



An Inclusive Study on Contributing Factors of Farmers' Suicide Condition

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Abstract: *The farmers' suicide disorder leads to decision to commit suicide. This paper evaluates the elements making this choice with a focus on Unified Mahabubnagar district of Telangana state. A total of 312 respondents from the families of farmers who committed suicide was contacted and collected data using structure interview schedule. The outcomes shows that, correlation coefficient of independent variables of affected farmers, gender, age, caste, education, occupation information seeking behaviour and delayed satisfaction have shown positive and highly significant ($P < 0.01$) relationship with suicide among the victims. Pearson Coefficients of independent variables for non-affected farmers, family type, caste, innovativeness and risk orientation have shown negative and highly significant ($P > 0.01$) relationship with suicide syndrome among non-affected farmers.*

Key Words: *Coping pattern, causes of suicide, correlation, significance level.*

1. INTRODUCTION :

The green revolution and the measures undertaken then that led to the rapid deterioration of soil conditions, increased demand for high-cost pesticides and fertilisers, and a network of institutional funding that extended to non-institutional sources too; the latter subsequently brought almost the entire farming community into the vicious grip of indebtedness. Punjab State Farmers' Commission (2007) stated that the number of marginal and small farmers that was 5 lakh in Punjab in 1991 declined to 3 lakh in 2001. Explained the conditions of women in the society after their husbands committed suicides. He says "dependent on the hetero-patriarchal structures of marriage and family, women are left fending for themselves, their children, the elderly, as well as dealing with the wrath and harassment of bank and commission agents". (Ranjana Padhi, 2009). The study shows that male farmers commit suicide more because of indebtedness as compared to female farmers for whom family distress is the primary cause (with the burden of indebtedness falling heavily on female household members). The conditions of both men and women was made more vulnerable by some global and regional process of liberalization the privatization of seeds, ineffectiveness of agricultural credit institutions, mono-cropping limited to cash crops, followed by an increased use of pesticides, fertilizers and subsequently low land productivity. These new agricultural practices were beneficial to only a small category of better off farmers, leading to the downfall of others. (Namrata Chindarkar, 2007). Maharashtra has been grappling with a disturbing issue for decades- farmer suicides. On an average, eight farmers and their lives day in the state as they are unable to repay the loans taken from private money lenders and banks due to crop loss and falling crop prices. Analysis suggests suicides among farmers and ranchers remain a public health concern. While data on suicide among female farmers and ranchers are supposed due to low cell count, research and intervention focused on suicides among female farmers and ranchers is warranted. While no clear risk factor for suicide among farmers and ranchers emerged, the results underscore the complex nature of suicide. (Cristina D.M. Miller PhD, Josie M. Rudolphi, 2022). Determining a single defining cause for farmer suicide in India is impossible, especially considering the relative lack of detailed literature. What can be inferred is that an amalgamation of factors has led to a picture of large-scale farmer indebtedness, that combined with a volatile ecological climate and socioeconomic landscape has left hundreds of thousands, millions



of farmers vulnerable to a situation of such crushing debt and depression that many have come to take their own lives (Dominic Merriott, 2017). India and other like-minded developing countries have been raising fundamental concerns on the likely adverse impact of the AoA on their food and livelihood security systems. Simultaneously, the government of India has also initiated measures for carefully monitoring and regulating the import liberalization process ushered in by the Exim policy 2001-02. Based on these developments, the paper advocates rigorous negotiation positions and proactive programmes of development in order to address the pressing problems arising from the AOA in developing countries, whose agrarian economies are characterized by “ecosystem multi-functionality”. These programmes have the scope for providing income diversification opportunities for the weaker sections of the farming communities through development of common property resources. This could form the best safety net to contain the fallout of the Agreement on Agriculture of W.T.O. (Damodaran A 2001)

