



Short Review Paper

A Study on the Causes and Consequences of Farmers' Suicides in India

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Abstract

This paper study on the causes and consequences of farmer's suicide, where in the recent past massive suicides were going on in India mostly in Maharashtra and Telangana State. Since Independence in India the contribution of agriculture share to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been declining, which itself shows that the government and administration had collectively deliberately neglected the agriculture sector. Every Indian feels proud to say that we live in a very large agricultural society where more than 65% of the families depend on this sector. But it is extremely brutal and negligence of government because there was no structured administration and very less in number of human resource in agriculture & its allied sectors to assist, sustain and encourage farmers to overcome the difficulties they face in farming. Services like soil test, proper guidance, crop information, productive seeds, new agriculture techniques, and awareness on mixed crop cultivation were not provided minimally to the farmers. The study analyzed and understood that most of the suicide farmers in India are the farmers who practiced only one crop cultivation and are not aware of mixed crop farming. Also, due to less concentration on courses of agriculture and its allied sectors which is resulting insufficient human resource personal and poor utilization of mechanizations in agriculture sector. Giving more priority to agricultural courses like diploma in agriculture, farm mechanization and others will help the farmers in future in resolving these issues.

Keywords: Administration, Agriculture officers, Services, Agriculture courses.

Introduction

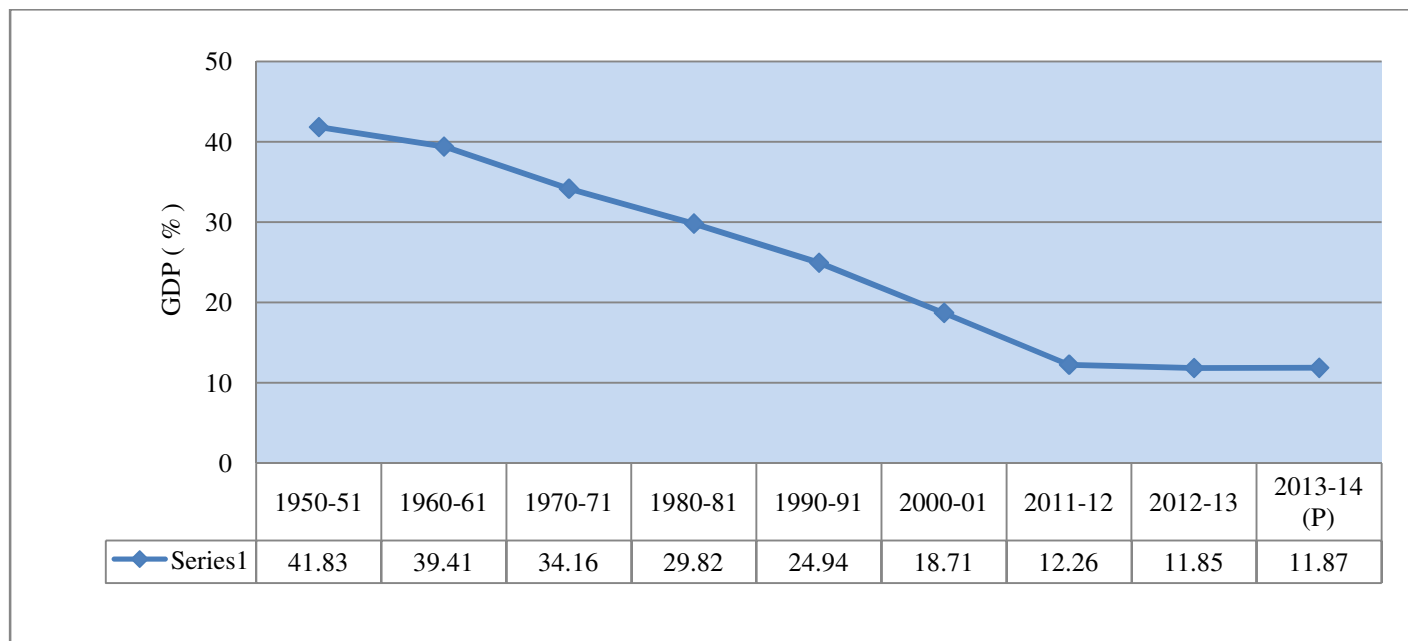
Agriculture is a term which encompasses the farming is the process of producing food, feed, fiber and other goods by the systematic raise of plants and animals. Agriculture output is a major component of the nation. In a country like India, agriculture is the backbone and the only economic source to rural population to survive on this earth. Majority of the work force can sustain, survive and able to feed their families through this agriculture sector only. The sector contributed 16.1 % to the overall Gross Value Added in 2014-15 (based on 2011-12 prices under new series). Apart from the economic indicators, the sector is the most vital for social security in terms of the food and nutrition and the employment that it provides to the large population and rural workforce¹. Now, the back bone of Indian economy is in menace further leading to farmer's suicide.

