

Drought & Farmers' Suicides in Vidarbha: Review

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Abstract— Major issues of Regional Disparities play an important role at the International, National as well as State levels. As per Prof. V. M. Dandekar's committee report which points out Marathwada and Vidarbha as backward regions. Vidarbha's districts shows more farmers' suicides reported as compared to rest of Maharashtra. In this paper we are going to identify some of the root causes and the corrective measures to reduce the number of farmers' suicides.

Key words: Regional Disparities, Farmers' suicides, Corrective measures, Droughts

I. INTRODUCTION

In Vidarbha, major crops are Cotton, Soybean, Jowar and Pulses. Rain is the only source for farming as irrigated farming has a less access and is limited to only small areas around the rivers. The region of Vidarbha has several rivers flowing which include Purna, Wainganga and Wardha river, etc. Also several dams are built in the region. Based on these resources the incidents of droughts/famine are pretty rare as compared to several drought prone areas/talukas in the Western Maharashtra and Marathwada areas. Still there are suicides by farmers more in Vidarbha, we need to understand why it is happening?

A. Statement of Problem

In 1990s, India woke up with a strange and surprising fact of farmers suicides. Maharashtra was the first State where the farmers' suicides were reported.

As per Darwin's law "Survival is fittest" is the law of nature. But in Vidarbha region this is misinterpreted as those who are not fit to struggle should commit suicide.



Fig. 1: Map of Vidarbha Region

On Daily basis we are reading news of droughts and its consequences in various parts of India. The problems related to droughts are being faced by farmers since so many years and there is a continuous increase in these cases. Government is working on the issues and has arranged for various facilities as well as packages for the farmers but still there are no significant improvements in reducing the farmers' suicide cases. There is also a need to study the direct linkage between farmers' financial structure and suicidal tendencies.



Fig. 2: Farmers' Plight

“People commit suicide due to feeling of social cutoff or isolation”- as stated by Durkheim. The below graph shows how the last decade is black years of Vidarbha history. Vidarbha's districts shows increased number of farmers suicides as compared to rest of Maharashtra. This list is topped by Yeotmal followed by Amrawati, Buldhana, Akola, Washim, Wardha, Nagpur, Bhandara and Gondia.

