

The Critical Study of farmers' suicides in Maharashtra

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Abstract:

From last few years every other day we read news of farmers committing suicides. Farmer's crisis since the 1990s has been one of the major problems we are facing today. Nearly above one lack 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, Suicidal behavior is a major problem across the world. Suicide is a conscious act and concerned person is fully aware about its results. Each year over 30000 people in the United States and approximately one million individuals worldwide are died by suicide. 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, causes, remedies

Introduction:

India is agricultural country and more than 60% people in India are directly or indirectly dependent on agricultural sector. It is now habitual to hear the cases of farmer's

suicide in Maharashtra. Despite of portrayal of farming as a healthy and happy way of life, agriculture sector experiences one of the highest numbers of suicide. Farmer's suicide is not only other reported in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, but also from Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka. The problem of farmer's suicide has become very serious in India especially in Maharashtra. There are several reasons for farmer's suicide such as Indebtedness, Personal Reasons, Rising Cost of Cultivation, Repeated crop failures, Lack of Cultivated Cash Crops etc.

Innovative remedies have to be thought of which are to be implemented with sincerity by the Government and the implementing agencies, along with putting in place ways to rehabilitate the affected farmers. Central and State Government have announced the relief packages to the suicide affected Families in Maharashtra. It is encouraging to see that our country is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Reform process in most of the economic sectors is in place. Government of India has planned to achieve 10% growth by 2012, but all this cannot be achieved unless the targeted growth is ensured for agriculture sector. The present paper is therefore discussing this serious problem of farmer's suicide in Maharashtra, its causes and necessary remedies to overcome this problem. It will also discuss the recommendations of various committees appointed on this issue.

Objectives of the study:

- 1) To review the farmers suicide in India and Maharashtra.
- 2) To study the findings of various committees appointed on this issue.
- 3) To study the cause the farmer's suicides in maharashtra
- 4) To suggest necessary remedies to overcome the problem of farmer's suicide.

Condition of farmer's suicide in India and Maharashtra:

It is seen that from the year 2010 to 2018 the figure of farmer's suicide is close to 2.15,000. It is revealed from the various researches that every seventh suicide in the country was a farmer's suicide. We would believe that even this number, shocking as it is, is in fact an underestimation of the actual number of farmer's suicides in the country during this period. Percentage of farmer's suicide was 14.2 of all suicides in India in 2015. In 2018, this percentage was increased up to 15.2 percent. This fact reveals that the percentage of farmer's suicide is more as compared to other types of suicides. Various researches have

been conducted on this issue by various experts and institutions. The findings of their researches are very heart breaking. The important researches are; the Madras institute of development studies, Study of Agricultural Indebtedness by Expert Group by prof. Ramkrishna, Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) Report, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR) Report on Suicide of Farmers in Maharashtra (Jan 2006) etc. The major findings of these committees are as follows:

- The rate of suicide among farmers is also likely to be very high in comparison with the rate for the general population
- An overwhelming proportion (nearly 85 percent) of farmer's suicides is by male farmers; and the number of farm suicides by young farmers, accounting for nearly 30 percent of the total.
- The decline in returns from agriculture has resulted in inability of farmers to repay debt and this has triggered farmer's suicide.
- Suicides happened among huge landholders and down to the landless. Ranchers didn't approach expansion apparatus of the legislature in giving sound data on the best way to manage bugs and declining profitability of land.
- Minimum Support Price has not been accessible to all ranchers, especially the little and peripheral ranchers.
- Farmers' suicides were unbiased to training and social gatherings.
- Breakdown of formal credit structures has prompted expanded dependence on casual private wellsprings of credit with more prominent intrigue trouble.

Farmer suicides are an unfortunate result of the agrarian distress plaguing the rural economy of many states of the country. Marathwada and Vidarbha regions in Maharashtra have recorded very high numbers of farmer suicides, and an attempt to calculate the number of suicides and the suicide mortality rate is the first step towards gaining an in-depth understanding of the prevalence and seriousness of the issue. An analysis of the data reveals the relationship between farmer suicides and issues such as monsoon failure, water shortage, drought, absence of social security, robust crop procurement mechanisms and increasing debt burdens.