As per Census 2011, total number of cultivators in India is 118.81 million and 144.3 million agricultural laborers where a total of 263.14 million people directly and indirectly involved in the agriculture and its allied activities. The agricultural production in the country has been increasing over the years, except in the years of adverse weather, rainfall, temperature conditions, etc., and there is no evidence to suggest that the Government's efforts to enhance crop yields have led to stripping of small farmers of their self-sufficiency.

Neglected Sector

GDP – Gross Domestic product which indicates the monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific period – where agriculture in India having much production and a major occupation that should have a high GDP growth rates in a developing society. But the Figure-1 shows us the deliberate negligence of the governments and administration towards growth in agriculture sector, where during the year 1950-51 the share of the GDP in agriculture sector is 53.1 % which is above half of the overall GDP growth rate had gradually a very rundown progress in the so-called developing country which is less than 15% GDP growth rate in the year 2013-14².

Countries having experience and succeeded in decreasing hunger and malnutrition project that economic growth and poverty reduction policies are only not guaranteed the achievement, where the growth also matters to it. Analysis by cross country shows that half of the poorest countries population got benefited where GDP growth was originating in agriculture than the growth generated in non-agricultural sectors. In developing countries about 75 percent of the poor live in rural areas and their livelihood fully depend from agriculture and its allied activities which can't be repudiate and surprising. Countries of agrarian societies in particular, ensured an overall growth and development due to their agriculture growth as a key role³.



Source: Central Statistical Commission, Data book for Planning Commission 22nd December, 2014

Figure-1
Total GDP (%) share in Agriculture Sector at Constant 2004-05 Prices

In present developed countries the basis for their successful transformation in economy is because of the agricultural sector. The industrial revolutions in countries like Europe and the USA and more recently to those in China, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Taiwan and other rapidly growing Asian economies was due to the agricultural sector as an originator. In course of these transformations, investment in the agriculture sector generated agricultural surpluses had shown food prices in low value and it assisted overall economic progress³.

having less than 2 hectares and 67% of them were marginal farmers (less than 1 hectare). It is to be noted that small-holder farming is the dominant feature of India's agriculture. In this system, where the majority of the peasants hold less than one hectare per household, land fragmentation has been the basic problem for agricultural development which is inefficiency⁴.

Table-2
Number of Suicides by farmers and labourers due to multiple reasons⁵

Year	No. of Suicide farmers & labourers
2013	11,772
2014	12,360
2015	2,997
2016 (as of 26/04/2016)	116
Total	27,245

Source: Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on 26th April, 2016 in Loksabha.

Table-1
Percentage of farmers based on category of land holdings

Category of Holdings	2000-01	2005-06	2010-11
Marginal (Less than 1 hectare)	62.9	64.8	67.1
Small (1.0 to 2.0 hectares)	18.9	18.5	17.9
Small-Medium (2.0 to 4.0 hectares)	11.7	10.9	10
Medium (4.0 to 10.0 hectares)	5.5	4.9	4.2
Large (10.0 hectares and above)	1	0.8	0.7

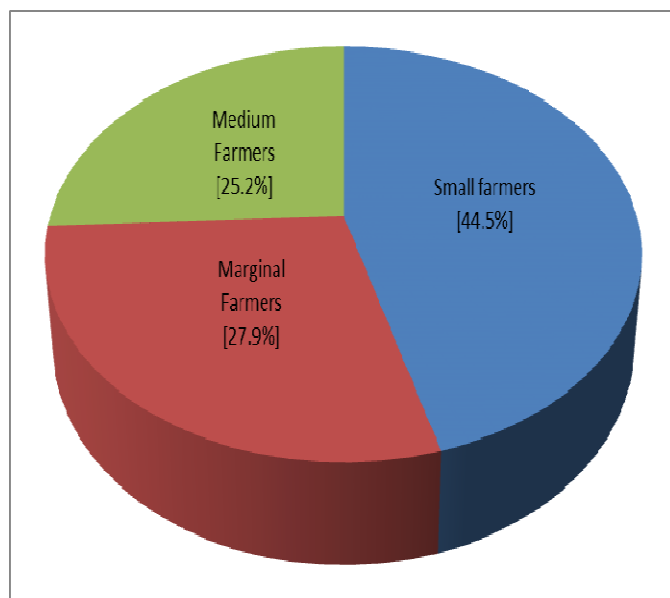
Source: Pocket Book of Agriculture Statistics 2015, Government of India.

