



Farmers Suicide: A Short Overview of Vidharbha in Maharashtra State

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ABSTRACT

The present paper highlights on vidharbha regions introduction, objectives of the paper and causes of farmers suicides, as well as greatness of the problems in vidharbha. We have studied in short the burden of debtness on farmers and percentage ratio of expenditure on agriculture in five year plan. We have compared trends of the numbers of farmer suicides in India and Maharashtra. At last we have given recommendation in the paper. The present study also uses secondary data.

Keywords :

Introduction:

Agriculture forms the backbone of the Indian economy. Despite 60 years of planned development of industries in India, agriculture and agrarian activities are still the mainstay of livelihood of nearly 70% of the country's population which lives in rural area. But the secondary and tertiary sector in India are growing at rapid rates, still the vast majority of Indian continues to depend on agriculture.

"Jai Jawan ,Jai Kisan" This slogan of a visionary Prime Minister had lost its potential over the time. After the independence, but according to Gandhiji's vision of Grame-Swaraj, villages and specially farmers were to be the main focus of any development plan of India. As year passed, 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 resent dramatic rise in the number of suicide among farmer community. Every day in National news paper invariably there is news related to farmer's suicide. Farmer suicides are not only reported in Vidharbha of Maharashtra but also from Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka.

If we have seen in context of rural economy in Maharashtra still depend on agriculture and industries based on agriculture. Due to the frequent infertility, capriciousness of nature and consequent crop failure attraction for agriculture business is decreasing day by day. Frequent incidents of suicide by farmers has attracted the attention of Government and thinkers. 2400 farmers committed suicide during the period of June 2001 to 30 oct 2006, in Maharashtra, majority of them belonging to the Vidharbha province. According to the claims of Vidharbha movement committee, 1000 farmers committed suicide, within 17 months during the period of June 2005 to 20 oct 2006. In Yeotmal district 261 farmers committed suicides, 186 in Amravati, 113 in Akola, 112 in Washim, 128 in Buldana, 80 in Wardha, 32 in Nagpure, 35 in Chandrapure, 28 in bhandara, 10 in Garhchiroli and in Gondiya district But according to eminent sociologist Emil Durkhin mental weakness is not only psychological factor which compels farmers to commit suicide, but the social factor is the only thing which compels them to commit suicide.

Objectives:

- 1) To study effect of debtness on farmers.
- 2) To search reason of farmers suicide in social and economical context.
- 3) To check the implementation five year planning expenditure.
- 4) On the basis of findings of the study suggest some ways to improve their facilities.

Greatness of the problem in Vidharbha:

The number of farmers committing suicide in India is more than twice of the total number of suicides being committed in the 100 countries on the suicides list. If we see the population of Vidharbha is 12 lakhs. So number of suicides should be around 116 per year. But according to vidharbha Jan Andolan Samiti. Suicides in Vidharbha is 600 in 2007 till June, 1065 in 2006, 572 in 2005, 620 in 2004, 170 in 2003 and 122 in 2002. These figures definitely suggest suicides rate in Vidharbha is high since 2002 in comparison to National suicides figure. A total of 7000 farmers have committed suicide during the Last three years. That is an average of over six farmers committing suicide in Vidharbha in the last 3-4 years has already crossed 2500 causing a great anxiety.

In 2008 till April alone there were 26 claims, as compared to 29 in 2004, 26 in 2005, 154 in 2006 and 128 in 2007. Subsequently Hon. P.M. Manmohan Singh visited Vidharbha and promised packaged of Rs. 11000 crores to be spent by Government in Vidharbha. This figure kept on varying, depending on how much pressure the Government was facing from the media and the opposition parties for being uncaring toward the farmer's plight.

The Burdon of Debtness on Farmers:

Debt of farmers has been increasing day by day. Due to the many causing they are going to face that big problem. As a result most of farmers have to take loan from private money-lenders on high interest rate up to 2 to 10% per month. So there is an old saying in Marathi 'Fles Meslekeâjer keâpee&leÙe pevcelees DeefCe keâpee&leÙe cejCe heeJelees' which means "Farmer takes the birth in debt and die in the same condition" This was the position of farmers before independence and it still continues after 60 years of independence. If we analyze the suicide by farmers in Maharashtra it is revealed that it is higher in vidarbha region of the state where farmers preferred cultivation of "white gold" i.e. cotton –a risky venture that suffered due to non-availability of quality seeds coupled with farmers or incapacity to buy costly. BT cotton seeds. They could also not get remunerative price for their produce. So they have fall prey to the debtness.