2. METHODOLOGY :

The study was conducted in five selected districts, chose purposively with in Telangana state, Unified Mahabubnagar was divided in five districts, Nagarkurnool, Wanaparthy, Gadwal, Narayanpet, and Mahabubnagar districts, having the farmers who committed suicide during the years 2000 to 2023 among these districts. Data was collected from 312 family member of farmer who committed suicide. The purposive random sampling technique was used in identifying families of farmers, focusing on affected families from the list of farmer suicides that occurred between 2000 and 2023. Especially, those families who have sanctioned compensation from the Government of Telangana state were chosen for the study. The data gathered from the respondents includes aspects like demographic details of farmers, socioeconomic and psychological conditions, causes of suicide and additional information family has shared. The collected data was utilised to conduct correlation analysis, examining the relationship between independent variables and coping pattern.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :

- Gender

Table .1

SI. No	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	157	50.3
2	Female	155	49.7
Total		312	100.0

The details of the gender of the respondents are presented in the table 3.1. Among the respondents, little more than a half of the respondents (50.3 per cent) are men and the rest are women. Less than half of the respondents (49.7 per cent) are women. This clearly states that out of the total respondents about fifty per cent of respondents were men who are the elder sons of the farmer who committed suicide and less than fifty per cent are the widows. It may be stated that the rate of women and men are almost equal and it denotes that the families of these farmer are either widow-headed or elder-son-headed families.

- Age in years

Table .2

SI. No	Age in years	Frequency	Percentage
1	Younger (20 - 27)	78	25.0
2	Middle aged (33 – 47)	150	48.1
3	Older Persons (47 - 65)	84	26.9
Total		312	100.0

The frequency distribution of the age variable of the respondent is provided in table 3.2 which reveals that the younger age group of (20 - 27) were one fourth of the respondents, (25.0 per cent). The middle aged group (33 – 47 years) were just a little less than half of the respondents (48.1 per cent). In the older age group (47 – 65 years), about one quarter of the respondents (26.9 per cent) were found. Additionally in the sample of 312 respondents, younger adult has clear vision and they are very cautious of the situations what they had and as of now they have plans to get



this situation on. The middle aged adults are striving hard to come out of the turmoil and still want to continue the same work which they have been doing and older persons are just being guided by the young adults. At this stage they are not going to try for new ventures as their age doesn't permit any of these.

- **Caste**

Table 3

SI. No	Caste	Frequency	Percentage
1	Backward Caste	199	63.8
2	Scheduled Caste	61	19.6
3	Scheduled Tribes	26	8.3
4	Other Caste	26	8.3
Total		312	100.0

The caste wise distribution of the respondents is presented in table 3.3. It reveals that a vast majority of the respondents (63.8 per cent) belong to BC community (Kurma, Golla, Midhiraj, Ediga, Vaddera, Chakali, Kamsali, Vadla, Telugu, Boya, katika, goud, Baindla, Musti Golla, Yerra Golla, Uppari and Munnuru Kaapu) which are the dominant backward communities in the unified Mahabubnagar district. Even today this community owns huge land holdings in the State. Respondents less than one fifth (19.6 per cent) are from Scheduled Caste (Mala, Madiga, Dakkali). Less than one tenth of the respondents (8.3 per cent) belonged to STs (Lambada and Erukala). The percentage of OCs (Reddy) who committed suicide were less than one tenth of the respondents (8.3 per cent). The point of inference that could be drawn from this table is that both majority and minority communities committed suicide in difficult situations.

- **Education**

Table 4

SI. No	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Literate	115	36.9
2	Illiterate	197	63.1
Total		312	100.0

The table 4 Reveals the respondents' literacy rate. A vast majority of the respondents (63.1 per cent) are illiterate. This indicates that a significant number of respondents surveyed do not have basic reading and writing skills. In contrast, over one third respondents (36.9 per cent) are literate. This category of respondents are those who have attained basic reading and writing abilities. The data underscores the stark contrast between the literacy and illiteracy rates among the surveyed respondents, with a clear majority lacking formal education and a smaller segment having achieved literacy.