As per land holding status, the farmers have been classified in to five categories as mentioned in the Table No.1.1 About 85% of the agriculture landholders were marginal and small farmers

Land Holding Status of Farmers who have committed Suicides

According to National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) Report 2015, the data of farmers who committed suicide revealed that 44.5% and 27.9% of farmers' suicides were small farmers and marginal farmers respectively, which is having an account of

72.4% (4,095 farmers out of 5,650) total farmer suicides. In these, 53.1% and 14.5% of small farmers who committed suicides were reported in Maharashtra (1,135 out of 2,516) and Telangana (366 out of 2,516) respectively during 2014⁶.



Source: NCRB, 2015 report

Figure-2

Land holding status of farmers Suicides Percentage share during 2014

Major causes for farmer's suicides: There are multiple reasons for farmers' suicides due to i. Gamble of monsoon, ii. Improper administrative structure and human resource constraints in agriculture sector, iii. Poor utilization of mechanization in agriculture, iv. lack of timely credit which leads to high interest rates, v. land fragmentation.

Gamble of Monsoon

Agriculture in India is dependent on rainfall and agriculture production depends upon the distribution of rainfall. Farmers keep high expectations in the monsoon seasons for their growth in agriculture, but due less or no rainfall there was a huge crop loss further pushing the farmer in to debt. This shows the gamble of monsoon in the farmer's lives pulling him/her to commit suicide.

Human resource constraints in agriculture sector

Human Resource Constraints, a sector having highest work force of more than 56% in village level in a country should have more decentralized and good administrative structure with enough human resources for providing information, creating awareness, soil tests, financial and moral support etc. The agriculture sector faces high shortages of technical and field level personnel. This problem is critical in most areas at the state, regional and the village levels. Due to illiteracy, general

socio-economic backwardness, slow progress in implementing land reforms and inadequate or inefficient finance and marketing services for farm produce which makes farmer alone in giving support and strength during crisis situation leads farmer in to depression financially and psychologically further allowing him/her to commit suicide. In order to strengthen the agriculture sector there is a dire need to create awareness and give importance to polytechnic agriculture courses among the students and educational institutions to have efficient technical personnel at field level by bridging the gap between government and farmers and ensuring farmers welfare in the farm.

Poor utilization of mechanization in agriculture

According to Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data⁷, only 4.10 % of the rural households owning mechanized three/four wheeler agricultural equipment and 9.83 % of households owning Irrigation equipment including diesel/kerosene/electric pumpset, sprinkler/drip irrigation system, etc. This data specifies the poor knowledge in utilizing the agriculture techniques through mechanization by the farmers.

Lack of timely credits

Agriculture is also a business, where farmer need to invest high amount to buy seeds, providing irrigation facilities, labor force and others to get good production. Many difficulties experienced to easy and reliable access of institutional credit by small, marginal and tenant farmers, landed laborers, households residing in hilly, tribal, desert, drought prone and most backward and vulnerable areas in particular. As per SECC-2011 data in rural households only 3.61 % of households having Kisan Credit Card with credit limit of Rs 50,000 or above which highlights the serious issues of agriculture credits.

The direct or indirect institutional credit for agriculture and allied activities should be provided properly and timely to promote agricultural productivity or increase agriculture income.

Conclusion

Indian society is an agrarian society in which about 80% of the farmers are uneducated so they cannot go with day to day information regarding cultivation and marketing. Farmers suicides in India causes multiple reasons which involves gambling of monsoons, lack of proper and timely credit, poor knowledge in utilizing mechanization process and others. Most of the farmers suicides were due to crop loss and debut burden which pushing the farmer as alone in to financial and psychological depression. These issues can be resolve through efficient, adequate and effective administrative personnel for the agriculture line departments to assist, sustain and encourage farmers to overcome the difficulties they face in farming at center, state, district and village level by providing services like

soil test, crop information, crop insurance, productive seeds, new agriculture techniques, and awareness on mixed crop cultivation.

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