

# International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

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## FARMERS SUICIDE IN INDIA AND MAHARASHTRA

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### ABSTRACT

**A**griculture plays an important role in Indian economy and social development. India consisting of 16% of world's population sustains only on 2.4% of land resource. Agriculture sector is the only livelihood to the two-third of its population which gives employment to the 57% of work force. Despite a steady decline in its share to the gross Domestic Product (GDP) agriculture remains the largest economic sector in the country. Low and volatile growth rates under the sector and the recent escalation of an agrarian crisis in several parts of the country pose a threat not only to national food security but also to the economic well being of the nation as a whole. In 1950-51 the share of Agriculture in total GDP was 37.6%. Gradually it declined and has now come down to 13.7%. in 2011-12. Still however 60% population depends on



agriculture for the livelihood.

**KEYWORDS:** Agriculture plays, Indian economy and social development.

### INTRODUCTION :

In 1988-89 growth rate in Agriculture in India was 15.4%, which has come down to 9.4% in 2006-07. Due to rapid growth of rural population and division of families the farmland has undergone rapid fragmentation. Now 80% of the farmland holding are with the small and marginal farmers owning land up to 5 acres. For this category of farmers cost of production by way of farm inputs has increased manifold over the years while the productivity of the land

remained at the same level and sale price of farm produce has not increased. These factors have driven farmers to the debt trap and have caused distress leading to suicide. If the landholding size is small then cost of production is high. The distressed economy of small scale crop cultivation is further accentuated by lack of knowledge, inadequate irrigation facility, scientific application of crop management, inappropriate system such as non availability of quality input material in time, non-remunerative prices, dominance of middlemen in Agricultural Marketing Structure.

### FARMERS' SUICIDES IN INDIA-

A large number of farmer's suicides in various parts of the country are perhaps a most distressing phenomenon observed in India over the last two decade. It was particularly so during the decades of the 1990s and 2000s. The distress of the farmers highlighted the need to focus and analyse the problems and steps needed to revitalize agriculture. The Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) carried out by the National Sample Survey Organization [NSSO, 2005] had also highlighted that the agriculture is no longer a profitable enterprise; income from crop cultivation is not enough to meet the annual cultivation expenditure of the farmer. According to various studies/experts, non remunerative prices for crops, indebtedness and crop failures due to monsoon vagaries are, by and large, identified as the

core reasons of agrarian distress and suicide. The widening gap between input-output prices has led towards further deterioration of the farm economy. The decline of public investment in agriculture and allied rural sectors, started in the late 1980s, accelerated during the period of economic reforms. An incidence of rural poverty (37.5%) is still at an alarming high.

Farmers suicide have been receiving a lot of social and public policy attention in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab and Maharashtra, in recent years. Tens of thousands of farmers in different states of India have committed suicide. These suicides can no more considered isolated cases of farmer's deaths but a symbol of deepening in the crisis of Indian agriculture. In the initial period of late 1990's when there were sporadic incidents of suicide across the country there was general indifference in these incidents. But when in early 2000 the number of farmer's deaths started rising fast in these five states.

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) figures across 18 years for which data exist show that at least 2,84,694 Indian farmers have taken their lives since 1995, If dividing these eighteen years India saw 1,38,321 farms suicides between 1995 and 2003 at a annual average rate of 15369 and for 2004-2012 the number of 1,46,373 at a much higher annual average of 16264.

### **FARMERS' SUICIDES IN MAHARASHTRA-**

Maharashtra is the second largest state in India both in terms of population and geographical area (3.08 lakh sq.km.). The State has a population of 11.24 crore in 2011. Which is 9.3 per cent of the total population of India. The state is highly urbanized with 45.2 per cent population residing in urban areas.

In Maharashtra, the contribution of agriculture and allied activities to the net state domestic product in current prices came down from 40 percent in 1960-61 to 13 percent in 2004-05 and 55 percent of the total workers are either cultivators or agricultural labourers.

In 1990s, India woke-up to spate of suicide among farmers community. The first state where suicides were reported was Maharashtra with particular reference to Vidharbha region. A look at the figures given out by State Crime Records Bureau makes it evident that farmers as a professional category is suffering from this problem of high suicide rates. Near about 3.4 million cotton farmers occupy the Vidharbha region. Incidence of farmers ending their lives in this region had hit epidemic like proportions recently.

