

AERC Report

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Farmer Suicides in Maharashtra

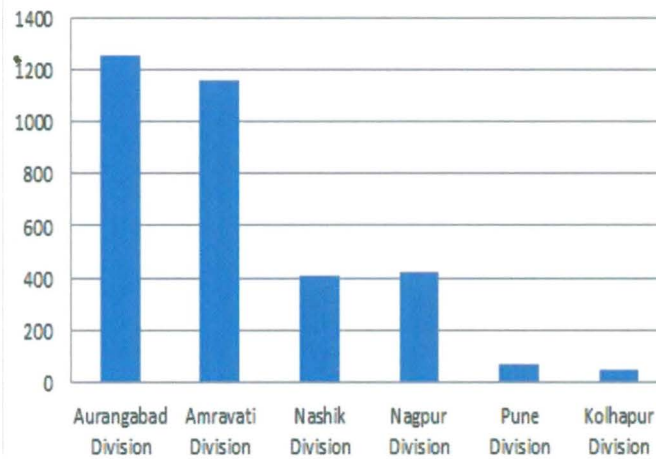
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Division wise Number of Suicides in 2015-16



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Foreword

Indian agriculture is currently passing through a period of severe crisis and the overall scenario in this sector is that of stagnation, underperformance and lack of dynamism. The Eleventh Plan target growth of 4 percent in the agricultural sector could not be achieved and the Twelfth Plan , has not shown any encouraging picture. The data from 70th Round of NSSO reveal that farmers cannot solely depend upon farming to meet their consumption requirements and in case of 70 percent of households, the monthly per household consumption expenditure was higher than income.

In view of the above agrarian crisis, a study on suicides by farmers in Maharashtra was undertaken. The findings of the study revealed that suicides were concentrated in Marathwada and Aurangabad region which every year, together, accounted for more than 70 percent of suicides in the state. Field level data from suicide prone districts for 2015-16 revealed that the deceased households suffered negative net returns of Rs. 27301/- per acre and there were several cases when sample households suffered from total crop loss but had incurred huge cost of cultivation. Crop failure was often accompanied by fall in prices due to imports or high output in other regions and hence farmers suffered from yield loss, price fall and high cost of cultivation. This state of affairs has led to indebtedness of farmers who borrow heavily from informal sources and out of total borrowing of sample farmers, 61.08 percent was from informal sources. The expenditure of a sample household exceeded income by Rs 60,335/-.

The main policy implications that emerged from the study was that top priority must be given to water shed strategies and irrigation. Marathwada is a water stressed region and continuous drought has led to ground water depletion. Besides, there are natural calamities such as hailstorms which cause pest attack and hence there is a need to install automated weather stations. Allied activities and rural non-farm income must also be promoted.

The findings of the study will certainly be useful to policy makers. I thank Sangeeta Shroff, Jayanti Kajale and Prashant Bansode for undertaking this study.

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Rajas Parchure, Professor and Officiating
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For writing the report, information had to be collected from various officials. We are grateful to the office of the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation, Government of Maharashtra and all the Divisional Commissioners of Maharashtra for providing the secondary data on suicides by farmers.

We thank all the respondent households for patiently responding to our questionnaire even in their grief and despair. Along with us, the field investigators Mr. S. S. Dete and Mr. Ravindra Gaikwad collected the primary data. Mr. Ravindra Gaikwad also inputted the data. We thank them for their hard work. We also thank Mr. Anil Memane, Ms. Rukaiya Khan, and Mr. Varun Miglani for research assistance towards preparation of the report. Finally, we thank our colleagues and staff of the office, computer centre and library for their co-operation.

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Content

Chapter No.	Chapter	Page No.
	Foreword	i
	Acknowledgements	ii
	Contents	iii-iv
	List of Tables	v
	List of Boxes	vi
	List of Figures	vi
	List of Annexures	vi
	List of Abbreviations	vii
1	Introduction	1-13
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Review of Literature	3
1.3	Main Objectives and Scope of the Study:	10
1.4	Data and Methodology	10
1.5	Organisation of the Report	13
2	Farmers' Suicide Scenario	14-35
2.1	Introduction	14
2.2	Intensity of Farmers' Suicide:	14
2.3	Procedure adopted and criteria for compensation	17
2.4	Payment of Compensation and Measures to Prevent Suicides by Farmers	18
2.5	Summary	22
3	Analysis of Primary Data	36-49
3.1	Introduction	36
3.2	Socio-Economic Profile of the Victims	36
3.3	Socio-Economic Profile of Victims' Family	38
3.4	Characteristics of operational holdings	39
3.5	Sources of Irrigation	40
3.6	Leasing of Land	40
3.7	Sources of Income and Items of Expenditure	41
3.8	Cropping Pattern and Returns to Cultivation	43
3.9	Credit Availed	45
3.10	Summary	48
4	Causes and Effects of Suicides-based on primary survey	50-73
4.1	Introduction	50
4.2	Symptoms observed and cause of suicide	51
4.3	Impact of suicides on family members	69
4.4	Suggestions from families to avert suicides in future	70
4.5	Summary	72

