



PERCEPTION OF GROUNDNUT FARMERS ON VARIOUS CAUSES FOR SUICIDE IN RAYALASEEMA REGION

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Abstract

The studies outside India have identified farming as a high stress profession that is associated with a higher suicide rate than the general population. This is particularly true among small scale farmers and after periods of economic distress. Their review claims a wide range of reasons behind farmer's suicide globally including mental health issues, physical environment, family problems, economic stress and uncertainties. The studies not concentrated on the measures taken or to be taken for the prevention of farmer's suicides. The literature which addresses farmer suicides in India is focused mostly on listing socioeconomic causes and state-level policy recommendations rather than addressing the mechanisms behind the rise in suicides. The Indian studies reviewed above were made during the crisis period and were neither intensive nor extensive and were made to grasp the crux of the crisis and to enable the government to rush with intervention to stem the problem. These studies have examined relatively smaller samplers and brought out generalizations. The very fact occurrence of farmers' suicides even now, even after these studies and interventions, only point that these studies had not grasped through reality of farmers' suicide in its totality and the governmental interventions that were initiated had not stemmed the suicides. These studies have also not gone into the issue of how the families of the farmers are coping up with suicides of their bread winners. Any effective intervention should not only try to prevent any further suicide among the farmers and also suicides among the family members of the farmers.

Key words: *Agricultural Farmers, Suicides.*

Introduction

India is an agrarian country with around 48.9 per cent of its people depending directly or indirectly upon agriculture. Nowadays the problem of farmers' suicides is one of the vital concerns that need to be addressed by the Government. Considering the paramount importance of this issue, the NCRB for the first time, has collected detailed data on farmers' suicides.

Farmers include those who own and work on field (viz. cultivators) as well as those who employ/hire workers for field work/framing activities. IT excludes agricultural labourers. A total of 5650 farmers have committed suicides during 2014, accounting for 4.3 per cent of total suicide victims in the country.

Causes farmers suicides in India

Bankruptcy or indebtedness and family problems are major causes of suicides, accounting for 20.6 per cent and 20.1 per cent respectively of total farmers' suicides during 2014. The other prominent causes of farmers' suicides were failure of crop, illness and drug abuse/alcoholic addiction.

Land holding status of farmers who have committed suicide in India

As per land holding status, farmers have been classified in four categories namely marginal farmers, small farmers, medium farmers and large farmers. Land holding status of farmers who committed

suicide female that 44.5 per cent and 27.9 per cent of victim farmers were small farmers and marginal farmers respectively, they together accounted for 72.4 per cent total farmers suicides. 53.1 per cent and 14.5 per cent of small farmers who committed suicides were reported in Maharashtra and Telangana respectively during 2014. Among the marginal farmers, 39.7 per cent and 25.5 per cent respectively of farmer's suicide were reported in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. However, 47.3 per cent well off farmers who have committed suicides were also reported in Maharashtra during 2014. Majority of the victims belong to 30 years & above –below 60 years of age group accounting for 65.7 per cent of total farmer's suicide during 2014.

Research Gaps

The studies outside India have identified farming as a high stress profession that is associated with a higher suicide rate than the general population. This is particularly true among small scale farmers and after periods of economic distress. Their review claims a wide range of reasons behind farmer's suicide globally including mental health issues, physical environment, family problems, economic stress and uncertainties. The studies not concentrated on the measures takes or to be taken for the prevention of farmer's suicides. The literature which addresses farmer suicides in India is focused mostly on listing socioeconomic causes and state- level policy recommendations rather than addressing the mechanisms behind the rise in suicides. The Indian studies reviewed above were made during the crisis period and were neither intensive nor extensive and were made to grasp the crux of the crisis and to tenable the government to rush with intervention to stem the problem. These studies have examined relatively smaller samplers and brought out generalizations. The very fact occurrence of farmers' suicides even now, even after these studies and interventions, only point that these studies had not grasped through reality of farmers' suicide in its totality and the governmental interventions that were initiated had not stemmed the suicides. These studies have also not gone into the issue of how the families of the farmers are coping up with suicides of their bread winners. Any effective intervention should not only try to prevent any further suicide among the farmers and also suicides among the family members of the farmers. In a country, where more than 70 per cent of the population, are dependent on agriculture, suicide of the farmers cannot be ignored as individual's response to distress. Looking large in the coming decades is the agriculture running into much more deeper crises owing to economic and ecological factors, in the coming decades, there is a need for a deeper understanding of the suicides of the farmers and also the coping up mechanisms of the families of the farmers. Hence, the present study is focusing on only ground nut farmers because of large size of the farmers in Anantapuramu district have been cultivating ground.

