
Farmer suicide and a social problem

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Abstract

In 1972, there was a severe drought in half of India. At that time, people in rural areas had the illusion of two meals a day. Many people were sleeping on an empty stomach. Farmers did not commit suicide in such a drought situation. The number of farmer suicides has increased significantly in the last few years. In the year 2013, 3228 farmers have committed suicide and this is the highest number of farmer suicides in the last 15 years. Suicide, whatever it is, requires a combination of two factors. Creating a suicidal situation, deciding to commit suicide for some immediate reason and taking action to enforce it. The decision to end one's life out of a lingering desire in the mind of a tired, sad, bewildered person is fulfilled by an action. That act is suicide. In India, farmer suicides have taken a serious turn in the last few years. In Maharashtra, the severity of the problem is even greater. Among them, Yavatmal district, which is number one in Maharashtra in terms of cotton production, has the highest proportion. About 20% of the total farmer suicides in India have been committed by farmers in Maharashtra. Most of these farmers were family heads and in the last few years, the participation of women farmers in committing suicide has also increased. Therefore, the suicide of a farmer has created a serious problem. I have tried to review this in this article.

Keywords: Suicides, agriculture Income, agricultural country, cultivation

Preface

India is an agricultural country. Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. Agriculture is the largest unorganized sector in India. Just as people get food from agriculture, industries also get raw materials. According to the 2011 census, 52 per cent of India's population was employed in agriculture and allied occupations. According to the 2011 Economic Outlook, the Indian agro-industry accounted for 16.09 per cent of the national income, while agriculture accounted for 10.05 per cent of India's exports during the same period. Today, the farmer who is the backbone of this industry is in crisis and the crisis that has befallen him has gone beyond his mental tolerance and this strong farmer has resorted to suicide. Agriculture has been facing many problems since 1991. E.g. Rising debts on farmers, expensive machinery, rising seed prices, water supply irregularities, power supply problems, uncertain prices of agricultural products, changes in the environment and global markets, and economic hardships have led to family strife. In India, in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka, the issue of farmer suicide has become very serious. According to the data on farmer suicides in India, a total of 12591 farmers committed suicide in Maharashtra between 2001 and 2011. Many of the people involved in the farmer's suicide played a major role in this family. But such

families have come to the streets because they have committed suicide. At the same time, the children of some families are moving to the left due to lack of control. How to make a living in many families as the earner commits suicide? This problem has arisen and the problem of farmer suicides is intensifying day by day and this problem is not limited to a few families but is an important problem facing Indian agriculture. This is because the resources to do agribusiness through suicide are running out prematurely. There are many problems that lead to farmer's suicide. I have tried to review these issues in this article.

Objectives of the study

- To study the reasons behind the suicide of farmers.
- To study the social and economic condition of suicidal farmers.
- To study measures to prevent farmer suicides..

Reasons responsible for farmer suicides.

Between 1995 and 2013, a total of 60750 farmers in Maharashtra committed suicide. Even today, the rate of farmer suicides has not stopped. Therefore, it is important to study the exact causes of farmer suicides. The following are some of the important reasons why farmers commit suicide in general.

1. **Debt Consolidation:** The farmer cultivates the land by taking a loan from a bank. Sowing is wasted due to untimely rains. Since he needs money to replant and buy seeds, the bank is not ready to lend to him a second time as he has not repaid the first loan and the farmer turns to a private lender for new plantings. Private lenders lend at a fraction of the interest rate. Once the debt is exhausted, the farmer's indebtedness increases. It is not possible to get out of this debt. When the debt finally goes beyond repayment, the moneylenders take possession of the land and the farmer is forced to do the same. Due to this, a large number of farmers commit suicide due to depression. Debt bondage is the main reason for many farmers to commit suicide.
2. **Climate change:** Indian agriculture is heavily dependent on rainfall. Although the amount of irrigated land in Indian agriculture is increasing, most of the agricultural area is dependent on rain water only. Sometimes dry droughts, sometimes wet droughts or unseasonal rains cause severe damage to crops. Due to this change in climate, even the grass in the mouths of the farmers escapes. This also leads to farmer suicide.
3. **Increased planting cost:** In the past, farmers used to collect and cultivate good seeds for their next crop at the time of harvest before the use of hybrid seeds.