- **Occupation**

Table .5

SI. No	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Agriculture	253	81.1
2	Services	6	1.9
3	Wage Labour	15	4.8
4	Other	38	12.2
Total		312	100

Table 5 explains the occupations of respondents highlighting that the vast majority of respondents (81.1per cent) are engaged in agriculture-related activities, such as planting, cultivating, cropping and marketing. Little more than one tenth respondents (12.2 per cent) are of the 'others' category, which includes various other occupations suggesting a diverse range of livelihoods among this segment of respondents. This indicates that a significant proportion of respondents derive their livelihood primarily from farming. Very few of the respondents (4.8 per cent) work as wage



workers, indicating that a relatively small number are employed in temporary or labour-intensive jobs outside of agriculture. In contrast, even less number of respondents (1.9 per cent) are engaged in services, suggesting that few respondents are employed in non-agricultural sectors such as education, healthcare, or government services. Overall, the data emphasizes the predominance of agriculture as the primary occupation among the respondents. Very few engaged in services, wage labour, or other activities.

- **Type of family of the respondent**

Table .6

SI. No	Type of Family	Frequency	Percentage
1	Nuclear Family	214	68.6
2	Joint Family	98	31.4
Total		312	100.0

The table. 6 shows the types of families among the respondents. A vast majority of respondents (68.6 per cent) belong to the nuclear families. This indicates that a significant proportion of respondents studied live in households consisting of parents and their children, often in separate and independent units. Just a few more than one third of the respondents (31.4 per cent) belong to joint families, where multiple generations live together under one roof, sharing resources and responsibilities. This is smaller yet notable segment reflects a traditional familial structure common in many rural communities, where extended families often collaborate in agricultural and household activities. Overall, the data underscores a predominant trend towards nuclear family setups among the surveyed respondents, with a significant minority continuing to maintain joint family structures.

- **Income**

Table .7

SI. No	Annual Income in Rupees	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low income (Rs.12000 -50,000)	16	5.1
2	Moderated income (Rs.50,000-1,00,000)	102	32.7
3	High Income (1,00,000 - 5,00,000)	194	62.2
Total		312	100.0

The table.7 which reveals the distribution of respondents by their income levels. There was about a vast majority of the respondents (62.2 per cent) of the respondents are high income group and above them having, about one third (32.2 per cent) of the respondents' are moderated income. As indicated in the table, very few of them (5.1 per cent) of the respondents' are low income. Earlier, the cost of living used to be manageable except for medical and other emergency requirements. After globalization the cost of cultivation soared and they were unable to meet even daily expenses and were burdened by their family expenses like marriages, education etc. On the other hand few respondents who had more than 5 acres regularly invested for the production of the crop but due to the drought situations they faced loss every year. Their returns were very less when compared to their investment. The situation is same even with the other respondents who had more than 10 acres. They invested more on to the various types of inputs. As they had large land holdings they tried to go in for scientific farming, which was more systematic and costly. They wished to get good returns from each crop but in the process they fell into the debt trap, to a point of no returns.

- **Dependents**

Table .8

SI. No	Dependents	Frequency	percentage
1	Few (Up to 2)	88	28.2



2	Moderate number (3 – 5)	184	59.0
3	Large (6 -9)	40	12.8
Total		312	100.0

The table .8 reveals distribution of households based on the number of dependents they support varies widely. A vast majority (59.0 per cent) of families have dependents from three to five, about one quarter of (28.2 per cent) have up to two. The six and above dependents are found in more than one tenth (12.8 per cent) of households. This breakdown illustrates that while some families manage with few dependents, the majority navigate the responsibilities of multiple dependents, with larger families being less common but still significant in their presence.

- **Number of Children going to School**

Table 9

SI. No	No of Children going to School	Frequency	Percentage
1	No children going to school	96	27.90
2	Few (1 – 2)	214	61.2
3	Many (3-4)	52	16.3
Total		312	100.0

The table 9 reveals the number of respondents’ children going to school. A vast majority of the respondents’ children (61.2 per cent) are going to school. A significant number of respondents do not have basic reading and writing skills because they do not go to school in contrast, less one third respondents (27.90 per cent) are not going to school but they take care of other house hold duties. Less than one fifth (16.3 per cent), of the respondents have 3-4 children attending school.

