



THE BURDENS OF RURAL INDEBTEDNESS AND FARMERS SUICIDE IN INDIA

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INTRODUCTION:

Rural indebtedness has deep roots in India. It has far reaching economic as well as social effects on the lives of farmers in India. In India, the Burdens of rural indebtedness go on multiplying year to year. The government of India measure of solemn to reduced rural indebtedness from time to time. In this article has been made to examine the burdens of rural indebtedness and why farmers suicide within India? For this purpose statistical data on farmers suicides in India is used from report National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) Ministry of Home Affair, Government of India and other published documents are be used.

THE BURDENS OF RURAL INDEBTEDNESS IN INDIA WITH STATE:

The burden of indebtedness shows the proportion of indebted farmers to the total farmers during the time of survey while extent of indebtedness is measured through average amount of debt per household. As per table 1 it was observed that out of the total rural households 60.40% households were farmers in India and 55.70% farmers in Maharashtra. Moreover, of the total farmers 48.60% percent farmers were indebted in India and 54.80% in Maharashtra. Moreover nearly 57.25% farmers had farming as main source of income for their livelihood in India and 57.90% in Maharashtra. Besides there were 56.9% indebted farmers who were cultivating land as main source of income in India and 62.60% in Maharashtra early 58.4% farmers had taken loan for farming activities in India and 75.4% farmers in Maharashtra forever the share of cooperative societies in total lending was nearly 20.0% in India and 48.50% percent in Maharashtra Next to cooperative banks, the share of commercial banks was nearly 35.6% in India and 34.1% in Maharashtra.

The share of non-institutional agencies to the total lending was 42.4% in India and 16.2 % in Maharashtra. Thus it showed that inspite of the progress of institutional agencies in supplying credit to agriculture, the

position of non-institutional agencies remained significant in rural credit market in India.

Table 1: Indebtedness of Farmers Households

Sr. No.	Items	Maharashtra	India
1.	% of farmers to total Rural Households	55.70	60.40
2.	% of indebted Farmers to Total Farmers	54.80	48.60
3.	% of farmers with farming as main source of income	57.90	57.20
4.	% of indebted farmers with farming as main source of income	62.60	56.9
5.	% of farmers, taken loan for farming activities	75.4	58.40
6.	% of farmers, taken loan from Government	1.20	2.5
7.	% of farmers, taken loan from Co-operative societies	48.50	19.6
8.	% of farmers, taken loan from Banks	34.1	35.6
9.	% of farmers, taken loan from Money lenders & Others	16.2	42.4

Sources : 1) Assessment Survey of Farmers, N.S.S. 59th round, 2005.
2) Report of the Expert Group on Agricultural Indebtedness, Ministry of Finance, G.O.I. 2007.
3) Srijit Mishra, Suicides of Farmers in Maharashtra- IGIDR, Mumbai.

STATE LEVEL ANALYSIS:

As per table 2, at national level of the total farmers 48.6% farmers were indebted and average debt per household was Rs. 12585. Position at state level showed that more than 50.0% farmers to the total farmers were indebted in the States like Andhra Pradesh Punjab, Kerala, Maharashtra, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, M.P. and W.B while in other States percentage was less than 50.0 %. In fact, developed states had higher percentage of indebted farmers as compared to less developed states

DEBT BY SOURCES:

As per debt by sources, it showed that of the total debt of farmers, 58.00 % debt was of institutional agencies and 42.0 % was of non institutional agencies. Among institutional credit percent share of commercial banks was 35.6 % followed by cooperative banks (19.6 %). The State wise position revealed that in majority of the states the outstanding debt of the farmers was financed more by the institutional agencies than private agencies. Co-operative credit societies were important source of finance in five states namely Maharashtra (48.5%), Gujarat (41.8%) Kerala (28.3%) Haryana (23.9%) and Tamilnadu (23.3%) while in other states like J and K, Jharkand U.P., Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh commercial banks had major share. With respect to non-institutional agencies it was 68.6 % in Andhra Pradesh, followed by

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Rajasthan (65.8%) Assam (62.6 %) Bihar (58.5 %), Punjab (52.1 %), Tamilnadu (46.5 %), and MP (43.0%).

