

CHANGING THE ROLE OF WOMEN MEMBERS IN THE FARMERS SUICIDE FAMILIES IN VIDARBHA REGION OF MAHARASHTRA

Anand Bhalerao

Ph. D. Research Scholar, (Social Work), Dept. of Social Work, TMV, Pune.

Abstract

The Study was undertaken to identification of various impacts of the suicide on the farmer's family members in highly suicide prone six districts in Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra. The research study was designed under the analytical research design of social research. The total 300 deceased farmers family were selected by purposive method of random sampling. It covers 105 villages, 18 Blocks and 6 Districts of Vidarbha Region. Result showed that the low educational level, large to medium family size with nuclear types of families, small and marginal rain fade holding with no source to access the irrigation, low productivity due to monsoon vagaries, low annual income, indebtedness, low socio-economic status, inability to fulfil important family responsibilities due to poor economic condition, addiction, personal and family members health problems, dispute, pressure of girls and sisters marriage', harassments by banks, harassment by moneylenders, relatives, pressure of repay of loans, double showing, drought, hailstorms, unproductively of crops, loss in secondary business, low income from the agriculture and so many causes of were identified of the farmers suicide in the Vidarbha region. All these causes are interrelated and they are feed into each other aggravate each other. All these are supporting causes to the farmer's suicide in the region. The farmers are continuous committing suicide in the region continuously and the whole responsibility is going on the women members of the farmer's family.

Keywords- *Suicide, Causes, Impact, Psychological, situational, Socio-economic.*



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Introduction

A large number of farmer's suicides in various parts of the country is perhaps a most distressing phenomenon observed in India over the last three decade. These suicides reached almost epidemic proportions in certain pockets of the country. Since the mid 1990s large section of the farm households has been facing a distress as a consequence of decline in agricultural income, declined repaying capacity and thereby increased debt burden. The agrarian crisis in India has both the long term structural and institutional as well as short term manifestation. The long term structural features are sharp decline in the share of agriculture in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accompanied by very low rate of labour force diversification away from agriculture. This has resulted in declined relative productivity of agriculture and non-agriculture sector. The growth rate of agriculture has

decelerated noticeably during the post reforms period and particularly during the South Asian Crisis-1997. In the liberalized trade market farmers are exposed to price volatility because of the fluctuations in domestic production and international prices. As a result farmers were adopting new techniques of production to improve the quality and the quantity of production. It caused an increase in the cost of cultivation as well as rapid environmental degradation. Rain-fed areas are particularly prone to successive fluctuations of the production, productivity and degradation of the natural resources due to uncertainty of monsoon. The liberalization of the economy has failed to give big push to agriculture sector and to increase income and employment in the agriculture sector. The most serious aspect of this crisis is deceleration in agricultural growth with the distress state of farmers in general and that of small and marginal in particular.

The gradual withdrawal of the state from active participation in development activities has resulted in sharp decline in public investment in agricultural infrastructure and research. Every day in newspaper invariably there is no related to farmer's suicide. This is now a public policy concern and has been receiving scholarly attention. Suicide is associated with unmet or fulfilled needs, feeling of hopelessness and helplessness, ambivalent conflicts between survival and unbearable stress a narrowing of perceived option and a need for escape.

In Vidarbha, particularly in six districts namely Akola, Amravati, Buldhana, Wardha, Washim and Yavatmal, the incidence of suicide of farmers has increased tremendously. Science January 2000 to December 2011, totally 8221 farmers committed suicide out of which 2890 suicide cases were reported legal at Government level for allocating Rs. One Lakh compensation from the government package. This is what we have been hearing from the Vidarbha and other part of the country over last eleven years.

Table No: - 1 District wise Farmers Information

Name of Districts	Frequency	Percent
Akola	50	16.7
Amarawati	50	16.7
Buldhana	50	16.7
Washim	50	16.7
Wardha	50	16.7
Yavatmal	50	16.7
Total		100.0

Table No 1 shows the data of farmers suicide has collected from six districts of Vidarbha region as Akola, Amravati, Buldhana, Washim, Wardha and Yavatmal districts which comes in vidarbha region of Maharashtra.

Finding: All over Maharashtra farmers are committing suicide but in the six district of vidarbha region of Maharashtra every half hour one farmer was committing suicide. That is why the region in called as a farmers suicide prone region. Especially in some district of vidarbha region every village the farmers committed suicide. So with this finding the big loss of the society and due to the suicide the new social problems are created in the region.