Objectives of the Study

1. To make an analytical study of farmers suicide in Indian agriculture sector
2. To discuss various causes and consequences of farmer suicide

Sample Design

For in depth study on the role of central and state governments to mitigate farmer's suicides multi-stage random sampling method was followed. In the first stage all four drought ridden district in Anantapuramu district of Rayalaseema Region. In the second stage the marginal, small, medium and big farmer's family members who have cultivated ground nut crop have selected on the basis of landholdings deceased farmers. The third stage was concerned with the selection of farmer's family members. It is decided to select 100 farmers from each category from this district. In all 400 farmer's family members were selected for an in-depth study.

Relevance of the Study

A large number of cases of farmers' suicides have been reported in Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema region in particular over the last decade. These suicides are considered to be symbolic of the deeper agrarian crisis. Many factors have been attributed for this case. Most prominent ones are growing indebtedness, crop failure, drought etc. These have been coupled with socio-psychological problems like break-up of joint family system etc. The governments of the day have accepted occurrence of farmers' suicides as a fact. In fact, the government of Andhra Pradesh from 2004 onwards declares as special package to the bereaved farmer's families. But these packages and other initiatives taken by the central and state governments failed to arrest the ever-increasing suicides of farmers in the study area. These issues are very much pertinent for evolving suitable agrarian policy. Farmers' suicides are not isolated cases of deaths by individuals but symptoms of larger agrarian crisis, which need to be addressed urgently. Hence, this topic was taken for study for an in-depth analysis and for formulating suitable policy measures.

Sources of Data

Primary Data

For evaluating the specific objectives of the study, necessary primary data have been obtained from the families selected suicide farmers, through personal interviews with the help of well-structured interview schedule. The data collected from the respondents includes general information about suicide farmers, their resources position, land holding, cropping pattern, debt condition, sources of income, asset position, sources of credit, purpose of credit, mental status of person, addictions, if any, reasons for suicide and any other information family wished to share etc. The researcher has interacted with the next of kin of the deceased in the family and also other members of the family. The method of personal interview have adopted to ensure that the data obtained from the respondents were relevant, comprehensive and reasonably correct and precise.

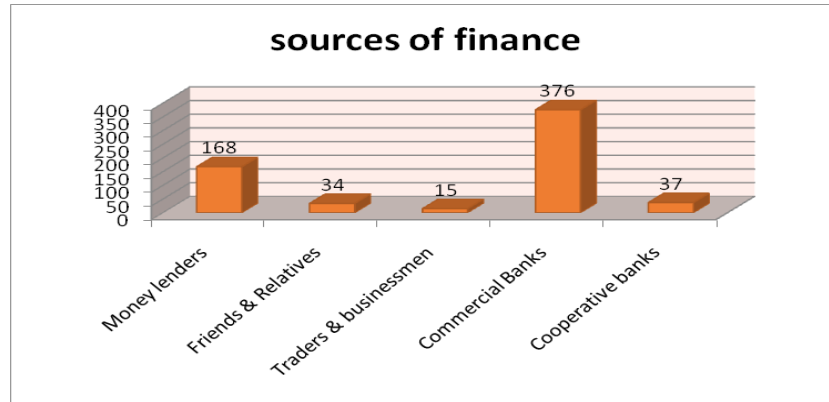
Secondary Date

Secondary date on the number of suicide case in the districts will be collected from the collect orates and joint director of agriculture office of Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. The data relating to total number of cases reported, cases eligible for compensation and actual compensation paid were collected from national crime records bureau, New Delhi.

Table 1, Sources of finance for selected farmers in the study area

S.No	Sources	Yes	No
1	Money lenders	168	232
2	Friends & Relatives	34	366
3	Traders & businessmen	15	385
4	Commercial Banks	376	24
5	Cooperative banks	37	363

Source: Field Survey



Micro finance/credit is very important role in every agricultural farmers in developing countries like India. Agricultural farmers are suffering from their productivity because of there is no using new technology, machineries and methods due to lack of finance. Hence, agricultural farmers are depends on various sources like money lenders, friends & relatives, traders & business men, commercial banks and cooperatives banks etc.

