



A Case Study

Causes and remedies of farmers suicide in Marathwada region of Maharashtra state

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SUMMARY : Recently the phenomenon of suicides of the farmers in Marathwada and other part of the country is one of the most tragic events in the history of India. In Marathwada particularly in low rainfall and low irrigation tracts, farmer's suicides have been happening in droves and the frightening phenomenon continues to persist and recur year after year, without any signs of abatement, hence, this issue has been an important among thinkers, researcher and social workers. The data from twelve respondents were collected from Parbhani and Beed district with the help of interview schedule. The results of the case studies pointed out that the causes of suicide are complex as are the causes of any social phenomenon. The main causes behind suicides found were indebtedness, low productivity, crop failure, low income, more expenditure than income and inability to fulfill family requirements. Majority family members of the deceased farmers suggested for remunerative prices to their farm produce, complete waiving of old loans, immediate Govt. help in natural calamities, provision of irrigation facilities, sound infrastructure facilities for agriculture, creation of subsidiary occupation and other income sources and provision of labours at cheaper rate as the important measures to be taken to prevent the recurrence of suicide tragedies.

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KEY WORDS :

Farmers suicide,
Prevent suicide

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

“Jay Jawan jai Kisan” - Lal Bahadur Shastri. This slogan of a visionary Late Prime minister has lost its potential over the time. After independence, according to Gandhiji's vision of Gram Swaraj, villages and specially farmers were to be the main focus of any development plan of India. As years pass by, agriculture as an industry lost its importance for policy makers of India. This over the time caused severe distress among the farmers leading to recent dramatic rise in number of suicides among farmers community. Every day in newspaper invariably there is news related to farmers' suicide.

According to National Crime Record Bureau, in all over India since from 1995 to 2010 total 2,56,913 farmers committed suicide. In first eight year *i.e.* from 1995 to 2002 total 1, 21, 157 farmers committed suicide and in second (2nd) eight year total 1, 35, 756 farmers committed suicide. In

Maharashtra state, since from 1995 to 2010. Total 50,481 farmers committed suicide.

As suicide is a complex, social and psychological phenomenon, which factors are mostly responsible for suicides in Vidarbha and Marathwada region and which factors should have to be taken for study is big question among researchers. However Singh (2005) pointed that causes of suicide as are the causes of any social phenomenon. Many factors combine to causes on particular individual (and not other) to divert his aggression open himself in the form of suicide.

Today the dependence on agriculture is largely among marginal and small farmers and agricultural labours. These groups also bear the chief impact of non availability of irrigation water and it is associated with yield uncertainty. Unemployment is also becoming chief problem due to mechanization, dryland farming, less agriculture allied agencies or business liking of the national market with international market as

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also increase in price uncertainty particularly in crops like cotton and sugarcane. The absence of formal rural financial market also leads to a dependence on informal sources like money lenders with greater interest burden.

In recent years, a larger agrarian crisis, particularly in low rainfall and low irrigation tracts of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra has precipitated a spate of suicide death among farmers. This is now public policy concern and has also been scholarly attention.

Present study was carried out with the objectives to study the causes of suicide of selected victims and to document the suggestions to prevent suicide in victims household.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The study was undertaken in Parbhani and Beed district of Marathwada region of Maharashtra state, as these are suicide hit districts in Marathwada region during last five years and as such type of study was not conducted so far in this districts. The present study was based on case study research design. The data about suicide cases for year 2007 to 2009 was collected. Among these three year, 2007 was selected in which maximum suicides occurred.

Accordingly six respondents from each district, (Thus total twelve suicidal farmers) were selected by random method of sampling, who committed suicide during 1st January 2007 to 31st December 2007 and had declared as a legal victims by district level committee headed by collector of the Parbhani and Beed district for allotting compensation of Rs. 1 lakh and their family members had got Rs 1 lakh. In this study respondents were the households of selected victims.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Some observed causes of suicide were:

Increasing cost of cultivation and unavailability of labours:

An increase in the cost of cultivation and the unavailability of the labour is one of the main cause of farmers suicide.

Low productivity:

Another cause was the low production. In spite of the farmers hard work the production of the crop was low which is also one of the basic cause of farmers suicide.

Unacceptability of sugarcane by sugar factories:

Unacceptability of sugarcane by sugar factories and the low payment also lead to farmers suicide.

Crop failure :

Sometimes failure in crop cultivation is due to natural

calamity or imputency of seeds, the cultivation of crop is not sufficient. This also leads to farmers suicide.

Indebtedness and low income:

Indebtness of the farmers lead to farmers suicide. The farmers are indebted because of low income from farming. Due to low income the farmers have to face many social and financial problems. Marriage of their daughters, much expenditure than income, daily dispute in family, alcohol addiction, inability to fulfill the requirements of the family members leads to farmers suicide.

Inability of loan repayment:

Continuous pressure from money lenders and bank people for the payment of the loans and their inability to repay the loan complete, farmers to commit suicide.

These findings are in the line of Singh (2005), Sainath (2006) and Kale (2008).

Suggestions given by the family members to prevent suicide are:

To waiv of the old loans completely. Farmers should get loan at low interest. Government should provide sound infracture facilities for agriculture. Mass marriage of the daughters of the farmers should be incurred in society. Government should give immediate help in times of natural calamities. Government should supply good quality seeds to the farmers. Alcohol and gambling should be completely banned. Along with farming subsidiary occupation and other income sources should also be created. Government should also provide good irrigation facilities. Timely employment should be created by non-form employment opportunities. Remunerative prices should be given to the farm produce. Laboures should be provided at cheaper rates. Constant or regular electric supply should be provided at cheaper rates. Information about agriculture technology should be available to the farmers from time to time.

– Government should stop National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA) during seasonal periods (during rainy and winter season) for availability of labour for agriculture.

These findings are in accordance with findings of Mehta (2007) and Gill (2004).

Conclusion:

On the basis of the results of the study it can be concluded that indebtedness, low productivity, crop failure, more expenditure than income, tension of daughter's marriage and continuous pressure from money lenders and banks people for repayment etc. were the major causes of suicide of selected victims. Important suggestions for preventing suicides were complete waiving of old loans, immediate government help in natural calamities, remunerative prices for

the farm produced, sound infrastructure facilities for agriculture, creation of irrigation facilities and subsidiary occupation and motivation of farmers towards mass marriage system.

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