In the event that we break down the suicides by farmers in Maharashtra it is uncovered that it is higher in Vidarbha area of the State where farmers favored

development of "white gold" for example cotton - a dangerous endeavor that endured due to non-accessibility of value seeds combined with the farmers or insufficiency to purchase expensive cotton seeds. They could likewise not get gainful cost for their produce. To end it all isn't ordinary yet for the most part happened for farmers because of dread of weight of moneylenders for example in the event that they neglect to reimburse the credit their territory will be persuasively removed. Their financial condition as a rule changes to, for example, degree that the farmers can't confront the general public. In this circumstance of depression and without any institutional or social component to fall back upon, farmers had to end it all. For farmers to come out of the upsetting circumstance a framework to address the different issues talked about in the prior sections must be developed through an institutional system with essential course of action for survey and development. A restoration program which tends to reimbursement of past due premium, flexibly of value contributions for next harvest, protection against normal disaster, chance of strengthening salary through non ranch exercises, arrangement of forward linkage, for example, promoting and capacity, augmentation administrations, and so forth must be contrived and executed.

Suicides of farmers in vidarbha Region of Maharashtra- serious issue:

Vidarbha is home for approximately 3.4 million cotton farmers and 95% of these are struggling with the massive debt. Most of the villages in Vidarbha are badly in need of basic social infrastructure like all-weather roads, drinking water, regular electricity, primary health care, and basic education. Majority of suicide cases are from cotton growing areas. The cotton farmers in India paying more prices for inputs like seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, electricity, water, and labor whereas the price of cotton has gone down along with decreased productivity. In contrast to this picture in India, US Government is giving USD 4.0 billion to cotton farmers and asking for further liberalization of cotton trade in USA. As discussed earlier, some of the important contributing factors for farmers' suicide in this region are:

- absence of adequate social support infrastructure at the level of the village and district,
- uncertainty of agricultural enterprise in the region,
- indebtedness of farmers,

- rising costs of cultivation,
- plummeting prices of farm commodities,
- lack of credit availability for small farmers,
- relative absence of irrigation facilities,
- repeated crop failures,
- dependence on rainfall for farming,
- rural living and easy access to poisons, and
- Lack of political will and insight in the region.

In Vidarbha (basically a low rainfall area), the major crop is cotton, jowar (Barley), and pulses and people rely more on dry farming. Irrigated farming is insignificant and seen only in very few pockets where major rivers provide water for the whole year. The remedial measures undertaken by the government did not show any immediate positive effect in the attitude of the farmers.

Major Causes of Farmers' Suicide in Maharashtra:

- 1) **Increasing amount of loan-** increasing amount of loan i.e. indebtedness is very important reason of farmers suicide. This loan is mainly from private moneylenders who are tease the farmers for recovery of loan
- 2) **Low capital-** Farmers have low capital backing and cant invest much for development. It is very difficult to farmers to use other sources of capital.
- 3) **Increasing cost of Cultivation-** nowadays because of inflation, the cost of cultivation is increasing on immense scale. This in turn is increasing the cost of production of crops.
- 4) **Physiological Effect on Mind:-** The incidence of suicide reported in a nearby village also affects their mentality and they also tend to suicide.
- 5) **Crop failures-** repeated crop failure is one of the important reasons of farmer's suicide in Maharashtra. The productivity of land is reducing day by day due to repetition of same crops over many years, due to low quality seeds.
- 6) **Absence of adequate social support infrastructure-** farmers does not get any kind of moral and social support from various sections of the society. It leads them the feeling of loneliness which divert them to suicide.