Table 2: State wise Number of Indebted Farmers and Debt per Household

Sr.No	States	Indebted farmers (Number)	% Indebted farmers	Debt Average Per farmer (Rs)
1	2	3	4	5
1	Andhra Pradesh	49493	82.0	23965
2	T.N.	28954	74.5	23963
3	Punjab	12069	65.4	41576
4	Kerala	14126	64.4	33907
5	Karnataka	24897	61.6	18135
6	Maharashtra	36098	54.8	16973
7	Haryana	10330	53.1	26007
8	Rajasthan	21828	52.4	18372
9	Gujarat	19644	51.9	15526
10	M.P.	32110	50.8	14218
11	W.B.	34696	50.1	10931
12	Orissa	20250	47.8	5871
13	U.P.	69149	40.3	7425
14	H.P.	3030	33.4	9618
15	Bihar	23383	33.0	4476
16	J.K.	3003	31.8	1903
17	Assam	4536	18.1	813
18	All India	434242	48.61	12,585

Sources: -Same as per table 1.

Moreover averages debt per farmer was higher in Punjab, Kerala, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. In these states average debt per households was more than Rs. 15000/- per households. While in other States average debt per farmer was less than Rs. 15000/-.

INDEBTEDNESS AND CATEGORY OF FARMERS:

The report showed that the indebtedness and the share of outstanding debt increased with size of land holdings. Of total marginal and small farmers, 46.0 % were indebted farmers. In case of big farmers, it was 66.0 %. Moreover, small farmers had 51.6% of the total outstanding credit from institutional agencies and 49.0 % from private agencies. It was observed that there were differences in the incidence of indebtedness among the social groups. The incidence of indebtedness showed that it was

50.2 % for scheduled castes, 36.3 % for scheduled tribes, 51.4 % for other backward class and 49.4 % for others. The average amount of outstanding debt was Rs.7167 for scheduled caste, Rs.5506 for scheduled tribes, Rs.13489 for other backward classes and Rs.18118 for others. Thus it indicates the increasing trend in extent of indebtedness with social hierarchy in rural areas.

Thus, all these things put together it showed that incidence and extent of indebtedness among farmers/are serious problems. It is now acknowledged the fact that the indebtedness has led to/substantial number of farmers suicides in rural areas. Hence in next section, issue of farmers suicides is discussed in detail.

FARMERS SUICIDES IN INDIA WITH STATE:

Statistical data relating to farmers suicides is mostly available from the records of National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India since 1997. Table 3 shows that number of farmers suicides in India, and some major states like Maharashtra, Andhrapradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and other States. At national level, it was observed that 13,622 farmers had committed suicides in 1997 in India, which increased to 17971 in 2002, 18,241 in 2004 and 17060 in 2006. Thus it showed increasing trends in farmers suicides during 1997 to 2006 in India. Moreover, of the total suicides in India during 1997-2006 percentage of farmers suicides remained in the ranged of 14.0% to 16.0%.

Analysis of farmers suicides across states at spatial level showed that of the total farmers suicides in India nearly 59.53 % farmers suicides were occurred in four major states like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh and remaining in other states in 2006. Moreover, Maharashtra state showed a highest number of farmers suicides (26.10%), followed by Andhra Pradesh (15.28%), Karnataka (10.08%) and Madhya Pradesh (8.06%). Initially, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh had almost more or less same number of farmers suicides as compare to Maharashtra but subsequently, in both states number of farmers suicides reduced steadily while in Maharashtra it was increased. The percentage of farmer's suicides to total in these two states was also reduced considerably. In case of Karnataka it was 13.35% in 1997 which reduced to 10.08 % in 2006. Similar trend was observed in Madhya Pradesh, it was 17.55 % in 1997 which reduced to 8.06 % in 2006. While

the share of farmers suicides to the total and Madhya Pradesh. In case of Maharashtra it was 14.07 percent in 1997 which increased to 26.10 percent in 2006. In Andhra Pradesh it was initially 8.5 % in 1997 which increased to 15.28 percent in 2006.

Table 3: Farmers Suicides in India with state

Years	Maharashtra	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	Madhya Pradesh	Other States	All India	% of all suicides
1997	1917 (14.07)	1097 (8.05)	1832 (13.45)	2390 (17.55)	6386 (51.88)	13622 (100.00)	14.2
1998	2409 (14.99)	1813 (11.32)	1883 (11.76)	2278 (14.22)	7632 (47.45)	16015 (100.00)	15.3
1999	2423 (15.07)	1974 (12.27)	2379 (14.79)	2654 (16.50)	6652 (41.35)	16082 (100.00)	14.5
2000	3022 (18.20)	1525 (9.18)	2630 (15.84)	2660 (16.02)	6766 (40.75)	16603 (100.00)	15.3
2001	3536 (21.54)	1509 (9.19)	2505 (15.26)	2824 (17.20)	6041 (36.80)	16415 (100.00)	15.1
2002	3695 (20.56)	1896 (10.55)	2340 (13.02)	2578 (14.34)	74.62 (41.52)	17971 (100.00)	16.3
2003	3836 (22.35)	1800 (10.48)	2678 (15.60)	2511 (14.63)	6339 (36.92)	17164 (100.00)	15.5
2004	4147 (22.73)	2666 (14.15)	1963 (10.76)	3033 (16.63)	6432 (35.25)	18241 (100.00)	16.0
2005	3926 (22.92)	2490 (14.53)	1883 (10.99)	2660 (15.53)	6172 (36.04)	17131 (100.00)	15.0
2006	4453 (26.10)	2607 (15.28)	1720 (10.08)	1375 (8.06) V	6905 (40.47)	17060 (100.00)	14.4

