



AGRARIAN CRISIS AND FARMERS SUICIDES IN INDIA A CASE STUDY OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture continues to play a predominant role in influencing the overall performance of the Indian economic. Agriculture is the main occupation for more than 60 percent of Indian population. Indian agriculture has been passing through a phase of serious crisis. The crisis in agriculture has many manifestations, of which suicides of farmers one is that came as a rude jolt. Andhra Pradesh is the first state of suicides by farmers. Here some causes of agrarian distress and farmers suicides in Andhra Pradesh monsoon failure, increasing cost of cultivation mono cropping. The recent literature on agrarian distress and distress driven farmers suicide examined crop and region related specific factors, have lead the farmers to suffer humiliation and finally surrendering them-self to kill themselves have convincingly proved that trade liberalization led price fall for agricultural commodities, compounded further by the hike in production cost and total withdrawal by the concerned governments from procurement and market intervention of 1990s and 2000s have caused distress to the roots causing rural distress claiming thousands of lives across the country. The exact causes of agrarian distress may vary from one to another state but everybody agrees on the common causes i.e., external trade liberalization and neo-liberal policy driven reforms in the economy have divested the life of agrarian community who have embraced agriculture as their main occupation. The outbreak of suicide in India is appalling and on average one Indian farmer committed suicide every 32 minutes during the past period 1997to2007 and as many as 48 farmers suicide per day in India between 2002-2007. The farmer suicide in India as a clear indication of serve distress in the farming community. The causes for present agrarian distress vary from one to another state. But the genuine causes may be common in all states which include external trade liberalization and neo-liberal policy driven reforms in the economy have played havoc with the farm dependent population in the country. Indian state now acknowledges the fact that between 1993and2003, 1,00,248 farmers committed suicide in India. The most important factor is there are many dimensions of the present agrarian crisis. In terms of population, India stands at number two but in terms of area it stands at number seven in the world. By the year 2003-2004 only 67.3 million hectares which is 35.3 percent of the total cropped area were under non-food grain crops. While the workforce in agriculture has remained more or less stagnant its contribution to nations GDP has been steadily declining ratio of worker productivity in agriculture to non-agriculture. On account of an increasing number of holdings and constant and even declining cultivable land area, the burden of farmers has been increasing.

Key words: Agrarian crisis, Farmers suicides, farmer's debts, agrarian distress.

Introduction:

Agriculture continues to play a predominant role in influencing the overall performance of the Indian economic. Agriculture is the main occupation for more than 60 percent of Indian population. Indian agriculture has been passing through a phase of serious crisis. The crisis in agriculture has many manifestations, of which



suicides of farmers one is that came as a rude jolt. Andhrapradesh is the first state of suicides by farmers. Here some causes of agrarian distress and farmers suicides in Andhra Pradesh monsoon failure, increasing cost of cultivation mono cropping. Present in most of the agriculturally advanced states, it has been most virulent in Andhrapradesh with two-thirds of suicide deaths in India in that state alone. During the past seven or eight years the peasants of AP., known for militant agrarian struggles before and after independence, actually the phenomenon of suicides in AP dates back 1987-88 when desperate cotton growers took their lives in Guntur and prakasham districts. There was a boom in cotton cultivation in the early 1980s bringing good profits to the farmers. The farmers called cotton "whitegold". But from mid-1980s onwards, cotton farmers suffered heavy losses due to crop failure however, the area under cotton cultivation continues to grow in the state, as it expanded to other regions, especially Telangana. There are considerable regional disparities in the agrarian economy of andhrapradesh. The eerily phase of green revolution in the state was largely confined to resource rich south coastal Andhra, and bypassed the semi-arid and rain fed areas of Rayalaseema north and south telangana, and north coastal Andhra. During the period 1998 and 2006, there were 4403 farmers' suicides in the state. According to a judicial commission appointed by the state government, between 14 May 2004 and 10 November 2005 alone there were 277 starvation deaths of weavers in the same period 2005. 26 debt ridden farmers of Guntur district had sold their kidneys. AN AWARE [1998] study covered a sample of 92 households of farmers who committed suicide, from across 10 districts. The major cause reported by most of the victims is accumulated debt for digging or deepening of the wells. A citizen's report [CES 1998] investigated 50 households of deceased farmers in Warangal district of the state. In all the cases the case seems to be failure of crops due to inadequate water sources. But 72 percent of the households depended on own ground water. Sources while 28 percent depended on tanks which failed to provide full protection because of monsoon failure. But all of them have invested heavily on cotton crop. A few contiguous drought prone districts of Andhrapradesh and Karnataka shows that though drought are nothing new to the region, the yield increasing technology without development of adequate infrastructure is superimposed on an agrarian structure where land institutions are not nationalized. 55 percent of farmers in the state do not get minimum support prices (msp). The worst affected are the marginal small and even medium farmers who do not get the msp because of their dependence on traders for credit not only at high rates of interest, but also tied up with the purchase of output at prices lower than the msp. The study covers 168 cases of farmers suicides spread over five districts extending to all three regions of Andhra Pradesh. Only six of the 168 victims were women, most of the victims 65.63 percent are in the prime of their working life (31-50) most of them have school education, and only a small proportion (18.75) percent are illiterate. The majority of them (65, 63) belong to the (BC) But there are also 25 percent of them belonging to the so-called forward caste. The proportion of suicides among schedule castes 6.21 percent and schedule tribe 3.12 percent are relatively less than their proportion in the population.



