

# Agrarian Distress in India: An Assessment of Trend, Causes and Lasting Solutions

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**Abstract** - Agriculture regarded as the base of Indian economy and regardless of deliberate industrialization over the most recent decades agriculture sector possesses a position of pride. Being the biggest sector in the nation it gives livelihoods to around 65% of the aggregate workforce in the nation. Aside from the effective development throughout the decades, Indian agriculture is confronting genuine difficulties, for example, stagnation of agriculture sector and farmer's suicide. The study is an attempt to understand the trend and the causes of farmer suicide in India. The study entirely rely on secondary sources of data. The primary source of data for analyzing the phenomenon of farmer suicides in India is the Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India (ADSI), an annual publication of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. The period of data on farmer's suicide was collected from 1995 to 2015. The study found that during 1995-15, 321407 farmers conferred suicide in India. This demonstrating the death of at least one farmer in every 30 minutes. In the vicinity of 1995 and 2015, the NCRB revealed 321407 farmers' suicides, which is 13.10 per cent of all announced suicide death. From all reported farmers' suicides, 83.92 per cent are males and 14.65 per cent are females. Bankruptcy or indebtedness and farming related issues' are the major causes of suicides among farmers/cultivators, accounting for 38.7 per cent and 19.5 per cent of total such suicides respectively during 2015. The other prominent causes of farmer/cultivators suicides were family problems, illness and drug abuse/alcoholic addiction, accounting for 11.7 per cent, 10.5 per cent and 4.1 per cent of total farmers/cultivators suicides respectively. The study suggesting that providing formal credit facilities to farmers is the appropriate solution to solve indebttness related suicide of farmers and extend crop insurance to all farmers will enable them to avoid huge loss due to climate change.

**Keywords:** *Farmer's distress, trend of suicide, Causes, Remedies.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the subsistence division of Indian economy. It has likewise been brought up that farming and allied areas contribute almost 14 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India, while around 65 to 70 per cent of the population is subject to agriculture for their occupation [1]. On the cutting edge time frame, the agriculture has turned into an industry on one side and along the other; it is confronting issues because of the absence of financial and credit facilities. Shockingly because of the vulnerability of monsoon, non-accessibility of credit, expanding costs of seeds, pesticides and composts, agribusiness has turned into a most critical industry and farmers are enduring because of financial pain and they are conferring suicide on a vast scale in various areas of the nation [2].

Indebtedness of farmers is one of the principle issues driving them to commit suicide [3]. The issue begins off with the accessibility of convenient credit. Keeping money segment isn't prepared to give credit/advance to agriculture for maintaining a strategic distance from the hazard. With the Breakdown of formal credit, structures will make the

farmers expanded depending on casual segments. Agriculture dependably has requested from the very latest credit, and a minute ago credit came at higher rates due to the great request hypothesis the more the request higher the monetary value. The banks take no role in this, as it isn't conceivable to take credit from banks casual wellsprings of acknowledging come just from the more prominent premium weight driving the farmers to an interminable loop of private debt [4]. Farmers need credit for buying seeds, pesticides and other major inputs and immense measures of credit is similarly required by them for introducing tube wells. Well, we can see credit is required by them in each angle they work in. There is a further absence of credit accessibility for small agricultural farmers. Whatever accessible is of high intrigue? As indicated by New York Times that "entrance to formal credit has limits, the influence of moneylenders, who charge no less than 24 for each yearly premium, has developed."

In 2012, the National Crime Records Bureau of India revealed 13,754 farmer suicides. The most astonishing bit of farmer suicides was recorded in 2004 when 18,241 farmers cummited suicide. The farmer suicide rate in India

has extended between 1.4 to 1.8 for each 100,000 in the aggregate population, over a 10-year time span through 2005. From 1995 to 2013, the sums of 296,438 farmers have executed themselves in India or a normal of 16,469 suicides for each year. Amid a similar period, around 9.5 million individuals kicked the bucket every year in India from different causes, including hunger, sicknesses and suicides that were non-cultivating related, or around 171 million passings from 1995 to 2013. The phenomenon of suicide by farmers is especially worrisome for India in light of the fact that most of the workforce is subject to farming for its livelihood [5].

