

CHAPTER - 5

FARMERS' SUICIDE IN MAHARASHTRA

5.1 Introduction

Suicidal behaviour is a major problem across the world. Suicide is a conscious act and concerned person is fully aware about its results. Each year over 30000 people in the United States and approximately one million individuals worldwide are die by suicide.¹ It is indeed, more than 10 to 20 times more people attempt suicide every year but failed to die. Similarly, more than 75 percent of global suicides occurred in low and middle income countries in 2012.² Mental disorder, physical illness, social isolation, unemployment, social boycott and many other risk factors are responsible for increasing suicidal behaviour among people of the world. WHO report found that suicidal behaviour does not occurred among specific age group, but it is more among the age group of 15-29 in the entire world. However, empirical studies on suicidal behaviour are doing limited in the world because of behaviour of suicidal person who die himself is not available for psychological assessment and individuals with suicidal behaviour are often excluded from clinical trials.

Suicidal behaviour of people adversely affects the family, society and the entire nation. A recent report of Institute of Medicine estimated that the value of lost productivity due to suicide is \$ 11.8 billion per year in United States of America.³ Consequently, World Health Organisation (WHO) aims at increasing the awareness of the public health, significance of suicidal individual and suicide attempters and to make suicide prevention world has given high priority in the global public health agenda. It also aims at encouraging and supporting and to strengthening comprehensive suicide prevention strategies in a multi sectoral public health approach in affected countries.

The limited numbers of thinkers and organisations have done study on psychology of suicidal behaviour individually on primary data basis and

¹ Mathew K. & Others (2008), "*Suicide and Suicidal Behaviour*", Epidemiologic Review, Vol. 30 (1), July 24, 2008, Pp. 133-154

² www.who.int

³ Goldsmith & Others (2002), "*Reducing Suicide: A National Imperative*", National Academics Press, Washington D.C.

secondary data basis. The word "suicide" was first coined by Sir Thomas Brown (1642) and Walter Charleton (1657). The term has been explained in many ways. Suicide is the human act of self-inflicted, self-intentioned cessation (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1973). Suicide is an act with a fatal outcome, which the deceased, with the knowledge and expectation of a fatal outcome, had himself planned and carried out with the object of bringing about the changes desired by the deceased (WHO, 1986). According to the sociologists Hammerlin and Enerstvedt (1988), "suicide is an activity which involves acts with the aim and result of one's own biological death on the basis of social specific historical motives." Durkheim (1897) applies the term 'suicide' to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result.

Durkheim's⁴ theory of suicide

Many thinkers had represented that suicide among the human individuals is caused by extra social factors such as mental alienation, heredity, climate, temperature and imitation. According to Durkheim suicide is the different phenomenon than individual form. In his words, "cause of suicide does not reside within the individual but within the group to whom individual belongs and the individuals interaction with agents of social institutions. He has strongly proved that suicide is not related to biological or cosmic phenomena, but a social phenomenon that consists of family, political and economic, social, religious groups.

According to Durkheim, the term suicide is applied to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows and will produce this result.

⁴ Emile Durkheim is the French sociologist. He has an important contribution in sociology and more popular for suicide theory in the world. The book 'Le Suicide' had written by Emile Durkheim in 1897 in French language and it is translated in English in 1930 by Marcel Mauss. This book had touched to normal & abnormal psychology, social psychology, anthropology, metrological and other cosmic factors, religion, marriage, family, divorce, primitive rites, customs, social & economic crisis, crime and law, history, education and occupational groups for study the suicidal tendencies of the individuals. The theory is based on statistical records collected from various organisations and governments of the European countries of the world.

In short, suicide is a conscious act and concerned person is fully aware about its result. The common acts of committing suicide are shooting himself by gun, drinking poison, jumping down from the building, jumping down in the well, set fire to himself considered in terms of suicide.

General findings of Durkheim's Suicide theory:

1. Suicide rate is differs from country to country.
2. Suicide rates are higher in urban areas than rural areas in any country.
3. Suicide rates are lowest among Catholics in all religious groups.
4. Suicides are higher among the men than among women.
5. Suicide rate gets higher with increasing age.
6. Suicide rates are relatively higher among the higher income groups.
7. Divorced men and divorced women have higher suicide rate than non-divorced men and women.
8. The suicide rate is very low among the Negroes compared to Whites.

Durkheim divides suicides into three categories according to religious affiliation, marriage and family, political and national communities, social and economic society.