Because of this, he did not have to spend much on fertilizer. The green revolution has brought new improved varieties to the market and it is becoming inevitable for farmers to purchase these seeds every year. After planting of hybrid seeds, application of chemical fertilizers like Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potash became mandatory to provide easy supply of nutrients to the variety. These crops are prone to early diseases as they pick up more nutrients from the chemical fertilizers in the soil and pesticides have to be used to control them. Due to the green revolution technology, most of the inputs required for agriculture have to be procured from the market. For this he has to take a loan. If a natural disaster does not produce the right product, the cost is wasted. Eventually he is pushed into debt.

4. **Not getting fair price for farm produce:** The farmer is facing many problems when he produces farm produce and when his produce comes in the market, he does not get fair price. When there is a huge crop due to good weather, the prices of agricultural commodities fall due to high supply of goods in the market. In that case, it is not the buyer who has the right to determine the price of the commodity that he has brought to the market. As a result, traders who buy agricultural commodities buy their goods at lower prices. Agricultural trade in India is still largely in the hands of middlemen. During the season, they buy goods from farmers at low prices and stockpile them. They sell at a higher price when the season is over. Although the commodity becomes more expensive for the consumer due to brokerage, the extra money does not fall into the hands of the farmers. It is an important reason for farmers' suicide.
5. **Poverty at home:** Most of the farmers in India are still living in 18 world poverty. In such a situation, he dares to cultivate the land. When nature is degraded, the crops that come to it get out of its hands and it does not get any financial support from anyone. Alternatively it is dragged further into poverty. In such a situation, their financial situation becomes fragile and family tensions begin to mount. His mental state makes him depressed and irresponsible as he is unable to provide for the basic needs of the family and he is prone to suicide.
5. **Irresponsible government policies:** The crisis of farmer suicides is one of the post-independence government policies. The agricultural policy adopted by India after independence is indirectly responsible for the widespread suicide of farmers. If the government had given priority to agricultural issues during the last 70 years, the situation would not be as it is today. Exports of agricultural commodities are

restricted and imports are encouraged. The government has made no effort to bring about new reforms in agricultural laws, crop insurance, electricity policy, credit supply.

6. **Lack of planning:** Agriculture is a means of livelihood. That is the narrow view of our society. Which crop to take when? To whom should the goods be sold? Expenditure and income not calculated, how much should be spent on religion, health? The farmer does not have the balance. So farmers commit suicide.
7. **Other reasons:** Lack of joint family system, incurable diseases, addiction, disorganization, lack of processing industry, village level politics, inefficiency of agricultural produce market committees Social and economic condition of suicidal farmers

Even though agriculture is a completely private sector, the government still keeps it tightly bound by various rules and regulations. Only with financial independence can this sector survive. No figures are needed to describe the condition of farmers in the country today. One of the major reasons for the dire state of agriculture, on which most of the people in the country depend, is the government's agricultural policies. The main problems facing the agriculture sector are being sidelined from these policies. On the other hand, it is alarming that farmers' dependence on the government is being increased by simply introducing schemes like debt waiver. Out of about 90 million farmers across the country, 52% of their households are in debt. Many small farmers have not benefited from the 2008 debt waiver program. On the contrary, many who did not qualify benefited from the waiver. The CAG report also revealed that Rs 52,000 crore was scammed in the debt waiver scheme that year.

The country underwent major economic reforms in 1991, but it was all non-agricultural. In this economic reform, however, the Shati sector was neglected and you can see the result in the form of farmer suicide. The agricultural sector was completely ignored by the policy makers. Even though agriculture is a completely private sector, the government still keeps it tightly bound by various rules and regulations. In a country where 50 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture, no government has taken the initiative to address the root causes of the problem. All the political parties announced temporary aid to the farmers and kept the farmers in suspense. The government calls the farmers 'food givers' and announces schemes for them. Due to such announcements as debt waiver, the government has crippled the farmers by depriving them of their right to earn money with self-respect. Measures to prevent farmer suicides

Farmers need to be financially self-sufficient to prevent them from committing suicide. The following measures may be useful for that