The changes took place in India after the arrangement of the WTO in 1995 essentially debilitated the institutional help structures in agriculture. The assurance offered to agriculture from ruthless imports was expelled, bringing about a fall in costs of numerous wares. As a feature of financial changes, major input subsidies were cut down with respect to the span of the farming economy. The development of rural credit was ended, reviving the entryways for the informal sector. Public resources were looked to be directed far from sustenance crops and towards high-esteem export-oriented crops [6]. Over the time of economic reforms and WTO period, agriculture development rates backed off fundamentally [7]. Above all, the rate of development of sustenance grain generation backed off and fell behind the populace development rates out of the blue after independence. The per capita nourishment grain accessibility tumbled from around 175 kg in 1992 to 163 kg in 2001. The spate of farmers' suicides detailed from specific parts of the nation mirrors the pain condition of agriculture after 1995 [8, 9, 10]. In this background, the present study made an attempt to analyses the pattern farmer's suicide in India. The study has been divided into two parts- the first part deals with analysis of trend of farmer's suicide in the country and second part is the analysis of causes of farmer's suicide.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Numerous analysts have looked to explore a wide assortment of parts of agrarian distress. Regardless, a careless take a gander at the current writing makes it genuinely evident that an examination concentrating on the occurrence of farmers' suicides, factors in charge of the crisis and on conceivable healing measures to recover the circumstance on this tally expect extensive centrality both from the present and the future perspectives, especially more so in regard of Indian farming which has seen extraordinary change over the Green Revolution decades. In more exact terms, the present examination has the accompanying primary objectives:

- To investigate the pattern and trend of farmer suicide in India

- To distinguish the contributory elements for farmers' suicide in India
- To propose therapeutic measures to adapt up to the issue of farmers' suicide

## III. METHODOLOGY

The present study is designed to understand the severity of the problem of farmers' suicides in India and also analyse the causes of farmer's suicide. The study entirely relay on secondary sources of data. The major sources of secondary data were the publications of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Department of Economics and Statistics, 48<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> rounds of NSSO, various journals in the area of agriculture and allied fields. Reports in National Dailies like The Hindu and Indian Express were also used extensively. The data on farmer's suicide was collected from the year 1995- 2015.

The main source of information for analyzing the phenomenon of farmer suicides in India is the Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India (ADSI), an annual publication of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. The NCRB has been publishing the ADSI, which holds information on suicides in the country, disaggregated by states and major cities, since 1967. Transcripts of the ADSI have been digitized and made available on the NCRB's website. Apart from supplying information on the number of suicides, the ADSI also gives information on the causes of suicides. From 1995, the ADSI added another dimension of information and started publishing suicide data disaggregated by professions.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Trend of Farmer Suicide

The substantial number of farmers' conferred suicides in different parts of the nation is a more troubling phenomenon saw over the most recent two decades in India [11]. During the 20 long stretches of period 1995-2015, upwards of 294966 farmers' have committed suicide in India. Along these lines, on a normal 15520 farmers had committed suicide in India. Amid the principal decade of 1995-2005, a normal 15855 and in the second decade of 2005-2015, on a normal 15226 ranchers had committed suicide in India. It is, surely, a genuine number of farmers' suicides might be higher than reports of government. The farmer suicide in India as a reasonable sign of serious pain in the cultivating community. The reasons for the exhibit agrarian misery fluctuate starting with one then onto the next state. In any case, the authentic causes might be regular in all states which incorporate an outer exchange progression and neoliberal arrangement driven changes in the economy have played ruin with the homestead subordinate population in the country.

Farmer suicide is the after effect of communication of various components that happened in diverse periods and distinct phases of development. Accordingly, the suicide rate

is higher specifically year and the other way around. The data of farmer suicide in India appear in table 1. It is appraised from the table that during 1995-15, 321407 farmers conferred suicide in India. This demonstrates the death of at least one farmer in every 30 minutes. In the vicinity of 1995 and 2015, the NCRB revealed 321407 ranchers' suicides, which is 13.10% of all announced suicide death. From all reported farmers' suicides, 83.92 per cent are males and 14.65 per cent are females. In the vicinity of 1995 and 2004, the aggregate number of farmer suicides showed a rising pattern, expanding from 10720 in 1995 to 18241 in 2004. From 2004 onwards, the aggregate number of farmer suicides in the nation has drifted downwards, tumbling to 11772 in 2013 and afterwards moving back to 12360 in 2014. In 2015, the number of farmer's committed suicide came to 12602. It is significant that the aggregate number of farmer suicides in 2015 is still a great deal higher than the number recorded in 1995.

