

Farmers Suicide in India- Causes and Remedies: 2006-2010

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Abstract

India is an Agrarian economy where more than 60% population either directly or indirectly depends on Agriculture & its allied activities. But in the race of development of Industrial and Service sector, India has totally neglected to Agriculture sector and its allied activities. This negligence resulted to increase in cost of production and losses also. Especially after Globalization, Indian farmers are in financial trouble and negligence of politicians and socialist towards rejuvenation, relaxation & Development of farmers and Agriculture, forces farmers to commit suicide. This research paper focuses on state-wise quantitative data of farmer's suicide in India and reasons of the same with effective remedies. It also compares data of farmer's suicides for period 1995-2005 to 2006-2010.

Keywords: Agriculture, Farmers Suicide, Globalization, Financial Trouble.

1. Introduction

India is a developing country and After China it is considered as one of the fastest developing nation of the world. While measuring development of nation, development of Industrial and service sector is considered with development of basic infrastructural facilities & increased in employment opportunities. But for the sustainable development of any nation only development of Industrial and service sector is enough. In addition to this growth and development of Agriculture sector is also important. In India, more than 60% of total population of nation is resides in rural area and Agriculture and its allied activities are the main source of their Income. Their overall development is depends upon development and growth of Agriculture sector. But government of India and concern state governments willfully neglected to Agricultural sector. This not only affects on standard of living of rural Indians but also affects on economic development of country. Simultaneously it affects on overall development of India.

India is an Agrarian economy where Agriculture is the main source earning of majority of people of the nation. But Politicians, Industrialist and Manufacturers/Producers willfully neglected qualitative and quantitative growth & development of the same. Government of India has always given preference to Industrial and service sector and collateralised Agricultural sector in all levels of development. Due to this attitude of Indian government, Agriculture sector facing many problems in last two decades. After 1991, in the era of Globalization this problem becomes more critical. After 1991, government of India adopted policies of WTO and signed GATTS, which was totally in favor of Developed nations like USA, UK, Japan and other European counties but totally harmful for Developing and underdeveloped countries. These new changes had adversely affected on Agricultural sector of developing and underdeveloped countries. Manufactures of food and industrial raw material (i.e. Farmers) facing financial problems due to this International and national policies. The success of Agriculture sector is also depends on natural conditions also. If natural condition is favorable, production is also good but unfavorable natural condition badly affects on quality and quantity of the goods produced by farmers. Even if natural condition is favorable and production is good with high quality, farmers are not ensuring that they will get good return of their products. Because high production also reduces their income as prices in the market are fall down due to heavy supply of goods.

The above conditions focused on the various problems facing by Indian farmers. Whether the environment is favorable or unfavorable, farmers always faces losses. Due to continuation of this condition and failure on state and central government in taking effective measures to protect and help to farmers to overcome on this barriers. Most of them became bankrupt and burden of heavy repayment of Debts and other family responsibilities forces them to commit suicides.

So this research paper focused on qualitative and quantitative data of farmers' suicide in India and reasons behind the same.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 To study the state- wise Farmers Suicide in India.
- 2.2 To compare the farmers suicides with total suicides in India.
- 2.3 To analyze the Farmers Suicide in India.

2.4 To find out the reasons of Farmers Suicide in India.

3. Hypothesis

3.1 Farmers Suicide in India has increased for period 2006-2010.

4. Methodology

For this research paper most of the data is collected by using secondary sources like Data & records available with NCRB Reports, Magazines, Journals, data published in various National and Vernacular newspapers, Government websites and some extend at primary sources like observation and oral interviews of local farmers.

5. Scope of Research

The main purpose of this research paper is to study the reasons of farmer's suicides in India and find out the remedies to control the same. For this study data regarding farmers suicides of five states i.e. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh is shown separately as they are on top in farmers suicides in India and contributed near about two third of total farmers suicides in India. Data of farmer's suicides in all other state are collected and shown together.

