

Farmer Suicides and Its Causes: A Survey of Various Causes through Bibliometric Analysis

Sreenath U. and Madhura Bedarkar

The farmer suicides can be considered as the manifestation of agrarian distress in rural India. The growers in various states as well as crops are affected by this distress in the agricultural sector. The farmers and agriculture have always been glorified by the political system, mainly because of the sheer dominance of workforce engaged by the sector. The recent times, especially post 1991 one can see the phenomenon of farmer suicides across the country. This paper is an attempt in understanding the crisis affecting the farming sector by analyzing the existing studies in this area. It also seeks to understand the various reasons which lead a farmer to take this drastic step. The study uses bibliometric analysis to understand the trends and tendencies of these studies as well as to understand the reasons. The first part of the paper provides a conceptual framework linking farmer suicides with agrarian distress from the existing studies. Many of the studies point to the indebtedness among farmers as major reasons for suicides. The second part involves use of bibliometric analysis to understand the issue.

I Introduction

The agricultural sector of India would no doubt be one of the world's biggest agricultural sectors after China (Jha 2008). It produces a wide range of agricultural produce which are ideally grown in different agro-climatic zones. Though declining steadily, the contribution of agriculture to India's Gross Value Added stands at 16.5 per cent in 2019-2020 (Economic Review, 2019-2020). The journalists, academicians and policy makers have a tendency to consider farmer suicides as an end result of natural factors like floods, droughts, climate changes etc. But, as we look into the various studies from different parts of India covering different crops and socio-economic situations, the farmer suicides can be considered as the manifestation of agrarian distress in India. From the wheat fields of Punjab to the misty tropical hills of Kerala or from the semi-arid cultivations in Andhra Pradesh to the dry lands of Marathwada, the story of farmers is more or less the same: similar in the sense of hopelessness, despair and distress. This paper is an attempt in understanding the agrarian distress through the existing literature.

Sreenath U., Ph.D. Scholar, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune 411023, Maharashtra, Email: sreenathunni@gmail.com

Madhura Bedarkar, Associate Professor, Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune, India, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Maharashtra, Pune 412115, Email: madhurabedarkar@sibmpune.edu.in