**Table 1.** Farmer's suicide and all suicides in India, 1995-2015

Year	Farmers' suicides				ALL suicides			
	Male	Female	Person	% of Male to Farmer's Su	Male	Female	Person	% of Farmers Suicide to Total Suicide
1995	8295	2425	10720	77.4	52357	36821	89178	12.0
1996	10897	2832	13729	79.4	51206	37035	88241	15.6
1997	11229	2393	13622	82.4	56281	39548	95829	14.2
1998	12986	3029	16015	81.1	61686	43027	104713	15.3
1999	13278	2804	16082	82.6	65488	45099	110587	14.5
2000	13501	3102	16603	81.3	66032	42561	108593	15.3
2001	13829	2586	16415	84.2	66314	42192	108506	15.1
2002	15308	2663	17971	85.2	69332	41085	110417	16.3
2003	14680	2463	17143	85.6	70068	40511	110579	15.5
2004	15929	2312	18241	87.3	72651	41046	113697	16.0
2005	14973	2158	17131	87.4	72916	40998	113914	15.0
2006	14664	2396	17060	86.0	75702	42410	118112	14.4
2007	14509	2123	16632	87.2	79295	43342	122637	13.6
2008	14145	2051	16196	87.3	80544	44473	125017	13.0
2009	14951	2417	17368	86.1	81471	45680	127151	13.7
2010	13592	2372	15964	85.1	87180	47419	134599	11.9
2011	12071	1956	14027	86.1	87839	47746	135585	10.3
2012	11951	1803	13754	86.9	88453	46992	135445	10.2
2013	10489	1283	11772	89.1	90543	44256	134799	10.9
2014	10889	1471	12360	91.65	89119	42521	131666	11.9
2015	7566	441	12602	94.95	91528	42088	133623	10.6

Source: Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

A total of 12,602 persons involved in the farming sector (consisting of 8,007 farmers/cultivators and 4,595 agricultural laborers) has committed suicides during 2015, accounting for 9.4% of total suicide victims (1,33,623) in the country. According to the official data, farm suicides are overwhelmingly by male farmers. Considering the period 1995–2015, about 85 per cent of all farm suicides are male farmers, and every fifth male suicide in the nation was a farm suicide. The per cent of male farmer suicide to total farmer suicide has increased from 77.4 per cent in 1995 to 81.3 per cent in 2000 and further moved upward to 85.1 per cent in 2010. In 2014, the ratio of male suicide to total farmer suicide was highest at 91.65 per cent, and the 2015 figure is 94.95 per cent, showing the alarming pace of development of male farmer suicide in the country.

It is underlined that the male usually mindful to meet the end needs of the family and ladies are second in

doing this function. All the obligation of the family goes to the shoulders of the male and this staggering weight push them to confer suicide. In addition, there are numerous suicides of females in the cultivating area yet might be these are unidentified as farmer suicide. In a scene where the male leader of a family unit is, for the most part, believed about the provider, the prevalence of male suicides recommends that financial distress is a noteworthy spurring factor fundamental an expansive number of suicides and that the intense agrarian emergency in the body politic is the understanding for this difficulty.

The percent of farmer suicide to total suicide has increased from 12 per cent in 1995 to 15.3 per cent in 2000, and then reached to the highest rate of 16.3 per cent in 2002. The trend since 2002 exhibiting a fall from 16 per cent in 2004 to 11.9 per cent in 2010 and 10.6 per cent in 2015. Therefore, it is to say that the ratio of farmer's suicide to total suicide has been declining in the country. According to the National Crime Records Bureau report titled 'Accidental deaths and suicides in India 2015', the overall suicide in farming sector has increased by 2 per cent from 12,360 in 2014 to 12,602 in 2015. In 2013, the number was 11,772. If we look at the data for two decades since 1995, the highest number of farmer suicide were recorded in 2004 when 18,241 farmers committed suicide. But since then the number of farmer suicide falling as can be seen from table 2. However, in 2014 it increased to 12360 from 11772 in 2013, constituting an increase of nearly 5 per cent.