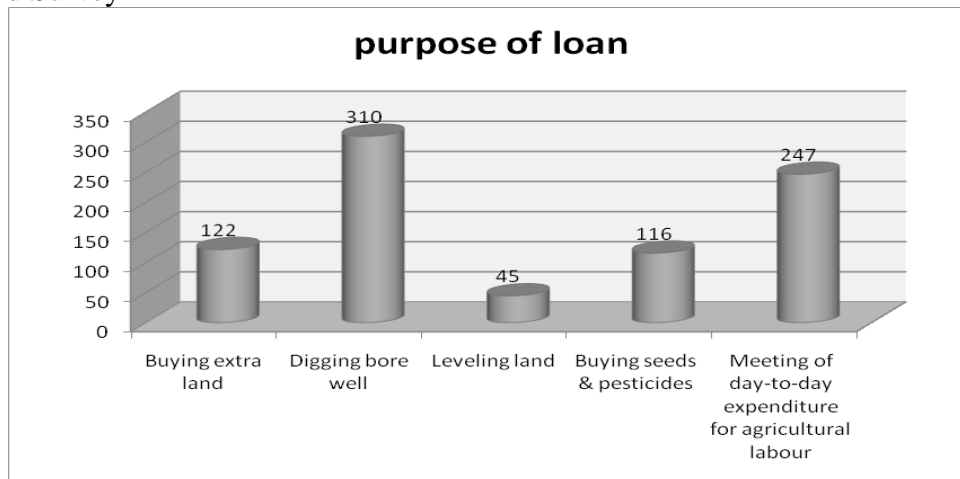
Hence, the researcher raised some question to the victims family member about the sources of finance is presented and analyzed 1 table. It is found that majority of the victim farmers were availing loans from the commercial banks (376), followed by money lenders (168), cooperative banks (37), Friends and relatives (34) and traders & business men (15) respectively.

It is found that too much of debt is one of the reasons of illness, psychological depression, for committed suicide in the study area.

Table 2, Purpose of loan of selected victim farmers

S.No	Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
1	Buying extra land	122	30.5
2	Digging bore well	310	77.5
3	Leveling land	45	11.25
4	Buying seeds & pesticides	116	29.00
5	Meeting of day-to-day expenditure for agricultural labour	247	62.00

Source: Field Survey



After availing loan/debt amount can be used for various activities like purchase of land, digging of bore well, development of land, buying the agricultural seed and pesticides and meeting the daily agricultural expenses like labour etc. It is evident from the study that, table 2 presented and analysed credit/loan amount used for various activities of the select victim farmer families in the Anantapuramu district of Rayalaseema region in Andhra Pradesh. It is found that 77.5 per cent of victim farmers have taken the loan amount for digging bore wells, 62 per cent represent 247 victim farmers availing loan for meeting day-to-day agricultural expenditure labour, 30.5 per cent of the victim farmers got loan amount/debt amount for buying extra land, buying seed/pesticides by the victim farmers through the debt amount and 11 percent of victim farmers used loan amount for levelling & development of their land in the study area.

Table 3 ,Details of water source of irrigation of selected study area

S.No	Sources	Frequency	Percentage
1	Bore well	268	67.00
2	Well	48	12.00
3	Canal	60	15.00
4	Public tank	24	06.00
	Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey

The table shows that the various sources of water for irrigation of various agricultural crops by the selected victim farmers in Anantapuramu district of Rayalaseema region. Sufficient water can be required to all agricultural crops at any place. Hence the researcher has addressed a question and collected information from the sample families and presented in table 3. It is found from the table that, out four hundred sample respondents, 67 per cent of the sample respondent have cultivated their crops by the bore wells, 15 per cent of the sample respondents have used water by the canal, 12 per cent of the sample victim farmer families have stated that they used water from the well for cultivation purpose, and only 6 per cent of the sample victim families have been used by the public tank in the study area. It can be concluded from the study that majority of the sample respondents have used bore wells, and canal for cultivation of their land.

Conclusions

The Indian economy is depending on agricultural sector, hence, the both central and state government has been focusing on development of agricultural sector. But various natural factors, seeds, financial institutions, failure of borewells, and failure of crop and seeds. The present study shows that various reasons behind the suicide of groundnut farmers in Rayalaseema region. The author suggested that the government will provide and implement effective insurance plan, provide quality seeds with credit based, and also fixed price of various agricultural products. These practices were implemented by government or NGOs – we have to save the life of agricultural farmers as well of the society people.

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