Table No: - 2 Block wise detail of the Farmers

Name of the Blocks	Data Collected from the Families	Percent
Akola (Dist)	20	6.7
Barshi Takli	18	6.0
Balapur	13	4.3
Amarwati(Dist)	18	6.0
Daryapur	16	5.3
Nandgaon K	16	5.3
Bulbhana Dist)	22	7.3
Chikhali	16	5.3
Khamgaon	11	3.7
Karanja	25	8.3
Ashti	13	4.3
Arvi	12	4.0
Mangrulpir	19	6.3
Manora	23	7.7
Karanja	8	2.7
Pusad	13	4.3
Yavatmal (Dist)	27	9.0
Digras	10	3.3
Total	300	100.0

Table No 2 shows the whole data has collected from (18) eighteen blocks of six districts as per the sampling chose by the research scholar. The distribution of data as highest 9.0% data collected from the Yavatmal block and 2.7 % data has collected from Digras Block other than the data has collected from the whole blocks on the basis of where the more no of farmers committed suicide.

Table No: - 3 Age group of Diseased Farmer

Age of Diseased Farmers	Frequency	Percent
18-28	44	14.7
29-38	53	17.7
39-48	83	27.7
49-58	71	23.7
59 and above	49	16.3
Total	300	100.0

Table No 3 shows the age group of the Diseased Farmers. All type of age groups farmers has committed suicide. This table shows the detail age wise farmers suicide as 27.7 % (83) of farmer's age was between 39- 48, 23.7% (71) farmers age was between 49 -58, 14.7% (44) farmers age was in between 18-28.

Table No: - 4 Sex Wise Population

Sex of Farmers	Frequency	Percent
Male	272	90.7
Female	28	9.3
Total	300	100.0

Table No 4 show the 90.7 % suicidal farmers was male and only 9.3 % was female committed suicide

Table No: -5 Marital Status

Marital Status of the Farmer	Frequency	Percent
Married	267	89.0
Unmarried	30	10.0
Widow	3	1.0
Total	300	100.0

Table No 5 shows among the whole suicidal farmers 90 % farmers were married and only 10 % farmers was unmarried. Hence the above table shows maximum numbers of farmers are married.

Table No: - 6 Education wise Distribution of Farmers

Education of Farmers	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	124	41.3
Literate	47	15.7
Primary	71	23.7
Secondary	41	13.7
HSC	13	4.3
UG	1	.3
PG	2	.7
Professional	1	.3
Total	300	100.0

Table No 6 shows the educational level of the farmers. The highest rate of the farmer's suicide as 41.3% (124) farmers was illiterate, professional and graduate farmers were 3% of the whole suicidal farmers.

Finding: The majority of farmers are illiterate few from the higher educated. Here the family comes out the illiterate farmers are not able to control their emotions and they are thinking which problem ahead them. They are not able to solve or they are not able to help the family members in their bad times. This farmer comes under pressure and committing suicide.

Table No: - 7 Method of Committing Suicide

Method of Suicide	Committing Frequency	Percent
Insecticide Consumption	118	39.3
Hanging	154	51.3
Immolation	8	2.7
Drowning	6	2.0
Other (Specify)	14	4.7
Total	300	100.0

Table No 7 shows the method of committed suicide. 51.3 % of farmers committed suicide through hanging themselves then 39.3% farmers committed suicide consumption of insecticide which is available in their farm or any agricultural shops it got easily on the shop because no any shopkeeper never think about the consumption of insecticide by the farmers but many farmers use the insecticide for suicide.

Table No: - 8 Year of Farmer Suicide

Year of Farmer Suicide	Frequency	Percent
2000-01	8	2.7
2001-02	6	2.0
2002-03	14	4.7
2003-04	34	11.3
2004-05	29	9.7
2005-06	81	27.0

Table No 8 shows the year wise farmer’s suicide. 27 % of farmers committed suicide in the year 2005-06 below that 25.3 % farmers committed suicide in the year 2006-07.

Table No: - 9 Family Size

Family Size	Frequency	Percent
Joint	131	43.7
Nuclear	169	56.3
Total	300	100.0

Table No 9 shows the family size of the suicidal farmers. 56.3 % farmers committed suicide belongs to the nuclear family and 43.7 % farmers belong to the joint family. Hence in both type of families farmers committed suicide.