6. Limitations of Research

This research paper concentrates on farmers suicides in India for the period of 2006-2010 Only. In addition to this, most of the collected data is based on secondary data sources. Even though research paper is related with farmer suicides in India. It mostly concentrates on top five states who contribute to near about 2/3rd of total farmers' suicides in India.

7. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

At the end of 20th century India accepted Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization policy and as per the norms of WTO and GATTs, reduces subsidies for farmers. Which badly affects on the farmers and cost of seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides but the selling price or market price of agricultural products are not increased as cost of production increases. Even the government declares minimum reasonable price (MRP) for certain products but these MRPs are also less than the cost of production of agricultural goods. Sometimes farmers are not able to recover the cost price of products produced by them and they incurred heavy losses. And due to the same they are not able to return high interest loan taken by them from private money lenders and banks. In addition to this they fail to handle their family responsibilities like education, marriages and health security of their family members. These failures frustrate them and forces them to turn towards suicides. The following table shows the state-wise data of farmers' suicide between 1995 to 2010.

Table no. 1 : State-wise farmers suicide in India.

Years	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total Suicides	1995 to 2005	Total Suicides
States								
Maharashtra	4453	4238	3802	2872	3141	18506	31975	50481
Andhra Pradesh	2607	1797	2105	2414	2525	11448	19672	31120
Karnataka	1720	2135	1737	2282	2585	10459	24594	35053
*MP + Chhattisgarh	2858	2856	3152	3197	2363	14426	26636	41062
A] Total	11638	11026	10796	10765	10614	54839	102877	157716
B] Other States	5422	5606	5400	6603	5080	28111	71086	99197
[A+B] Total Suicides	17060	16632	16196	17368	15694	82950	173963	256913

Source: National Crime Record Bureau of India.

(*AS Madhya Pradesh [MP] and Chhattisgarh were a single state before year 2000 separate data of farmers suicide in Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh is not available. So combine data of both the state is given)

Table no. 1 shows that Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh has contributed near about two third of farmers suicide in India for the period 1995 to 2010. For the period 2006 to 2009 the number of farmers' suicide in Maharashtra is continuously decreased, but in year 2010 it was again increased to 3141 as compare to 2872 in year 2009. The farmers' suicide in Maharashtra for the period 2006 to 2010 was 18506, which is comparably higher than the farmers suicides occurred in 1995 to 2005, which was 31975. At the same time Maharashtra is highest ever in farmers suicides compare to all other states for the same period. Same situation is occurred in states like Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka. MP and Chhattisgarh had 14426 farmers' suicides in 2006 to 2010 which is more than 50% of farmers suicides (26636) in last ten years (i.e. 1995 to 2005). As compare to overall farmers' suicides other 30 states (including Union territories) had 99197 farmers' suicides for the period in 1995 to 2010. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, MP & Chhattisgarh (combinely) had 50481, 31120, 35053, 41062 farmers suicides respectively in period 1995 to 2010.

Table no. 2: State-wise Famers Suicide in India (in Percentage)

Years \ States	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	1995 to 2005
Maharashtra	26.10	25.48	23.47	16.54	20.01	18.40
Andhra Pradesh	15.28	10.80	13.47	13.90	16.09	11.33
Karnataka	10.08	12.84	10.72	13.14	16.47	14.16
*MP + Chhattisgarh	16.75	17.17	19.46	18.41	15.06	15.34
A) Total Suicides in above 5 States	68.21	66.29	66.65	61.99	67.63	59.23
B) Other States	31.79	33.71	33.45	38.01	32.37	40.77
[A+B] Total Suicides	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table no. 2 shows the Maharashtra had highest percentage of farmers' suicides for the period 1995 to 2010, which is 18.40%. Top five states in farmers' suicide contribute to 59.23% of the total for the same suicides. All other state had 40.77% of farmers' suicides for the same period.