- **Children education level**

Table 10

SI. No	Children Education Level	Frequency	Per cent
1	No Schooling	26	8.3
2	Primary Education (0-5)	158	50.6
3	Secondary Education (6-10)	83	26.6
4	Intermediate and Above	45	14.4
Total		312	100.0

The table.10 displays the education levels of children. Half of the respondents’ children (50.6 per cent) are in primary education (0-5 years), showing that above half of the children are in the initial stages of their education. About a quarter (26.6 per cent) is receiving secondary education (6-10 years). Finally, about one tenth (14.4 per cent) have reached intermediate or college levels. Very few (8.3 per cent) children are not attending school. This indicates that while the majority of children are in primary education, a significant portion advances to secondary and higher education levels.

- **Land holding status**

Table 11

SI. No	Land holding	Frequency	Percentage
1	Small Hectares (1-2 hectares)	86	27.6



2	Semi-medium (2-4 hectares)	148	47.4
3	Medium (4-10 hectares)	68	21.8
4	Large number (10 hectares 15)	10	3.2
Total		312	100.0

The table .11 outlines the distribution of land holdings among respondents across different categories. It can be seen that less than half of the respondents' (47.4 per cent) belongs to semi-medium category with land holdings ranging from 2-4 hectares. Among the respondents about one quarter (27.6 per cent) possess small land holdings of 1-2 hectares. About one fifth (21.8. per cent) of respondents have medium-sized holdings of 4-10 hectares. Very few of the respondents (3.2 per cent), own large holdings exceeding 10 hectares. This distribution highlights a diverse landscape of land ownership, with a significant majority falling within the semi-medium range of 2-4 hectares indicating a balanced spread between smaller and larger land holdings among the surveyed respondents.

- **Source of Irrigation**

Table 12

SI. No	Irrigation source	Frequency	Percentage
1	Bore-well	209	67.0
2	Well	39	12.5
3	Rain	49	15.7
4	Canal	15	4.8
Total		312	100.0

Distribution of respondents by source of irrigation is presented in Table.13 which reveals that a vast majority of the respondents, (67 per cent) depend on bore wells. Respondents relied on wells to cultivate are less than one fifth (15.7 per cent) of the total group. As such most often they look at the blue sky to shower blessings on them. But the uncertainty of the rains over the years had rendered the poor respondents hopeless. Nearly more than one tenth (12.5 per cent), use rain water for farming. Only very few respondents (4.8 per cent) have irrigational facilities and are utilizing canal water to cultivate the lands.

4. CONCLUSIONS :

There is a significant association between caste and coping pattern of families of farmers' suicide. This shows that the caste is a major factor influencing many things in Indian society. There is a significant association between income levels and coping patterns, the Pearson Chi-Square test was applied to the data. This suggests that income level is a crucial factor influencing how individuals cope with challenges. In the analysis of the relationship between the number of school-going children in a family and coping patterns, the Pearson Chi-Square test was applied. It underscores the need to consider the educational responsibilities and related pressures when developing support systems and interventions aimed at helping families manage stress and adversity effectively. It can be seen from this result the hypothesis that greater the number of children going to school is accepted. This goes to prove that sending children to school and keeping them there and the coping adopted are closely associated and education of children must be emphasized. To analyses of the relationship between irrigation sources and coping patterns, indicating a statistically significant association between irrigation sources and coping patterns. This very clear indicator goes a long way in providing that measure must be taken for all formers to provide adequate irrigation. To understand whether these differences were by chance or do they have any statistical significance, there is no significant association between gender and coping. These differences are merely due to chance. To understand whether these differences were by chance or do they have any statistical significance, there is no significant association between age and coping pattern of families of farmer's suicide. These differences are not significant among the respondents age between younger, middle-aged and older person of respondents. This could be because the family of the farmer is in direstraits strait and require other resources in addition to education. The association between occupation and coping patterns is not statistically significant. Other factors aside from occupational roles may be more influential in determining coping strategies.



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