Table No: 10 Landholding in Acers

Landholding in Ac	Frequency	Percent
Marginal 0 to 2.5 Ac	50	16.7
2.6-5 Ac	119	39.7
5.1-10 Ac	102	34.0
11-20 Ac	16	5.3
Above 21 Ac	13	4.3
Total	300	100.0

Table No 10 shows the type of land of the suicide farmers. 119 (39.7%) farmer committed suicide they have 2.6 to 5.00 ac and then 13 (4.3%) farmer have above 21 ac of land. Here all type of land holding farmer have committed suicide. The more no of comes in the category of marginal and medium size of farmer land.

Table No: - 11 Type of Land

Type of Land	Frequency	Percent
Un-irrigated	185	61.66
Irrigated	52	17.33
Un-irrigated+ Irrigated	63	21.00
Total	300	100.0

Table No 11 shows that 185 (61.66%) farmers land come under the un-irrigated type of land, 52 (17.33%) farmer land comes under the total irrigated and 63 (21.00%) farmer land come under the best category as un-irrigated and irrigated category.

Table No:-12 Crops

Crops	Frequency	Percent
Cotton	44	14.6
Soya been	96	32.0
Jawar, Cotton, Tuar, Soybean, Udad, Rice, Wheat, Maij and other	160	53.3
Total	300	100.0

Table No 12 shows the information regarding the crops which farmers are producing in their farm. 160 ((53.3%) farmers are showing their field Jawar, Cotton, Tuar, Soybean, 31 (10.3%) farmers are producing in their farm only the cotton 96 (32%) farmers are producing in their farm only soybean.

Finding: 53.3 % farmer Committed suicide those who are producing in their farm Jawar, Cotton, Tuar, Soybean 31 (10.3%) farmers are producing in their farm only the cotton. 4.3% farmer produce in their farm only the Jawar.

So majority of farmers committed suicide those main crop as a Cotton, Tuar and Soybean

Table: 13 Joint Occupations

Joint Occupations	Frequency
Agriculture (only farming)	122 (40.6)
Agriculture+ Labour	178(59.3)
No Joint Occupation	215 (71.66)
Kirana Shop	7 (2.33)
Govt. Job	4 (1.33)
Temporary job	10 (3.33)
Dairy	64 (21.3)

Table No 13 shows the joint occupation of the farmers family members are engage in other occupations. Very few no of family members are engage in the joint occupations.

Finding: The most of farmer they don't have any joint occupation but some farmer family member involve in other joint occupation as dairy, kirana store/pan Stoll. Some engage in temporary jobs and some women member are working as anganwadi karyakati and anganwadi helper.

After some family member started the small scale jobs and villager gave some jobs at their villages.

Table No: 14 Annual Income

Annual Income	Frequency	Percent
Below 20000	40	13.33
20001-40000	60	20.00
40001-60000	77	25.66
60001-80000	54	18.00
80001-100000	42	14.00
Above 100001	27	9.00
Total	300	99.99

Above table No 14 shows that the annual income of the farmers family out of total farmers family 77 (25.66%) families income level is 40001 to 60000 thousand less than only 27 (9.00%) family members income level up to above 1 lakh.

Finding: The highest rate of the committing farmers suicide is the range as 40001 to 60000 means within this category they have no other income source as well as no family member is earning from any other occupations. So that whole family is fully depend on agricultural production.

Table No:-15 Role of Women is changed

Role of Women is changed	Frequency	Percent
	236	78.7
	54	21.3
	00	100.0

Table No 15 shows that the information related to the women’s roles is changed Here within the farmer’s family the farmers are head of the family but after the suicide of the farmer the whole responsibility goes on the solders of the women. 236 (78.7%) women now they are playing the role as a head of the family, 64 (21.3%) women are playing role as a family member within the house. Within the family the research scholar observe the father- in- law or big boys are the head of the family.

Table No:-16 Role Women are playing

Role Women are Playing	Frequency
Head of the Family	236 (78.7)
Family Member	64 (21.3)

Table No 16 shows that the information related to the women’s role which they are playing in the family. Here within the farmer’s family the farmers are head of the family after the suicide of the farmer the whole responsibility goes on the solders of the women. 236 (78.7%) women now they are playing the role as a head of the family, 64 (21.3%) women are playing role as a family member within the house. Within the family the research scholar observe the father- in- law or big boys are the head of the family.

Finding: - within the study 78.7% women roles are totally change. Now they are playing their role as a head of the family and 21.3% women’s are playing their role as a family member in the family. Before suicide all women play their role as a common member of the family but now a day they are playing various roles in the family.