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Agrarian crisis:

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Agrarin distress:

There are many dimensions of the present agrarian crisis. In terms of population, India stands at number two but in terms of area it stands at number seven in the world. By the year 2003-2004 only 67.3 million hectares which is 35.3 percent of the total cropped area were under non-food grain crops. While the workforce in agriculture has remained more or less stagnant its contribution to nations GDP has been steadily declining ratio of worker productivity in agriculture to non-agriculture. On account of an increasing number of holdings and constant and even declining cultivable land area, the burden of farmers has been increasing. The land –to- labour ratio as well as income gains precipitate has been reducing significantly.

Farmers Debt's

In India, it is a documented fact that still most of the farmers depended upon external finance to do agriculture increasing indebtedness is one of the strong factor responsible for farmers distress and distress driven suicide. Year 1997-2007 21,174 farmer's suicide having high indebtedness.

Need for the study:

Agricultural activity for their income. Agriculture in India is undergoing a structural change leading to a crisis. Andhra Pradesh is the first state that drew country wide attention through a state of suicides by farmers. Farmer's suicide in



andhrapradesh there are economy of Andhra Pradesh. The first spurt in farmer's suicides occurred in the mid 1980s. 1986-1987 there were a few cases in the later years, so the early warnings of crisis in agriculture in the form of suicides were ignored as aberrations. During the year 1997-2007 farmer suicides in Andhra Pradesh 21,174. Different causes for farmer's committed suicide in India increasing indebtedness, inadequate support price and repeated crop failure. Agrarian conditions in Andhrapradesh, marginalization of holding and resource stress, income and consumption levels of farmers monthly level of income is less than the monthly consumption expenditure for all classes of farmers up to semi-medium farmers.

Objectives:

- To study the indebtedness of farmers who had committed suicide in Andhra Pradesh.
- To examine the problems related to repayment of loans in the non-institutional sources.
- To study the reasons behind the farmer suicides in Andhra Pradesh.

Methodology

The study is based on secondary data. The data is collected from census reports of the government of India. Reports of the national sample survey. various books, journals, reports, published by various authors, commissions.

Farmers suicide in india;

The outbreak of suicide in India is appalling and on average one Indian farmer committed suicide every 32 minutes during the past period 1997 to 2007 and as many as 48 farmers suicide per day in India between 2002-2007. The farmer suicide in India as a clear indication of severe distress in the farming community. The causes for present agrarian distress vary from one to another state. But the genuine causes may be common in all states which include external trade liberalization and neo-liberal policy driven reforms in the economy have played havoc with the farm dependent population in the country. Indian state now acknowledges the fact that between 1993 and 2003, 1,00,248 farmers committed suicide in India. The most important factor is debt.

Table -1: Farmers Suicide in India 1995 to 2012

S. No	States	Farmers suicides in India
1	Maharashtra	53,818
2	Karnataka	33,326
3	Kerala	18,907
4	Chhattisgarh	15,340
5	Andhra Pradesh	10,007
6	Punjab	1,363

Source: National crimes record bureau 2012.



Above Table No-1 explain that farmer's suicide across India in different states during the period 1995-2012. In India. More farmer suicide were in Maharashtra is 53,818, It has taken place in first rank, and following state were Karnataka, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab. Pandjab was least in place took in farmer's suicide comparative with other state. The Andhra Pradesh occupy the fifth place in farmer suicide.