1. Immediate repeal of anti-agriculture laws: The APMC Act and the Essential Commodities Act are barriers to getting a fair price for a farmer's goods. Both these laws should be repealed and become laws in the interest of the farmers. So that farmers have the right to set the price of their produce and sell their produce wherever they want.
2. Stopping the plunder of agriculture: The experiment of Green Revolution entered the lives of farmers through external inputs like hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides. As a result, the cost of cultivation of farmers increased. The pulse of all these inputs is in the hands of the market system or in the hands of for-profit factories and shopkeepers. Even the 'subsidy' given by the government in the name of farmers falls into the hands of the farmers and goes directly to the manufacturers. In this way, the producers have the right to set the prices of external agricultural inputs and the prices of agricultural commodities are decided by the government and the buyers considering all the capital expenditure, depreciation, interest on capital expenditure and their own profit. The farmer cannot decide the price of his own goods. Apart from his own profit, he also does not get prices based on cost of production. In times of natural calamities like drought, premature rains, his condition gets worse and it is his turn to sell his goods at a fraction of the price. Without legal control over this looting, it is not possible to increase the income of the farmer and the farmer will not be financially self-sufficient.
3. Timely credit to farmers: It is a big problem that credit is required for agriculture and timely. Banks are reluctant to lend to farmers due to unreliable agriculture and skepticism of debt recovery. Therefore, in the end, the farmers have to hold the feet of the lender with the help of Nilaja. Banks' interest rates are also unaffordable. As a solution to this, low interest loans should be made available to the farmers. If this credit is made available to the farmers through women's self help groups at the village level, debt recovery can also be done easily.
4. Improving irrigation facilities: Most of the agriculture in India is dependent on rain water. The productivity of irrigated agriculture is definitely higher than that of arable agriculture. The proportion of arable land in our country is 63% of the total cultivable land. The productivity of agriculture has always been low as the majority of the poor tribals and non-tribals in our country have to resort to agrarian farming. It is necessary to increase irrigation facilities for agriculture in order to increase agricultural production.

5. Availability of supplementary occupations to agriculture: Considering the present state of agriculture, agriculture cannot be a complete source of livelihood for the farmers. Therefore, along with agriculture, it is necessary to encourage farmers to engage in animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries, cultivation of medicinal products and bee keeping.
6. To formulate agricultural policy: Government of India spends crores of rupees on import of edible oil and pulses. Instead, if the money is spent on the farmer's scheme and subsidized them to buy these products, the farmer can benefit and the farmer can get out of his financial trouble.
7. Need for mechanization of agriculture: Rural migration: Due to the poor state of agriculture, the number of people migrating to the cities in search of jobs is increasing. This has created a huge problem for laborers in rural areas. The younger generation in the village is not ready for manual labor on the farm. She dreams of getting some work in the city. Due to the change in cropping pattern in the last few years, at a certain point in time, all the farmers need labor and there seems to be a shortage of farm labor. Due to high demand and low supply competition, farmers have to pay higher wages than usual. Some work is not done on time, it is different. For this, it is necessary to find alternative devices that run on animal power. Which will reduce the cost of cultivation and cultivation.
8. Implementing Competent Crop Insurance Scheme: Till date, we have not got such a trusting mechanism from the insurance scheme. However, an insurance plan needs to be developed as a proactive and minimal protection mechanism so that the farmer can get immediate compensation in case of loss.

Conclusion

In the present situation, all the political parties are ready on one foot to get votes from the farmers in the politics of votes but no one is ready to solve their problems. So the farmer has been in financial straits since ancient times and still is today. Due to the misery of agriculture, the farming farmer has become a complete failure. The fear of recovery of the lender does not allow him to live properly and the government is not ready to solve the problems of the farmers. Depression has led to a sharp rise in alcohol and other addictions in rural areas. Eventually, his mental balance deteriorated, leading him to commit suicide. Serious pollution from chemical farming, food chain toxicity, persistent soil erosion, declining groundwater levels, and consumption of food containing pesticides have created various health problems for the masses. Normally a farmer does not keep an account of his farming system and even if it is kept, it does not even include the money to be taken as interest on

the loan taken from the lender. The farmer is trapped in a debt trap. The above challenges of agriculture are not easy. Political will at the state and national level is needed to cultivate it and at present the government lacks it. But it is true that if the alternatives are not properly considered, the situation of the farmers will become more and more explosive in the future.

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