increment with cultivating creation in this regard. Snap here to peruse more with regards to accuracy cultivating in India. Our ranch gear strategy should be patched up with an attention on further developing assembling hardware in the country as opposed to bringing in them which is exorbitant. Acquaint present day business venture with Indian farming under the beginning up India plot. This can help get current innovation and contributions to ranchers. Helpful cultivating on a public scale ought to be executed to diminish input costs and work on rural usefulness and creation. The collaboration might go from aggregate activity in getting to credit, securing inputs, promoting to creation. It likewise incorporates land pooling, work pooling, joint speculation, joint water the executives, and joint creation.

On institutional credit

Guarantee that institutional financing is accessible and open. Town savvy arrangements of profoundly obliged ranchers should be arranged every year to distinguish ranchers on the way to expected self destruction. NABARD, alongside nearby organization, should think of neighborhood strategy mediations and furthermore devise convenient advance rebuilding drives, protection guarantee settlements, and better advising. Nationalized banks need to change their method of working to grow provincial effort.

On agricultural marketing

The long chain of delegates between the homestead and the buyer ought to be decreased as they adversely sway ranchers' pay. Delisting organic products, vegetables and different perishables from the ambit of APMC can give ranchers the opportunity to sell straightforwardly to retailers and food handling organizations.

Gathering ranchers into Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) could work with further developed market access and better bartering limit. Make Agro groups in significant creation zones to guarantee collection of produce. Item alternatives (rights to purchase or sell) in agrarian items can shield the ranchers from the fancies of pain deal during the times of guard harvests. This will guarantee ranchers the post-collect costs at the hour of establishing the actual yield. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) which worked effectively in different areas can be carried out in farming promoting too. The private area should be permitted to obtain, store and disseminate grains in any event, beginning with the public appropriation framework = diminish capacity cost for the public authority and result in the foundation of capacity limits. Expanded capacity and handling limit can lessen post-collect misfortunes, guarantee value soundness and ensure rancher interests.

Creating rural job opportunities

The center must be moved from ranch pay to ranchers' pay i.e., boosting ranchers' income through extension of open positions in and around rustic regions. Advancing the rewarding partnered exercises of agribusiness, for example, cultivation and gardening additionally assists help with cultivating earnings. Gobardhan Yojana ought to be carried out all around the country. It targets keeping the towns clean and furthermore creates energy while working on the pay of ranchers and dairy cattle herders. (Snap here to peruse more with regards to Gobardhan Yojana) Thus a multi-included pay age plan, instead of MSP climbs and advance waivers, can assist with relieving ranchers' pain.

IMPROVING AREAS OF AGRICULTURE ARE:

1. Extension of irrigation facility.
2. Extensive use of modern agricultural technology.
3. Increasing the both public and private investment on agriculture.
4. Effective implementation of land reforms.
5. More institutional credit support.
6. Getting farmers loans from the state owned banks at very low interest rates.
7. Marketing reforms.
8. The warding the further division of land.

CONCLUSION:

The study focused on the agricultural crisis and farmers' suicides. Most of the farmer's suicide was due to the distress, crop failure, indebtedness, poverty, lack of institutional credit, poor irrigation, lack of awareness on new technologies, a high-interest rate of non-institutional agencies and lack of government policies. The review shed light on the fact that there was a lack of research done specifically on the plight of tenant farmers' suicides in India. Previous studies had also focused on the time period when suicide may occur. They also noted that reasons for suicide changed as per the gender of the farming community. Caste also played a role in the case of farmers' suicide. Thus, one can say that demographic factors played a major role with regard to farmers' suicide. The government was providing subsidies, short-term bank loans, and crop insurance benefits to the farmers. In India, many state governments had waived farmer's bank debt but even then, farmers were committing suicides. Such sort of short-term government measures was not enough to stop the farmer's suicides and agricultural crisis. Therefore, the government should provide irrigation facilities, minimum support price for their products and increase the long-term institutional credit. Such kind of long-term measures will reduce farmer's suicides.

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