Agrarian Distress in Andhrapradesh:

Present in most of the agriculturally advanced states, it has been most virulent in Andhra Pradesh with two-thirds of suicide deaths in India in that state alone. During the past seven or eight years the peasants of AP., known for militant agrarian struggles before and after independence, actually the phenomenon of suicides in AP dates back 1987-88 when desperate cotton growers took their lives in Guntur and prakasham districts. There was a boom in cotton cultivation in the early 1980s bringing good profits to the farmers. The farmers called cotton 'whitegold'. But from mid -1980s on wards, cotton farmers suffered heavy losses due to crop failure however ,the area under cotton cultivation continue to grow in the state, as it expanded to other regions , especially Telangana.

Farmer's Suicides in Andhrapradesh:

The number of farmers committing suicide was much higher during 1995-2002, in Andhra Pradesh it was estimated that more than 3,000 farmers committed suicide. In fact in Andhra Pradesh the beginning of suicide started during the late 1980s than in 1990s. The Chrisman aid estimated that in 2004 2,115 farmers killed themselves, which comes to around 4,378 since 1998. there are others who estimated that between 1997 and 2006 over 9,000 peasants took their lives due to the failure of cotton crops. There are considerable regional disparities in the agrarian economy of Andhra Pradesh. Theeerily phase of green revolution in the state was largely confined to resource rich south coastal Andhra, and bypassed the semi-arid and rain fed areas of Rayalaseemanorth and south Telangana, and north coastal Andhra. During the period 1998 and 2006, there were 4403 farmers' suicides in the state. According to a judicial commission appointed by the state government, between 14 may 2004 and 10 November 2005 alone there .were 277 starvation deaths of weavers in the same period 2005. 26 debt ridden farmers of Guntur district had sold their kidneys. AN AWARE [1998] study covered a sample of 92 households of farmers who committed suicide, from across 10 districts. The major cause reported by most of the victim's is accumulated debt for digging or deepening of the wells. A citizen's report [CES 1998] Investigated 50 households of deceased farmers in Warangal district of the state. In all the cases the case seems to be failure of crops due to inadequate water sources. But 72 percent of the households depended on own ground water. Sources while 28 percent depended on tanks which failed to provide full protection because of monsoon failure. But all of them have invested heavily on cotton crop.

A few contiguous drought prone districts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka shows that though drought are nothing new to the region , the yield increasing technology without development of adequate infrastructure is superimposed on an



agrarian structure where land institutions are not nationalized. 55 percent of farmers in the state do not get minimum support prices (msp). The worst affected are the marginal small and even medium farmers who do not get the msp because of their dependence on traders for credit not only at high rates of interest, but also tied up with the purchase of output at prices lower than the msp. The study covers 168 cases of farmers suicides spread over five districts extending to all three regions of Andhra Pradesh. Only six of the 168 victims were women, most of the victims 65.63 percent are in the prime of their working life (31-50) most of them have school education, and only a small proportion (18.75) percent are illiterate. The majority of them (65,63) belong to the (BC) But there are also 25 percent of them belonging to the so-called forward caste. The proportion of suicides among schedule castes 6.21 percent and schedule tribe 3.12 percent are relatively less than their proportion in the population.

Table-2: Farmer's suicides in Andhra Pradesh state during 1999 to 2012

S.No	Districts	Farmer Suicide No
1	West Godavari	1138
2	krishna	900
3	Eest Godavari	726
4	Prakasam	559
5	Guntur	456
6	Srikakulam	243
7	Vijayanagaram	238

Source: Computed from the data at www.indiastat.com

Table-2 elaborate that Farmer suicide different districts in Andhra Pradesh between 1999-2012. In Andhra Pradesh, West Godavari District took first place in farmer suicide was 1138. Following district were Krishna, East Godavari, Prakasam, Guntur, Srikakulam and Vijayanagara. The Vijayanargarma District took last place farmer suicide is 238 comparative to other district in Andhra Pradesh.

Conclusion:

The failure of preventing farmers suicides speaks failure of previous packages declared either by state government or central government committed suicide assistance in the form of providing employment should be started on the merit of each case. Effective water management techniques sThe causes for present agrarian distress vary from one to another state. But the genuine causes may be common in all states which include external trade liberalization and neo-liberal policy driven reforms in the economy have played havoc with the farm dependent population in the country should be popularized to that effective water management of the scare water is done effectively. The exact causes of agrarian distress may vary from one to another state but everybody agrees on the common causes i.e., external trade liberalization and neo-liberal policy driven reforms in the economy have divested the life of agrarian community who have embraced agriculture as their main occupation.



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