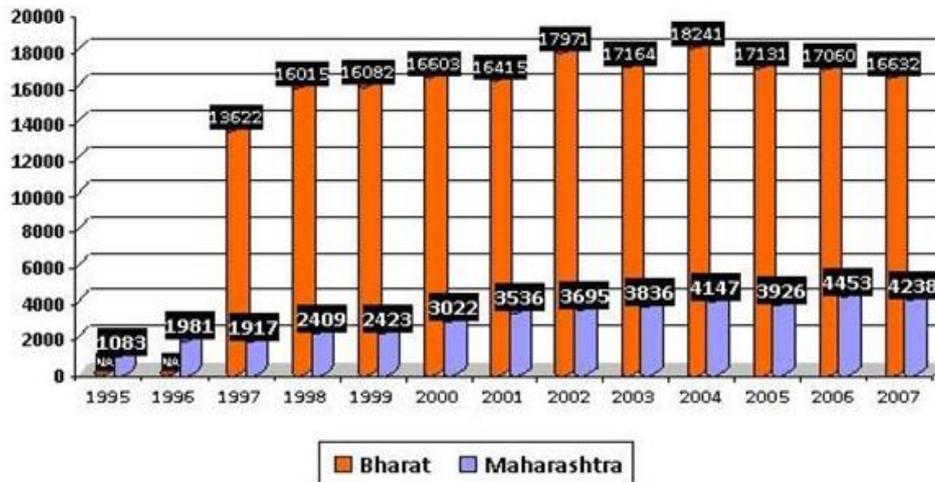


Fig. 3(a): Overall Comparison of Farmers' suicides

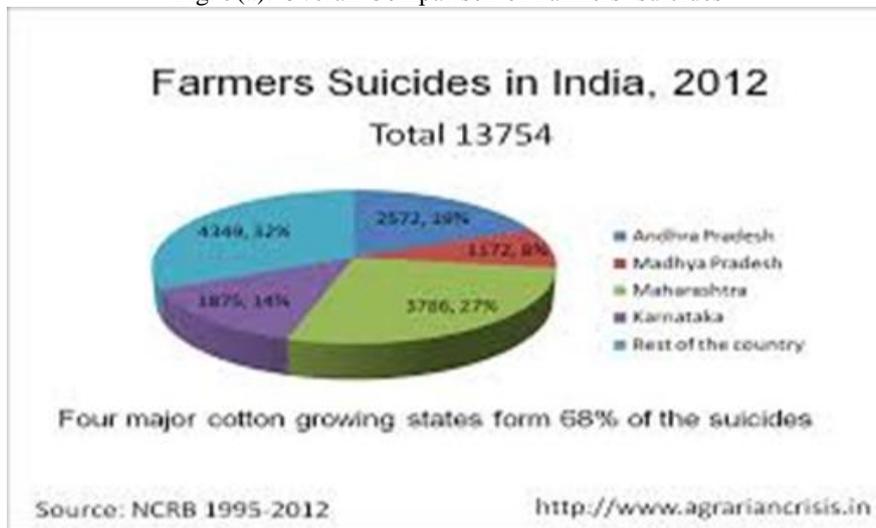


Fig. 3(b): Overall Comparison of Farmers' suicides

Farm suicide annual averages in select States 1995-2002 & 2003-10			
State	Farm suicides annual average		Difference (2nd Avg - 1st Avg)
	1995-2002	2003-2010	
Andhra Pradesh	1590	2301	+711
Assam	155	291	+135
Karnataka	2259	2123	-136
Kerala	1292	1071	-221
MP + Chhattisgarh	2304	2829	+525
Maharashtra	2508	3802	+1294
Tamil Nadu	992	866	-126
Uttar Pradesh	640	531	-109
West Bengal	1426	990	-436

The table only includes States whose annual averages have risen or fallen by over 100 farm suicides between the two periods. It also treats Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh as one unit for data purposes.

Source: NCRB Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India reports 1995-2010.

Fig. 4: Statewise Farm suicide annual averages

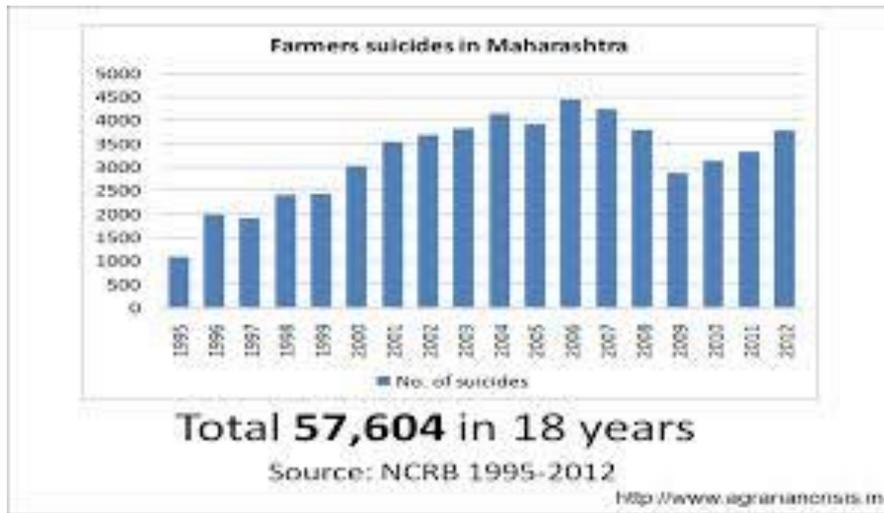


Fig. 5: Farm suicides in Maharashtra State

B. Research Methodology

A research was conducted on 50 students belonging to agriculturist families and particularly those whose fathers are farmers. Out of these, 2 students were those whose fathers committed suicide. In this informal type discussion, below mentioned causes were found out by the researchers for farmers' suicides.