Table No: 17 Attitude towards the Women of Community members

Attitude Towards the Women of Community members	Frequency	Percent
Positive	230	76.7
Negative	70	23.3
Total	300	100.0

Table No 17 shows the attitude of the community member towards the women is change. 230 (76.7%) family member or women said the attitude of the community is now positive towards the women, 70 (23.3%) family members replied the attitude of family members is negative towards the women.

Finding: (76.7%) family member response is positive towards the women and 23.3%) family members replied the attitude of family members is negative towards the women.

Here the research scholar observes the majority of the community member’s attitude towards the women is negative.

Table No: - 18 How the Women are Feeling

How the Women's are Feeling	Frequency	Percent
Secure	45	15.0
Un-secure	255	85.0
Total	300	100.0

Table No 18 shows the information regarding how the women are feeling in this table 255 (85%) women and family members are replied the women are not secure, 45 (15%) women's and family member replied women are secure in their family.

Finding:-85% of the total respondent replied the women are not secure in the community. They are feeling unsecure after the death of the husband. They are not sharing their emotion and physical problems of the any other family members in the family.

Table No: 19 Family Running

Family Running Smoothly	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	10.7
No	268	89.3
Total	300	100.0

Table No 19 shows the information related to the family functioning of the house. 268 (89.3%) respondent and family member told after the farmer suicide the whole farmer's family is disturbed in different areas, 32 (10.7%) farmers family members are replied the family is running smoothly.

Finding: (89.3%) respondent and family member told after the farmer suicide the whole farmer's family is disturbed in different areas, the impact is showing on the farmer's family on agricultural production, market relation, attitude of the banks and other community members. Farmer's suicide is a big loss for the family.

Table No: - 20 Loan Taken

Loan Taken	Frequency	Percent
Yes	230	76.7
No	70	23.3
Total	300	100.0

Table No 20 shows that the information about 20 (76.7%) farmers has taken loan from the banks, money lenders, & relatives for their agricultural purpose, 70 (23.33%) farmers have not taken loan from any agency.

Finding: 76.7% farmers have taken the loan from the banks & money lenders. The big numbers has farmers taken the loan.

Table No: - 21 Name of Borrower

Name of Borrower	Frequency
No Loan	70 (23.3%)
Bank	185 (61.66%)
Co-operative/Society	228 (76%)
Commercial Bank	50 (16.66%)
Money Lender	217 (72%)
Relatives/ Friends	84 (28%)
Bank and Moneylender	184 (61.33%)

Table No 21 shows the information related to where from the farmer have taken the loan. Her 228 (76%) farmer taken the loan from the Co-operative/society. 217 (72%) farmers taken the loan from the money lender, 185 (61.66%) farmers have taken the loan from the banks. 70 (23.33%) farmers have not been taken loan from anywhere but they have also committed suicide.

Finding: 76% farmers were taken the loan. So every farmer has a great need of loan and they have taken loan from any agencies.

Conclusion

Suicide in general and by the farmers in particular is a complex phenomenon largely associated with economic, social, psychological distress of the family as well as victim. From 1995 the epidemic of farmers suicide is spread in the state of Maharashtra specially in Vidarbha region many farmers committed suicide , most of which are linked with indebtedness, crop failure, negative returns from the farm, marriages of girls and sisters, health problem, addictions etc. Due to the socio-economic complexity of various factors working as gross root level it cannot be appropriate to conclude all farmers' suicide taken place only due to the indebtedness. There are some other many causes of farmer's suicide but indebtedness is more effective cause of farmer's suicide.

The recurring whitefly attacks are forcing the farmers for shifting their land use pattern towards soya been crop that may further play role in enhancing the Maharashtra's agrarian problems like irrigation, monoculture of cotton, no control on market and market management, Minimum support prices. Farmers Suicide are results of the crisis in agriculture sector that can be solved by taking adequate efforts like proper checking of prices and quality of inputs available markets. Well structured contract farming model to avoid price fluctuations of crop. Some programmes form for women empowerment as mobilizing women them to collective, gave them separate identity as a farmers to the women, build their skill and

capacity as a farmer in problem solving, to gave the priority to the women as decision maker, to support as separate self help groups as a farmer, support as pressure group as a farmers. There is a great need to empowerment of women farmers through multiple processes. After suicide the women provides an opportunity for greater social participation and improves women farmers' self-confidence.

After the suicide of the farmers the role of the women is immediately changing. In some village more then 8-10 farmers have committed suicide in that situation the women are taking care of the other family members as old age mother and father of the farmers, supporting to their children's education, taking care of health, looking immediately the agriculture, marriages of girls and sister-in-laws. As the women member of the family they are ready to accept the all roles which are ahead them.

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