Sources: i) Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affair, Government of India,

ii) K. Nagaraj, Farmers Suicides in India: Magnitudes, Trends, Spatial Pattern, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai.

Note: Figures with in parenthesis show percentage to the total figure suicides in India.

Thus, inter-state comparison with respect to farmers suicides showed that among the affected states maximum number of farmers suicides was occurred in Maharashtra state during 1997-2006 and more alarming situation is that it has increased during this Period. Moreover, the position of farmers suicides across regions of Maharashtra state showed that the maximum number of cases of farmers suicides were occurred in Vidarbha region which is known as cotton growing region of

the State. There were 1071 farmers who had committed suicide in 2001, which increased to 1160 in 2004 and 1520 in 2006.

Thus some important conclusions from this analysis can be drawn :

- 1) The number of farmers suicides in India has increased
- 2) At state level, it revealed that Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh showed higher number of farmers suicides as compared to other states.
- 3) There has been maximum number of cases of farmers suicides in Vidarbha region as compared to other regions of the State.

GENDER BASED FARMERS SUICIDES:

As per Table 4, it showed that of the total farmers suicides, 85.45 % farmers were male and 14.05% farmers were female in India during 2006. It showed percentage of male farmers suicides increased from 82.43% in 1997 to 85.45 % in 2006. While share of female farmers suicides was reduced from 17.57% in 1997 to 14.05% in 2006. During 1997 to 2006 1,40,398 male farmers households and 25,906 female farmers households who committed suicides, state, it showed that, of the total farmers suicides in the state. 92.32% farmers were male households and 7.68% farmers were female households in 2006. During 1997-2006, there were 29109 male farmers and 4255 female farmers who committed suicides. Thus, it reveals the fact that the higher increasing trend in both male and female farmers suicides show the serious agrarian crisis in rural areas.

Table 4: Gender-based Farmers Suicides in India

Years	India				Maharashtra			
	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%
1997	11229	82.43	2393	17.57	1600	83.46	317	16.54
1998	12986	81.08	3029	18.92	1938	80.44	471	19.56
1999	13278	82.56	2804	14.44	2050	84.60	373	15.40
2000	13501	81.32	3102	18.68	2492	82.46	530	17.54
2001	13829	84.24	2586	15.76	2945	83.28	591	16.72
2002	15308	85.18	2663	14.82	3155	85.38	540	14.62
2003	14701	85.65	2463	14.35	3381	88.14	455	11.86
2004	15929	87.32	2312	12.68	3799	91.60	348	8.40
2005	14973	87.40	2158	12.60	3638	92.66	288	7.34
2006	14664	85.45	2396	14.05	4111	92.32	342	7.68
Total	140398	84.42	25906	15.58	29109	87.24	4255	12.76

Sources: Same as table 3

AGE-WISE FARMERS SUICIDES:

Table 5 shows age-wise classification of farmers suicides in India which indicates that substantial number of farmers were in the age group of 15 to 59 years who committed suicides. It is the fact that farmers in these age groups had borrowed loan from institutional agencies and private agencies and invested in bio chemical inputs in view to increase income from agriculture. However due to repeated crop failure, they could not earn expected income from such investment, consequently indebtedness has become serious problem for them, which in turn led ,to suicides, due to non repayment of accumulated loan.

Table 5 : Age-wise Farmers Suicides in India (2001)

Age (years)	Farmers suicides	% Share	Others	% Share	All	% Share
Up to 14	168	1.02	2839	3.08	3007	2.78
15-29	4858	29.59	34052	36.98	38910	35.86
30-44	6008	36.62	30440	33.05	36448	33.59
45-59	3865	23.54	17714	19.24	21579	19.88
60 and above	1516	9.23	7046	7.65	8562	7.89

Sources: Same as table 3.

CONCLUSION:

Indian agriculture has been passing through crisis since the last two decades is now widely acknowledged. It was observed that indebtedness was the major factor which led to farmers suicide, along with other socio-economic factors. Hence it is required to create confidence among the farming community. Hence the government should take initiative to develop and expand the network of institutional finance and regulate private agencies in the rural credit market.

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