



# Causes and suggestions of farmers suicide in Marathwada region of Maharashtra state

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was observed with the objective to study the causes of selected victims and to document the suggestions for preventing suicide of farmers. The data from victims (12) were collected with help of interview schedule. The result of the case studies pointed out that causes of suicide are complex as are the causes of any social phenomenon. Many factors combine to causes, one particular individual to diverts his aggression upon himself in the form of suicide. Suicide of farmers were not a random or pointless act in study area on the country ,it was adopted by the deceased farmers to escape from various problem or crisis that were invariably causing intense suffering to them.

Agriculture provides the principal means of livelihood for over 60 per cent of India's population. Despite a steady decline in its share to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), agriculture remains the largest economic sector in the country. It means 20 per cent income is distributed among 60 per cent population which is unjust. In 1988-89 *i.e.* prior to introduction of financial sector reforms, growth rate in agriculture in India was 15.4 per cent which has come down to 2.5 per cent in 2010-11. Due to ever increasing population and division of families the farmland has undergone rapid fragmentation. For these categories of farmers cost of production by way of farm inputs has increased manifold over the year, while the productivity of the land remained at the same level and sale price of farm produce has not commensurately increased. These factors have driven farmers to the debt trap and have caused distress leading to suicide. Hence a comprehensive study for identification of real causes and setting aside the rhetoric's has been undertaken with the objectives to study the causes of suicide of selected victims and to document the suggestions for preventing suicide of farmers.

Present research investigation was carried out in two purposively selected districts namely Jalna and Aurangabad

of Marathwada region of Maharashtra state. The present study was based on case study research design. Families of farmers who had committed suicide during January 2007 to December 2009 in the Jalna and Aurangabad districts. For the collection of data; structured interview schedule in the local language Marathi was prepared. The interview schedule so developed was pre-tested for accuracy, simplicity and practicability.

In Table A figures ( ) indicate the number of farmers' suicide cases valid for compensation.

**Table A : Yearwise farmers' suicide in Jalna and Aurangabad districts**

Districts	Year	2007	2008	2009	Total
Jalna		24(18)	20(13)	2(1)	46(32)
Aurangabad		16(13)	16(16)	10(1)	42(26)
Total		40(31)	36(25)	12(2)	88(58)

Source:-Districts collector office (Jalna and Aurangabad)

The results obtained from the present study are summarized below according to objectives of the study:

**Causes of suicide:**

The suicide is complex social and psychological phenomenon Kamthe (2007) reported that the poverty, unemployment, loneliness, social and economic insecurity and conflict in inter personal relation are the important social factors contributing to suicide, whereas psychologically, the suicide prone persons experience mental distress because of certain crisis situation. Identified socio-psychological risk factors of suicide are given below :

- Increased indebtedness
- Drop in economic status
- Hopelessness due to crop failure
- Introvertness
- Change in behavior before incident due to stressful life events
- Daughter/sisters of marriageable age
- Family member's chronic illness/ Handicappedness.
- Alcohol use disorder
- Deceased having health problem
- Depressed due to land
- Disputes with money lender
- Decreased self esteem
- Disputes/quarrel with the family members
- Psychological effect of suicide in the adjoining villages
- Depression due to over unemployment after education
- Disputes with neighbors or others
- Death of family member
- Family history of suicide/suicide attempt
- Disgraceful event
- Given verbal clues of suicide
- Suicide by close friend
- Non children

The above findings are in conformity with findings of Kamthe (2007), Kale (2008) and Rajput (2009).

**Suggestions for preventing suicides:**

Obtaining suggestions for avoiding present spate of suicide on ground reality is one of the objectives of this study. The suggestions of family members of the deceased farmers have been noted and they are :

- Providing remunerative prices to farm produce
- Providing/creating irrigation facilities
- Crop insurance
- Immediate government help in natural calamities and in case of losses by wild animals
- Undisrupted electric supply for farming
- Family counseling for building self-confidence through local leaders/social workers
- Complete waiving of old loans in case of crop failure

- Creation of subsidiary occupations and other income sources
- Providing critical information about agricultural technology
- Complete ban on alcohol and gambling
- Encouraging mass marriage system in society
- Timely employment by creating nonfarm employment opportunities
- Strict vigil on the quality of inputs in the market
- Provision of easy, timely and sufficient institutional credit at low interest rate

The present findings are in line with the findings reported by Kamthe (2007), Kale (2008) and Rajput (2009).

**Implications:**

The victims under case study were either illiterate or low educated. Therefore, it implies to take social measure for provision of quality education as well as higher education to children, which can develop socially and psychologically sound persons able to face hardship and distress.

There is an urgent need to provide remunerative prices to farmers in consonance with the cost of cultivation.

Presently most of the farmers depend on external inputs involving high initial cost which the small and marginal farmers may not be able to offer. Hence, they borrow more loans. This warrants reducing dependency of farmers on extend inputs. It is therefore; suggested the intensity efforts for implementing seed village concept, use of biofertilizers, FYM, organic insecticide, green manuring, vermicompost etc.

Rainfed farming is most vulnerable to vagaries of nature, probably they take only *Kharif* crops. If the crops fail the farmers become incapable of paying back the loan. Hence, it is suggested to provide crop insurance facilities with low premium afforded by the farmers for all crops and to all farmers. Secondly the insurance unit should be reduced to individual villages.

It was observed that in most of the cases of suicide the disturbed unrestful behaviour was observed which was not noticed by family members due to ignorance. It is therefore suggested that rural people may be trained to identify such behaviour and take such patients to psychiatrists for counseling.

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