Table no. 3 - Data of farmer's suicide with compare to total suicides in states and total suicides in India.

Year		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Particulars						
Total Population in India (in Lakhs)		11197.75	11365.50	11531.30	11694.40	11857.60
Total Suicides in India		118112	122637	125017	127151	134599
Maharashtra	Total Suicides	15473	15206	14377	14241	15883
	Farmers suicides	4453	4238	3802	2872	3141
	% of Farmers suicides to Total suicides in India.	03.77	03.46	3.04	02.26	02.33
	% of Farmers suicides to Total suicides in Maharashtra.	28.77	27.87	26.45	20.17	19.78
Andhra Pradesh	Total Suicides	13229	14839	14377	14495	15883
	Farmers suicides	2607	1797	2105	2414	2525
	% of Farmers suicides to Total suicides in India	02.21	01.47	01.68	01.90	01.88
	% of Farmers suicides to Total suicides in Andhra Pradesh	19.71	12.11	14.64	16.65	15.90
Karnataka	Total Suicides	12166	12264	12252	12206	12652
	Farmers suicides	1720	2135	1737	2282	2585
	% of Farmers suicides to Total suicides in India	01.46	01.74	01.39	01.79	01.92
	% of Farmers suicides to Total suicides in Karnataka	14.14	17.41	14.18	18.70	20.43
MP+ Chhattisgarh	Total Suicides	10984	11160	12627	15004	15479
	Farmers suicides	2858	2856	3152	3197	2363
	% of Farmers suicides to Total suicides in India	02.42	02.33	02.52	02.51	01.76
	% of Farmers suicides to Total suicides in MP + Chhattisgarh	26.02	25.59	24.96	21.31	15.27
All Other States	Total Suicides	66261	69167	71385	71205	74702
	Farmers suicides	5422	5606	5400	6603	5080
	% of Farmers suicides to Total suicides in India	04.59	04.57	04.32	05.19	03.77
	% of Farmers suicides to Total suicides in All other States	08.17	08.11	07.56	09.27	06.80

Table no. 3 shows state-wise farmers suicide data to compare with farmers total suicides of India and total suicides of the particular period. Table no. 3 shows that, for the period 2006-2010, total suicides occurred in India were 118112, 122637, 125017, 127151 & 134599 respectively. And for the same period total suicides occurred in Maharashtra were 15473, 15206, 14377, 14241 & 15883 respectively. For the same period

percentage of farmers suicide in Maharashtra with farmers suicides in India were 03.77, 03.46, 3.04, 02.26, 02.33 respectively and shows that it was reduced up to 2009 but again increased in 2010 by 0.07%. but as compare to total suicides in Maharashtra. farmers suicides in Maharashtra were 28.77, 27.87, 26.45, 20.17 & 19.78% respectively and shows continuous decline for the period 2006-2010.

Andhra Pradesh also shows little bit different picture of farmers suicides as compare to total suicides in India and Andhra Pradesh. Table shows that Andhra Pradesh had 01.46, 01.74, 01.39, 01.79 and 01.92% respectively farmers suicides compare to total suicides in India, for the same period and shows continuous decline up to 2009 but increased by 0.13% in 2010 compared to previous year. as compare with total suicide in Andhra Pradesh, farmers suicides in Andhra Pradesh has 14.14, 17.41, 14.18, 18.70 & 20.43% respectively and shows continuous increase from year 2008.

Karnataka also shows same picture like Andhra Pradesh. In year 2010, Karnataka had 01.92% of total suicides in India as compare to 01.79% farmers suicides in 2009. And in 2010, 20.43% of total suicides in Karnataka as compare to 18.70% farmers suicides farmers suicides in 2009.

MP & Chhattisgarh combinely shows decline in farmers suicides in year 2010 a compare to Total suicides in India and MP + Chhattisgarh.

All other states shows same picture like MP + Chhattisgarh.