- 7) **Physiological problems-** sometime farmers attempt suicide as a result of psychological effect. Suicides of other farmers in near vicinity lead them towards self suicide.
- 8) **Personal Reasons -** Personal reasons like various addictions, health problems and quarrels with neighbors are also responsible for suicides.
- 9) **Reducing Landholding area -** The landholding area is reducing day by day, thereby converting the farmers from large land holding farmers to marginal farmers. That has resulted in adverse effects on their status in the society. It increases mental tensions
- 10) **Unproductive expenditure-** it is seen that in villages, there is large expenditure on daughter's marriage and its related ceremonies. This expenditure is totally unproductive which is not recoverable. As a result of this expenditure, the indebtedness is increased which becomes the cause of farmer's suicide.
- 11) **Absence of credit availability for small farmers-** generally loans are provided to farmers who own big area of land and having repayment capacity. Small farmers are deprived from loan facility and as a result of depression they attempt suicide.

Remedies to overcome the problem of Farmers' Suicide:

- 1) Farmers should be provided more health, medical and other facilities to make them aware regarding government's policy for benefit of farmers.
- 2) Programmes of eminent personalities should be arranged to provoke them for their growth and to divert their attention from suicides
- 3) Scientific training should be provided to farmers regarding rearing of crops and other activities.
- 4) Every state should be encouraged to establish '**Farmers Welfare Funds**'. Out of this fund farmers can get aid for marriages, illness and festivals
- 5) In the cases of natural calamities, the losses should be immediately settled.
- 6) The Employment Guarantee Scheme should also be strengthened.
- 7) State government should provide compensation for any crop failure, loss due to draught or any other natural calamities

- 8) Marginal farmers should be provided facilities like subsidy for seeds, fertilizers and other equipments.
- 9) Farmers should be provided with adequate warehousing facilities. Efforts should be made to create markets more effective for agricultural produce. Chain of Selling Centers should be strengthened and efforts should be made to avoid agents.
- 10) There should be supply of electricity in rural area for at maximum time. In addition they should be provided electricity at a concessional rate.
- 11) The laws against the moneylenders should be made stricter, punishing the moneylenders causing mental harassment.
- 12) For old farmers pension scheme should be formulated so that they can maintain their regular life style.
- 13) A network of Agricultural Information Centers should be established covering every nook and corner villages from India.
- 14) In India and Maharashtra collective and co-operative farming should be adopted. This will reduce cost of production of farm output.
- 15) Farmers should be given minimum support price for their production.
- 16) The policy of both central and state government should be in favor of farmers. Sufficient provisions should be made in annual budget for development of agricultural sector.
- 17) Farmers should be encouraged to engage themselves in agro based activities such as dairy, poultry farming, sheep rearing, horticulture, sericulture etc. so that they can compensate their losses arisen from agricultural activities
- 18) The influence of unorganized finance e.g. 'savkar' should be eliminated. Farmers should be encouraged to borrow loan from banks and especially from nationalized and other agricultural banks. Therefore government should provide refinance facility in ample size to these banks so that these banks can provide loan to farmers in adequate amount.
- 19) There is need to issue Kisan Credit Cards to all the eligible farmers to have them access to get ST, MT and LT loan from all the banks.

- 20) The barren and hilly lands should be encouraged to be brought under cultivation. The Unemployed Youth from rural areas could be entrusted with this work thereby creating employment for them.
- 21) There should be tax relaxation for the products which prove input for agricultural activities. By this the cost of production will be decreased.
- 22) A network of Agricultural Information Centers should be established covering every nook and corner villages from India.
- 23) Arrangements of marketing /forward linkages /contract farming should be made by the government to sell their produce at remunerative prices.

Conclusion:

India is agro based country, and farmers are our pride. But it is tragedy nowadays that farmers are attempting suicide on immense scale. The number of farmer's suicide is increasing in all states of India but this problem has become very serious in the state of Maharashtra and in Maharashtra vidarbha is main region where this number is large. Hence it is now a time to take necessary steps to eliminate such tendency of farmers. But if above facilities are given to farmers they may achieve self-sufficiency in agricultural production. There is need for major review of agricultural policy to meet the changing needs of both producers and consumers.

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