C. Causes Of Suicides

1) Huge Debts

Debt is the main reason behind the farmers' suicides. Debt gets renewed every year and if due to some reason they cannot pay it then it is carry forwarded to next year. In this way it keeps on increasing and the farmers feels/thinks that he won't be able to repay it, this creates stress, leading him to end his life. It is also a main cause for farmers' poor financial structure.



Fig. 6(a): Reasons for indebtedness

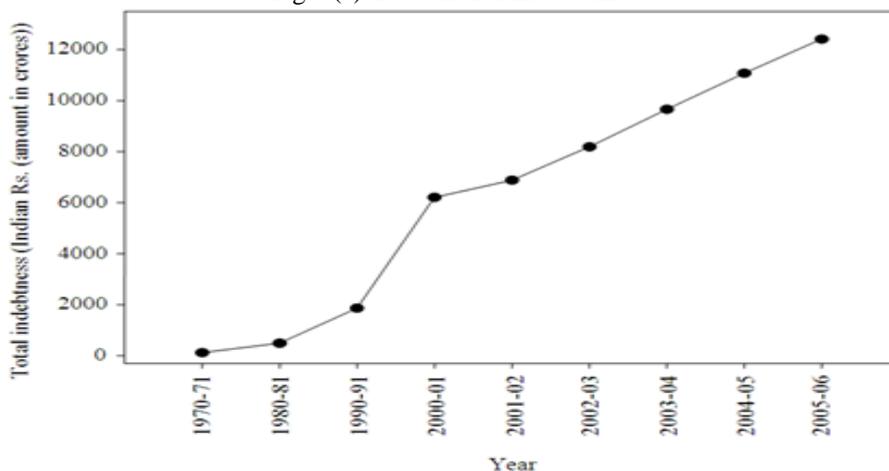


Fig. 6(b): Year wise comparison of indebtedness

2) *Maximum Use of Chemical Fertilizers*

Chemical fertilizers are being preferred by the farmers over organic or Green manure. Chemical fertilizers normally increase the cost but also the water requirements of the crops. Prices of chemical fertilizers increase day by that resulting in increasing expenditure of farmers more than the expected one. Government should provide chemical fertilizers on subsidized rates.

"FARMING TECHNOLOGY OF DEATH"