9. Causes of Farmers suicides in India:

Analysis and interpretation of above data shows that the farmers' suicide in India for the above mentioned period considerably increased. According to the expert in the field of agriculture, farmers' suicides in India for the same period are world's highest. Analysis of above data focused on following reasons of farmers suicide:

9.1 Financial reasons: As an agrarian economy more the 60% population of India depends on agriculture and its allied activities. But for the successful running of agriculture and its allied activities requires capital. More than 80% of the Indian farmers are marginal land owners and they are economically poor. So they are facing economical problems for successful running of agricultural activities. At the same time nationalize banks are not willing to lend funds to farmers as there is no surety to return it. Even the private money lenders don't lend funds to them as they don't have any mortgage except their land. Even they lends funds to farmers they charges high rate or compound rate of interest. In addition to this, the farmers has their family responsibilities like education, marriages and health provisions of their family members and children, which requires huge money. Even the Government of India (GOI) and concern state government also fails to give economic relief to farmers. The government always declares various packages in crore of rupees to farmers for relief but due to corruption in distribution, wrong criteria's of assigning aids, unwillingness about farmers problems needy farmers don't get benefits of government help. The burden of these entire things turns them towards suicides.

9.2 Natural Calamities: In addition to economical reasons natural calamities are also responsible for farmers suicides. The effective agricultural production is mostly depends on favorable weather condition. Due to the global warming, deforestation and other manmade reasons natural condition has become more worsen and reasons like heavy raining, floods, droughts, delay in raining, heavy cyclones, and manmade reason like reduction in subsidies, fire, accidents and so on, farmers are not able to take qualitative and quantitative production from their farm. Even all the condition are in favor of farmers and production is good in quality & quantity farmers don't get proper return of their product in the market, as more supply of goods reduces demand and reduction in demands automatically reduces price of the same. Most of the time farmers are not able to recover cost price of their product. The State governments declare MRPs of the agricultural product every year. But the MRPs declared by government are less than the total cost incurred for production. Due to these reasons agriculture becomes an assured loss making business. But the marginal & small farmers of India don't have another option for earning. And they again & again put their all efforts in the agriculture. Continuous losses turn them to become insolvent and frustration of the same forces them to commit suicides.

9.3 Increase in cost of production: In addition to the above reasons increase in cost of production also forces to the farmers to commit suicide. Agriculture sector in India requires huge manpower for ploughing, digging, soil maintenance etc., for insecticides, pesticides, cutting, transportation and selling of products requires funds. In addition to this hybrid seeds are also requires for good quality & quantity of product, which are very costly and not affordable to marginal and poor farmers of India. The following table no. 4 shows that the cost incurred for per hectare of wheat production and income from the same:

Table no.4: Income Earned from and Expenditure Incurred for one Hectare of production of wheat. (Expenditure in Indian Rupee)

Expenses incurred	Amt. (Rs.)	Income earned	Amt. (Rs)
Land Plough	4500.00	38 Quintal X Rs.1500 per Quintal	57000.00
Cow dung (two Trolleys)	18750.00		
Hybrid seeds	5000.00	Loss Per acres (Forecasted loss in rupees)	1575.00
Sowing of seeds	2500.00		
Chemical Fertilizers (1 st Dose)	3750.00		
Chemical Fertilizers (2 nd Dose)	5000.00		
With Insecticides & Pesticides			
Irrigation Cost (five times)	1875.00		
Electricity Bill (Four months)	0500.00		
Crop Maintenance	2500.00		
*Crop cutting (manually) (Rs. 3750 per hectare for crop cutting with Harvester)	8000.00		
Wheat bags (38 bags X ₹. 40 each)	1520.00		
Transport cost (farm to Home)	0400.00		
Transport cost (Home to market)	2000.00		
Selling cost (Commission etc.) (Rs. 56700 X 4 %)	2280.00		
	**58575.00		58575.00

(* Crop cutting with harvester saves Rs. 4250 per hectare.)