**Table 2.** Number of Farmers Suicides in India (By Gender)

	Male		Female		Total farmers suicides		Percent
	Number of suicides	Indices	Number of suicides	Indices	Total suicide	Indices	
1995	8295	100	2425	100	10720	100	22.6
1996	10897	131.3683	2832	116.7835	13729	128.069	15.6
1997	11229	103.0467	2393	84.49859	13622	99.22063	17.6
1998	12986	115.647	3029	126.5775	16015	117.5672	18.6
1999	13278	102.2486	2804	92.57181	16082	100.4184	17.4
2000	13708	103.2384	3102	110.6277	16603	103.2396	18.7
2001	13708	100	2576	83.0432	16284	98.86767	15.8
2002	15308	111.672	2663	103.3773	17971	109.4791	14.8
2003	14701	96.03475	2463	92.48967	17164	95.39258	14.3
2004	15929	108.3532	2312	93.86927	18241	106.4049	12.7
2005	14973	93.99837	2158	93.3391	17131	93.91481	12.6
2006	14664	97.93629	2396	111.0287	17060	99.58555	14.0
2007	14509	98.94299	2123	88.60601	16632	97.49121	12.8
2008	14145	97.49121	2051	96.60857	16196	97.37855	12.7
2009	14951	105.6981	2417	117.845	17368	107.2364	13.9
2010	13592	90.91031	2372	98.13819	15964	91.91617	14.9
2011	12071	88.80959	1956	82.46206	14027	87.86645	13.9
2012	11951	99.00588	1803	92.17791	13754	98.05375	13.1
2013	10489	87.76671	1283	71.15918	11772	85.58965	10.9
2014	10889	103.8135	1471	114.6532	12360	104.9949	11.9
2015	11584	106.3826	1018	69.20462	12602	101.9579	8.08

Source: Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

The farmer suicide by gender, as can be seen in table 2, farmer suicide rates among male were only somewhat higher (13.2) than those of females (11.2) in 1997. But in 2011, the rate had significantly diverged; male rates had gone up to 14.6 whereas rates for female farmers had fallen to 5.4, three years later in 2014, the male suicide rate had fallen sharply to 10.9 per cent, that of female to 1.4 in 2015.

**4.2 Causes of Farmer Suicide**

A few investigations led to India have connected the phenomenon of farmer suicides for the most part to the

agrarian crisis, especially to trim disappointment, rising input prices, inferior quality of seeds and pesticides, private cash loaning, between linkages of the item and credit markets and non-gainful costs. There is a sentiment of frailty because of yield disappointment, arrive estrangement and obligation. The causes of farmer suicide identified by NCRB in its report "Accidental and Suicidal Deaths in India" has been discussing in this part.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau Report called "Accidental and Suicidal Deaths in India", insolvency or indebtedness and cultivating related issues are the major causes of farmers/cultivators suicide in India. The respective percentage is 38.7% and 19.5% in 2015. The other reasons for farmer/cultivators suicides were Family Problems (11.7%), Ailment (10.5%) and Medication Abuse/Alcoholic Addiction (4.1%). It is noted that the major reasons for male farmers/cultivators suicide were bankruptcy or indebtedness (39.4 %) and cultivating related issues (19.7%). Likewise, the reason behind the suicide of female farmers/cultivators were liquidation or indebtedness (27.0%) and family problems (18.1%) in 2015. It is recorded that 42.7% suicides in Maharashtra (1,293 out of 3,030 suicides), 79.0% in Karnataka (946 out of 1,197 suicides) and 46.5% suicides in Telangana (632 out of 1,358 suicides) were because of Bankruptcy or Indebtedness. 31.5% suicides in Madhya Pradesh (183 out of 581 suicides) were because of Family Problems. Table 3: Percentage Share of Major Causes of Farmer’s Suicides in 2014 and 2015.

**Table 3.** Causes of Farmers Suicide

Causes of Farmer’s Suici	Percentage Share	
	2014	2015
Indebtedness/Bankruptcy	20.6	38.7
Family Problems	20.1	11.7
Farming related issues	17.2	19.5
Other causes	14.7	0
Illness & Health related issue	13.2	10.5
Drug abuse/alcoholic issues	4.3	4.1
Causes not known	4.1	0
Poverty	2.6	1.1
Marriage related issues	2.1	2.0
Property dispute	0.9	1.1
Fall in social reputation	0.1	0

Source: National Crimes Record Bureau, 2014-15

It is also visible from the report that Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Assam were witnessed conferred by farmers/cultivators because of poverty, these States together represented 78.3% of aggregate such suicides amid 2015. The farmers/cultivators have committed suicides because of extramarital affairs is found higher in Chhattisgarh, representing 60.0% of aggregate such suicides in the state amid 2015. The dominant part of suicides conferred by farmers/cultivators because of family Problems were accounted in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, these states together represented 77.1% of aggregate such suicides in the country. Of the suicides committed by farmers/cultivators because of cultivating

related issues was accounted in Maharashtra alone which representing 50.9% of aggregate such suicides in the country in 2015. Lion's share of suicides committed by farmers/cultivators because of 'Illness' were accounted for in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh in 2015. The suicides conferred by farmers/cultivators because of drug abuse/alcoholic addiction were found higher in Maharashtra which representing 51.5% of aggregate such suicides in 2015.