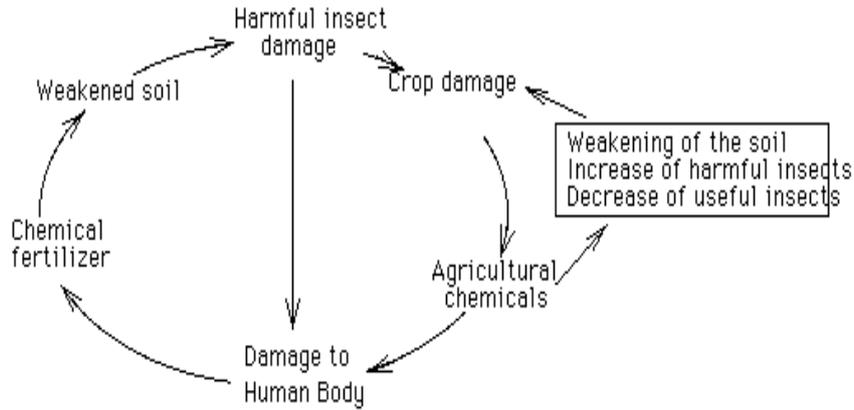


Fig. 7(a): Farming technology of death

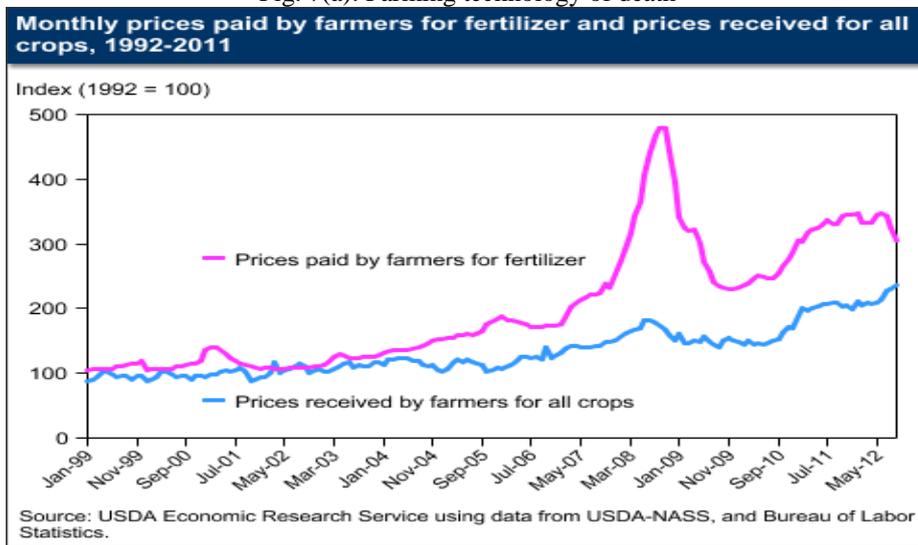


Fig. 7(b): Monthly prices paid by farmers

3) *Less Crop Yield And Deficient Irrigation System*

Cotton, Rice, Soybean, Pigeon gram, Green gram, black gram and Rabi crops like wheat, Jowar, Linseed and gram are major crops in Vidarbha region. 95% crop land in under irrigated which reduces crop yield which reduces farmers desired profits. In order to increase the crop yield, arrangement should be made for a provision of proper irrigation system.

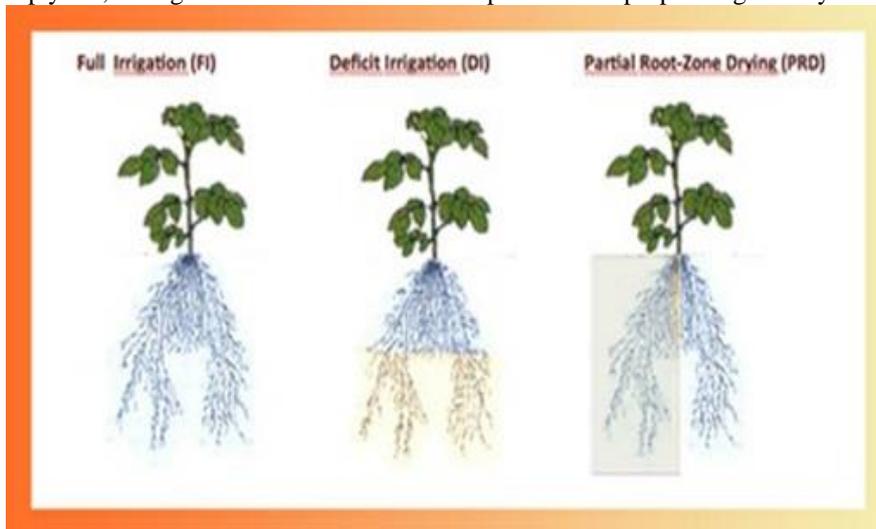


Fig. 8: Effect of deficient irrigation

4) *Lack of family planning and Addictions*

Due to lack of family planning, there are three or more family members in each family resulting in stretch on available limited resources. This gives rises to unemployment and unwanted addictions to young ones.



Fig. 9: Effect of lack of Family Planning

II. CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted and the various studies done on the said subject, there is a need of some concrete steps to be taken in terms of Government subsidies, advanced irrigation techniques, proper health and family planning measures, etc.

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