The total number of farmers who have taken their own lives in Maharashtra since 1995 is 57,604 at an annual average of 3200, the rise is occurring even as the rural population is shrinking a fact broadly true across the country and in Maharashtra which has been urbanizing more rapidly. The increasing suicides rate suggests a major intensification of the pressure on the community.

### **CAUSES OF THE FARMER'S SUICIDES**

#### **Following factors contribute to the suicides among farmers**

- 1)Indebtedness of small and marginal farmers
- 2)Increasing costs of cultivation
- 3)Relative absence of irrigation facilities
- 4)Uncertainty of agricultural enterprise in India
- 5)Falling prices of farm commodities
- 6)Absence of adequate social support infrastructure at village level.
- 7)Repeated crop failures
- 8)Lack of credit availability for small and marginal farmers
- 9)Improper supply of electricity
- 10)Reduction of agriculture subsidies

**Table No-1**  
**Farmers Suicides in India and Maharashtra during 1995 to 2012**

Sr. No.	Year	Farmers Suicides	
		India	Maharashtra
1	1995	10720(100)	1083 (100)
2	1996	13729(128)	1981 (183)
3	1997	13622(127)	1917 (097)
4	1998	16015(149)	2409 (126)
5	1999	16082(150)	2423 (100)
6	2000	16603(154)	3022 (125)
7	2001	16415(153)	3536 (117)
8	2002	17971(168)	3695 (104)
9	2003	17164(160)	3836 (104)
10	2004	18241(170)	4147 (108)
11	2005	17131(160)	3926 (95)
12	2006	17060(159)	4453 (113)
13	2007	16632(155)	4238 (95)
14	2008	16196(151)	3802 (90)
15	2009	17368(162)	2872 (75)
16	2010	15964(149)	3141 (109)
17	2011	14027(131)	3337 (106)
18	2012	13754(128)	3786 (113)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,84,694</b>	<b>57,604</b>

Note: Figures in brackets shows indices with 1995 as the base.

Source: National Crime Records Bureau 1995 to 2012

Above table shows the Farmers Suicides in India and Maharashtra during the period of 1995 to 2012. In India there were 2,84,694 farmers committed suicide in India and 57,604 in Maharashtra. The table also indicates that on an average around 15816 farmers committed suicide in the country and 3165 in Maharashtra during the period of 1995 to 2012. In India the number of farmer's suicide was very high i.e.18241 in the year 2004 and in Maharashtra State it was 4453 in the year 2006.

#### **SUGGESTIONS:**

1. Encourage organic farming techniques
2. Social expenditure costs associated with marriage in the family should be reduced.
3. Volunteers should be trained to identify psychological disorders and refer the patients accordingly
4. Create more insurance schemes to the small and marginal farmers
5. Timely and adequate support by way of credit to farmers with focusing small and Marginal farmers to have them modern equipment for improved agricultural productivity.
6. Train staff in primary health care facilities to deal with poisoning
7. Encourage the farmers to adopt allied activities like dairy, poultry with farming activities.
8. To form the SHGs of Tenant farmers & agricultural workers and give them micro-credit through banks.
9. Diversification/crop rotation in agricultural production in changed scenario.
10. 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.
11. Arrangements of marketing /forward linkages /contract farming to sell their produce at Remunerative prices.
12. Adoption of Non-Farm activities with allied agricultural activities.
13. Adoption of upgraded technology inputs along with provision of infrastructure inputs like power at subsidized cost, supply of inputs like seeds, fertilizers, tractors and credit provision through all nationalized banks.

**CONCLUSION:**

The agrarian crisis is multidimensional phenomenon; the indebtedness of the farming community is the root cause behind it. The factors that caused indebtedness are vital. The most important aspect is that the states where the agrarian crisis and farmers suicides are of higher order have been the comparatively developed in agriculture where green revolution brought development. Hence, it is significant to study the nature of agrarian economy of suicide affected states. So, there is need the government can appoint an expert group to make estimate and analyze causes and suggests remedial measures to prevent this unfortunate phenomenon.

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