(** This cost does not include cost of land owner & his families contribution for wheat production.)

(Selling price per quintal is as per market price in year 2010)

Table no.4 shows that small and marginal farmers in India continuously facing losses in agriculture. The MRP declared by government are less than the cost incurred for production. i. e. government of Maharashtra has declared MRPs on certain agricultural produces which is 72% of Cost of production of Pulses, Wheat, Jawar and Bajra, 84% of onion, garlic, cotton and 92% of Sugarcane. In addition to this the cost of production and production may varies as per change in weather condition. Even the weather is favorable and production is high, more supply of product automatically reduces the price. So most of the farmers are not able to recover the cost price of the same.

9.4 Political reasons: Politics in India is one of the main reasons for farmers suicide in India. For the success of any business & profession, in addition to favorable economical and weather condition, political environment also plays important role. The Indian politicians who plays important role in policy making and decision making are totally shy and neglected agriculture sector. They are failing to take effective measures for soundness of agriculture. The politician has totally neglected agriculture sector and always gives preference to Industrial and service sector. While deciding MRPs of agricultural produces they don't consider the cost incurred for the production of same. They frequently declare various relief packages for farmers but failing to take effective implementation of the same. So the needy farmers don't get the benefits of such packages. The government also frequently bans export of agricultural products as per terms & conditions of WTO & GAATs. This is harmful for the exportable agricultural produces. at the same time most of the small and marginal farmers are belongs to backward communities like SCs, STs, OBCs and Muslims (Inferiors in Indian Politics) and even today politics is the monopoly of self declared superiors. This is resulted in biases in distribution of financial help and subsidies.

9.5 Global reasons: The GOI has accepted Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) policy after 1991 and signed GAAT agreement as per the terms and conditions of WTO. Which forced to India to accept all the restriction binding on member countries. Even today the GAAT agreement is helpful for the developed countries and developing & Underdeveloped countries facing many problems as they don't have freedom while taking various production and sell and export of the same. Patents of certain agricultural products are also troublesome for Indian farmers. e.g. Indian don't have patent of B.T. Cotton Seeds. And main product of farmers of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra cotton. Due to GAAT agreement and international patent policies. Even we are capable for B.T. cotton seeds we must import hybrid B.T. cotton seeds from abroad which is very costly due to import duties and all other charges. These restrictions support to increase in cost of production. And in addition to this, if above four factors are against to the farmers, they don't have any other option than suicide.

9.6 Illiteracy, Traditions & Culture: In addition to above factors Illiteracy, Tradition and Culture also forces to farmers to commit suicide. Due to illiteracy and inadequate knowledge, farmers do not believe in importance of education. Lack of education skills their decision making skills. Lack of money and perception capacity, they turn to rights and rituals of orthodox and other religious activities which again requires more money. And sometimes, to perform these activities they use to take heavy loans from private money lenders with high rate of interest. In addition to this, a marriage of daughters, farmers requires to give huge fund and gold to their son in law (Known as 'Hunda'). If the farmers fails to perform all these traditions and cultural activities they become frustrate and turn towards suicide.

9.7 New changes: After the green revolution and innovation of new technologies new hybrid seeds, insecticides, pesticides and farm cultivation technologies makes farming more easier and production is increased considerably. But these technologies and innovations are so costly and not affordable to poor small and marginal farmers. marginal farmers have small piece of land which might be less than a hectare e.g. the Vidarbha, a highly farmer suicide region of Maharashtra has three district namely Wardha, Yawatmal & Washim has highest number of marginal farmers i.e. 33.30, 46.70 & 27.60% respectively. And number of small farmers was 23.80, 17.20 & 10.00% respectively in 2006. This data is enough to focus on condition of farmers in India.

9.8 Other reason: In addition to the all above reasons lack of basic infrastructural facilities like safe drinking water, inadequate health facilities, transport facilities, proper food, cloth and shelter affects on psychological and physical condition of the farmers. Sometimes they become drug addicted and drunker. All these things attracted heavy diseases and turn them to die.