According to the National Crimes Record Bureau report 2014, bankruptcy or indebtedness (20.6%) and family problems (20.1%) are major causes of suicides during 2014. The other prominent causes of farmers’ suicides were crop failure (16.8%), illness (13.2%) and drug abuse/alcoholic addiction (4.9%). During 2014, the major causes of suicides among male farmers were bankruptcy or indebtedness (21.5%) and family problems (20.0%). Whereas, in female farmers’ suicides, farming related issues (21.4%) followed by family problems (20.6%), marriage related issues (12.3%) and bankruptcy or indebtedness (10.8%) were the major causes of suicides during 2014.

State, UT and City–wise details on several causes of farmers’ suicides shows that Maharashtra (33.4%) and Telangana (23.2%) accounting higher farmer suicide due to bankruptcy or indebtedness. The farmers’ suicides due to failure of crop (87.5%) were reported in Himachal Pradesh. It is estimated that 4.7% farmers in Himachal Pradesh, 4.1% farmers in Jharkhand and 2.7% farmers each in Bihar, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh have committed suicides due to suspected/illicit relation. The suicides by farmers in Sikkim (6.5%) followed by Himachal Pradesh (2.3%) and Puducherry (2.0%) were due to cancellation/non settlement of marriage. The Maharashtra and Telangana have recorded higher farmer/cultivators suicides due to bankruptcy or indebtedness caused by crop loan during 2014.

**V. REMEDIAL MEASURES**

Farmers require security through defensive enactment as nothing is regularly done to enable them to settle their obligations or handle the phenomenal value rise that leads them to confer suicides. Unimportant lip sensitivity by political gatherings and government authorities isn't sufficient to connect the enlarging request supply hole in the agricultural segment. The examination has made after recommendations to alleviate the disturbing rate of rancher's suicide in the nation.

- The dependency of farming on nature ought to be lessened. This should be possible by powerful execution of water administration strategies by the legislature.
- The regulated assets ought to be made accessible to the greatest farmers. The farmers must be checked and instructed as to the user concerning such supports.

- The ranchers ought to be given specialized help to improve the farming efficiency.
- Organic cultivating must be supported. The administration must finance natural manures rather than concoction composts.
- Farmers with little land property must be urged to seek after network cultivating.
- The farmers ought to be furnished with coordinate rather than backhanded endowments.
- The intemperate forces of the cash banks must be checked.
- There is a requirement for social and social arousing with in the town networks. This might be finished by giving basic instruction and professional preparing to the farmers and their families.
- Minimum Support Price instrument for farming produce should proper with thought increment in rural information sources.
- Ensure that the formal keeping money framework in the provincial regions covers all the credit necessities of ranchers and others, and that the scope of the formal monetary framework is reached out to every single country family unit.
- Focus on expanding farming profitability with maintained development and lower expenses of generation.
- Promote applicable open research in agribusiness, especially dry land agriculture, for the improvement of dry spell and malady safe seeds of oats and heartbeats.
- Analyze the connection between input expenses and market costs, and propose fitting and auspicious mediations by the state/local government organizations, with a specific end goal to guarantee profitable costs to the ranchers.
- Improve the infrastructure for crop markets and the post-harvest management of the product.
- Identify legitimate chances to advance country work, including nonfarm business, empower expansion inside and out of agriculture; create esteem expansion exercises, for example, agro-handling in provincial zones in a way that advantages farmers.
- Crop disappointments are a debacle for farmers and their families. Along these lines government should make a lawful arrangement about harvest protection for all ranchers.

## VI. CONCLUSION

There have been different plans by the government for the advantage of farmers. There is a need to acquire certain progressions the strategies for the government, and their approaches. As opposed to spending a while later on alleviation bundle to manage farmer suicides, it will be smarter to take preventive measures to control this crisis. The preventive measures ought to be tended to on both social and financial fronts. In this association, the

significance of budgetary proficiency, training, guiding, and restorative administrations can't be over-accentuated for tending to social causes. Be that as it may, financial makes driving disintegration in farmer salary should be taken up with a feeling of earnestness. Farmer's income is presented to both production and market dangers.

With a specific end goal to diminish the circumstance of indebtedness among the farmers, it is important that keep a nearby watch on levels and patterns of indebtedness of farmers. It is imperative to deal with the crop loss that may occur because of yield disappointment. This should be possible with the assistance of Agricultural Insurance Company with editing harm gauges at the square or sub-square levels. Obviously, gauges at the individual farm level are basic to help the affected. There is a nonappearance of any instrument to address showcase chance. In this way, there is a need to acquire changes in the market reform, with the goal that the arrangements amongst farmers and the customers are reasonable.

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