Chapter No.	Chapter	Page No.
5	Conclusions and Policy Implications	74-82
5.1	Introduction	74
5.2	Objectives and Methodology	75
5.3	Major Findings	76
5.4	Policy Suggestions	80
	Executive Summary	83-87
	References	88-90
	Annexure I	91

List of Tables

Table No.	Table	Page No.
1.1	District wise selection of Households of Suicide Victims	12
2.1	District –wise details of farmers’ suicides in Maharashtra (July 2015 to June 2016)	15
2.2	Month-Wise Number of Farmers’ Suicide in Maharashtra (July 2015 to June 2016)	16
2.3	District-wise details of compensation (July 2015 to June 2016)	19
3.1	Socio-economic profile of victim	37
3.2	Socio-Economic Profile of victims' family	39
3.3	Characteristics of operational holdings (Acres per sample household)	40
3.4	Source-wise distribution of irrigated area	40
3.5	Rental value of leased-in and leased-out land	41
3.6	Net income and expenditure during 2015-16	42
3.7	Cropping Pattern of Sample households	44
3.8	Details on credit of sample households	45
4.1	Symptoms observed by family members before suicide	51
4.2	Social causes of suicide	52
4.3	Farming related causes of suicides	56
4.3(A)	Comparison of Yield (per acre in quintals) and Price (Per quintal) in 2013-14 (Normal Year for Monsoons) in Maharashtra with that of sample farmers in 2015-16 (Drought Year)	58
4.3(B)	Comparison of Cost of Production Per Quintal of selected crops of Sample farmers and MSP for 2015-16	60
4.4	Indebtedness related causes of suicides	64
4.5	Ranking of the social, farming and indebted causes of suicides	67
4.6	Impact on Household after committing suicide	69
4.7	Suggestions to prevent the suicides in future	71

List of Boxes

Box No.	Title	Page No.
1	Suicide case revealing expenditure regularly exceeding income	43
2	Mounting debt caused suicide	47
3	Pressure of social obligations triggered suicides	53
4	Agricultural income unable to sustain health expenses	55
5	Sharing of agricultural income induced stress	55
6	Victim suggested that only water can solve their problems	71

List of Figures

Figure No.	Title	Page No.
1.1	Sample Districts	13
2.1	Division wise Number of Suicides in 2015	24
2.2	Division wise Suicide for per lakh hectare of GCA and NSA for 2015	28
2.3	Region wise suicide per lakh hectare of GCA and NSA, 2015	29
2.4	Division-wise Percentage share of number of suicides in 2015-16	29

List of Annexures

Annexures No.	Title	Page No.
2.1	Division wise Number of Suicides in Maharashtra	23
2.2	Division wise Suicide for per lakh hectare of GCA and NSA	24
2.3	District wise Number of Suicides in Maharashtra	25
2.4	District wise suicide for per lakh hectare of GCA and NSA in Marathwada	26
2.5	District wise suicide for per lakh hectare of GCA and NSA in Vidharbha	27
2.6	Regionwise suicide per lakh hectare of GCA and NSA	28
2.7	District wise Month wise Number of Suicides (2015-16)	30
2.8	District wise Month wise (Percentage) of Suicides (2015-16)	31
2.9	Number of Eligible Cases for Compensation (Division wise)	32
2.10	Number of Eligible Cases for Compensation in Marathwada (District wise)	33
2.11	Number of Eligible Cases for Compensation in Vidharbha (District wise)	34
2.12	Scheme -wise and Grantor-wise Amount Received and Expenditure under PM Package as on May 31, 2009	35

List of Abbreviations

GVA	Gross Value Added
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organization
GoM	Government of Maharashtra
NSA	Net Sown Area
GCA	Gross Cropped Area
PM	Prime Minister
MSP	Minimum Support Price
AAJ	Antyodaya Anna Yojana
ha	hectares
Qtls	Quintals
HH	Household
RRBs	Regional Rural Banks

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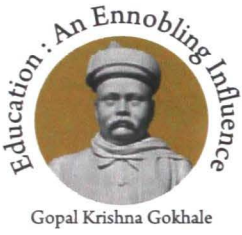
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Annexure I

Comments on the report received from Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, and Action Taken by Authors

1. Table 2.2 on month-wise number of suicides in Maharashtra from July 2015 to June 2016, and Table 2.3 showing district wise details of compensation, has been suitably indicated. All other tables are put in Annexure at the end of chapter 2.
2. Corrections have been made in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2.
3. Table 4.3 is presented for 2015-16 as the samples are from households where a suicide was committed in 2015-16.
4. Table 4.3 (A) and Table 4.3 (B) along with discussions are retained in chapter 4 as these tables relate to causes of suicides which are discussed in chapter 4.
5. All tables are removed from chapter 5 and only broad conclusions and policy suggestions are presented.



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