Percentage ratio of expenditure on agriculture in five year plan:

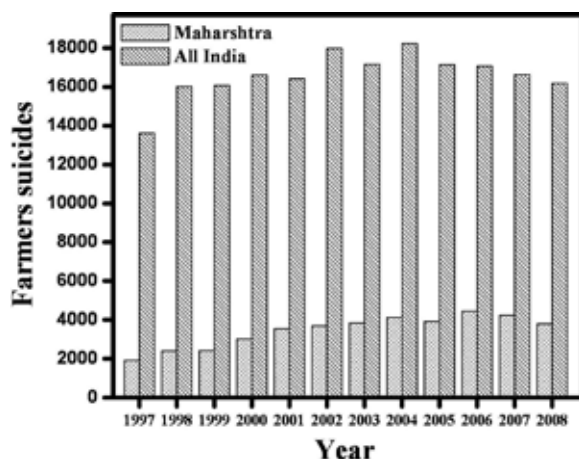
Sr. no	Five year plans	Percentage ratio of total expenditure with agriculture expenditure
1	Ist five year plan	31.00
2	IInd five year plan	20.00

3	IIIrd five year plan	20.00
4	IVth five year plan	24.00
5	Vth five year plan	20.00
6	VIth five year plan	13.90
7	VIIth five year plan	05.00
8	VIIIth five year plan	12.67
9	IXth five year plan	19.40
10	Xth five year plan	03.95

International referred Research Journal Vol- Issue 8 RNI: RA-JBIL/2009/30097

It is clear from above table that a considerable amount of money was earmarked for agriculture, but in latter five year plans agriculture business was neglected and less expenditure had been earmarked on agriculture development. As a result, agriculture business was pushed to the backward, due to this, the condition of farmers deteriorating day by day. India is called as an agriculture country but actually only 10 % national and annual income is acquired from the agriculture business. More than 65% people still depend on agriculture. Because of the controversial policies of planners Indian farmers pulled into economic complexity.

Trends of Farmers suicides in India and Maharashtra:



Source: Indian Streams research journal Volume I Issue 1 Feb., 2011.

In above chart suicide of farmers in Maharashtra and in All India in the period from 1997 to 2008 is given. Maharashtra is known as progressive and developed state but on other side number of farmers suicide is maximum in India because the average of farmers suicide in Maharashtra is 3450.33 which is more than other states. All India average 165943 has more than Maharashtra but the total of Maharashtra 41404 farmers suicide.

The Causes of farmer's suicides are both economic and social. The economic causes are :

- 1) Growing Expenditure, specially on bought inputs
- 2) Low productivity.
- 3) Inadequate prices of agriculture produce.
- 4) Difficulties in marketing hazards.

- 5) Natural hazards caused by drought.
- 6) Absence of proper crop planning.
- 7) Unsatisfactory agriculture credit.

Among the social cause are.

- 1) The drinking habit which atrophies the productivity of the farmers.
- 2) Extravagant expenditure on marriages.
- 3) Bad health and illness and inability to meet the necessary expenditure on medicine and health service.

Conclusion:-

Timely and adequate support by way of credit to farmers with focusing small and marginal farmers to have them modern equipment for improved agriculture productivity. Adoption of upgraded technology inputs along with provision of infrastructure like power at subsidies cost supply of inputs, like seeds, fertilizers and credit provision through all nationalized banks. Thus poverty of Indian farmers is subject of research and deep thinking. Sincere implementation of these welfare scheme by the government and favourable response to these governmental efforts on the part of the farmer will undoubtedly bring golden days for Indian farming. But as well as if the facilities will provides to farmers by the centrals and state government they may be achieve self – sufficiency in agriculture production. There is need for major review of agriculture policy to meet the changing needs of both producers and consumers.

Remedies:

Following remedies should be implemented to change the miserable conditions of farmers in India and Vidharbha.

- 1) Removing Irrigation Backlog. Because lack of irrigation they have to depend on capriciousness of nature as a result many time they have to face famine.
- 2) Farmer should be provide loan at 2% interest rate from co-operative bank by Government.
- 3) Minimum support price mechanism for agriculture produce should appropriate with consideration increase in agriculture inputs.
- 4) Storage facilities for agriculture products. Store house should be established at Taluka as well as rural level to put an end to the exploitation of farmers by traders.
- 5) Improve infrastructure for crop market and the post harvest management of the produce.
- 6) Government should make legal provision about crop insurance because they need farmers can take money.
- 7) Fundamental policy changes to factor in the fluctuating production cost in the minimum support price mechanism.
- 8) Government should provide goods seeds & fertilisers to need farmers in good quality in sufficient money.
- 9) Analyze the relationship between cost and markets prices and suggest appropriate and timely interventions by the states and central government in order to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers.
- 10) Health improvement programme, medicines and other health care facilities should be provided at rural level in lower rate.

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