10. Remedies to avoid farmers suicides

The above natural and manmade calamities forces farmers to commit suicides. We cannot avoid natural calamities but we can give relief & control on manmade calamities by taking following measures:

10.1 Financial Help: to avoid farmers suicide Government of India and concern state governments must give subsidies to the farmers. while delivering these subsidies preference must be given to marginal and small farmers. they should get free of cost hybrid seeds as they have small piece of productive land. If they have given subsidies for the same. It should be given in cash and before the sowing seeds. Which will help to avoid malpractices and corruption in distribution of seeds and subsidies. In addition to this while deciding small and marginal farmers farming of total family is taken into consideration instead of single landholders of each family.

10.2 Effective loan schemes: The government should establish special system while providing loan to farmers. Every Nationalize and co-operative bank including Agriculture co-operative credit societies must setup this system in their banks to provide loan to the farmers on time and as per their requirements. At the same time loans should be provided at low rate of interest. So that farmers should not be exploited and not discriminated by private moneylenders and creditors.

10.3 Effective loan waiving scheme: After consideration of high numbers of farmers suicides; In 2004, government of India and concern states also declared packages of thousands of crore rupees for relief to farmers & avoid their suicides. But the benefits of the same were not reached to families of suicide affected farmers. so their condition is remain the same. And farmers suicides are continued and even increasing day by day. E.g. according to the data of year 2007, out of the total 34 lacs farmers of Vidarbha region 95% of farmers of B.T. Cotton were in debt. Which means needy farmers didn't get the benefits of such relief packages. And package of 1075 crore from chief minister of Maharashtra and 3075 crore from Prime Minister of India, failed to control farmers suicides in Maharashtra. So instead of giving packages concern governments should directly deposits money to the bank accounts of the farmers instead of waiving loans.

10.4 Export policies: The Government of India and Concern state governments always make bias and takes irresponsible decision in export of Agricultural products. They use to ban on export of agricultural products when their prices are high. This is resulted to more supply in local market and falling in prices. So farmers don't get proper return of their produces. So, the government should implement quota system for every farmer for export, to avoid these practices while framing export policies.

10.5 Irrigation facilities: Indian farmers facing problems of irrigation. Geographical condition in India is varied for every region. Some regions facing problem of heavy rainfall and some regions are comes under drought prone area. Due to failure of water management heavy rainfall area and drought prone area also facing problems of irrigation in rainy as well as off rain season like summer. Indian agriculture policy makers

intentionally neglected this important fact. Farmers in India are using traditional methods for irrigation, which consumes more water than actually requirements and farmers don't get water for irrigation as per their requirements in off rain seasons & in droughts. So methods like Drip irrigation must be used to overcome on saving & fulfillment of required water for agricultural productions.

10.6 Policy about MRPs: According to the Agricultural policy of GOI, it is binding on concern state government to declare MRPs of all agricultural products before the agricultural production comes out. But till 2010, all state governments have declared MRPs less than the cost of all agricultural products. So, GOI and concern state governments must declare MRPs which at least gives minimum profit or follow a policy of MRP which is Cost of Production + 30%.

10.7 Other Remedies: In addition to above measures GOI and all concern state governments must help to farmers for development of allied activities of Agriculture and support for farmers oriented small scale and agri-products industries. This helps to increase standard of living, solve financial problems and fulfill their basic, safety and prestigious needs.

Conclusion

An analysis and interpretation of the above data shows that, the GOI and concern state governments have totally neglected agricultural sector and its allied activities. It also fails to take effective measures and its effective implementation, which is resulted in farmers suicides, which are continuously increased in last 15 years and rate of farmers suicides is considerably increased for the period 2006-2010.

- *Small Farmers: less than 2 hectares of land, Marginal farmers: less than 1 hectare of land*

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