1. Egoistic suicide

Egoistic suicide is caused by lack of integration of individuals into society. The stronger the forces throwing individual out of his own resources in society, greater the suicide rate in such society. It is the result of extreme loneliness and excess individualism. Durkheim had studied varying degrees of integration of individuals into their religion, family, political & national communities.

According to Durkheim, egoistic suicide is seen in those families where slight integration of the individuals into family life. As well as, greater is the density of family, grater the immunity of individuals to suicide. In political and national communities greater the crisis, lowest the suicide rate caused by more strongly integrated and active participation of individuals in social life. Egoism of individual is restricted and will to live be strengthening. Further, he has found that egoistic suicide had comparatively less in Catholics than Protestants due to Catholics are more integrated than Protestants. Durkheim has concluded that the lack of integration is the main cause of egoistic suicide.

2. Altruistic suicide

Altruistic suicide results due to over integration of the individual into his group. The life of individuals is rigorously governed by custom and habit and individuals end his life by heroic means as a sacrifice of life. This type of suicide finds still exist into modern society. Sati of widows, Samadhi of Sages, Nirvana of Buddhist Monks, Hari-kari of Japanese are famous forms of altruistic suicide in the world.

To sum up, man is always ready to sacrifice his life for a great cause, principle, ideal or value in altruistic suicide.

3. Anomic suicide

The lack of equilibrium between social, economic, political changes and individuals thought and action about the same changes create issue of anomic suicide. The breakdown of social norms and sudden social changes are the major causes of anomic suicide. When the collective conscience weakens, individuals fall to anomic suicide victim.

According to Durkheim, when social relations get disturbed, erosion of social ethics, decline the values of life and place taken by the economic factors create the issue of anomic suicide. The existence of anomic suicide is not only found in poor people and in period of economic disaster and industrial crisis but also during the period of sudden economic prosperity and in rich community. In short, when serious readjustments take place in the social order, whether or not due to a sudden growth or to an unexpected catastrophe, men are more inclined to self destruction.

Farmers' suicide has become serious issue all over India. The large number of small and marginal farmers' particularly rainfed farmers could not face the challenge of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation since the 1990's in India. Consequently, crisis in agriculture sector arise and it leads to farming community towards social, economic and psychological distress and some farmers are adopted suicide as a permanent relief from the distress.

According to Mid Term Appraisal of tenth plan slowdown in growth, widening economic inequality between irrigated and rain-fed areas, vulnerability in prices of agriculture produce across world particularly cotton and oilseeds, uneven and slow development of technology. inefficient use of available technology and inputs, lack of adequate incentives and appropriate institutions, degradation of natural resources, rapid and widespread decline in groundwater table, increased non-agricultural demand for land and water as a result of the higher GDP growth and urbanization, aggravation in social distress have a cumulative impact on food security, income of farmers' and poverty and it reflected in an upsurge of farmers' suicides.⁵ Hence after, repeated crop failures, inability to meet the rising cost of production, indebtedness are major responsible factors for farmers' suicide in India and Maharashtra⁶

According to the NCRB reports, almost 2,57,000 farm related peoples had committed suicides during 1995-2011 in India. It is found that issues of farmers' suicide have spread all over India. However, the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and even Punjab are facing acute problem of farmers' suicide. Not only this, the level of intensity of farmers' suicide has not same among various states and also different regions of particular state. Government have been appointed many committees and commissions to study and suggest measures to resolve the agrarian crisis and taken initiative to increase confidence among the farming community and encourage farm business.

Moreover, union government and the state governments formulate policies time to time for articulating clear vision on few basic parameters of agricultural sector. However, agrarian crisis could not prevent these policy decisions due to lack of competency among small and marginal farmers' and lack of government efforts towards agriculture development and preventing farmer's suicide through long measures. Planning Commission of India in its draft of eleventh five year plan quoted that, "Small and marginal farmers often lack access to major agricultural services, such as credit, extension, insurance and markets. This is especially true with respect to women farmers since there is pervasive male bias in provision of such services. Almost all sharecroppers and most marginal farmers

⁵ Planning commission (2008), "*Eleventh Five Year Plan, Vol. 03*", Government of India, Pp. 4

⁶ Government of Maharashtra (2005), "*Causes of Farmers' Suicide in Maharashtra: An Inquiry*", Tata institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

unable to access credit from the formal system, a key issue relating to agricultural credit is the utter lack of financial inclusiveness. Farmers committed suicides in many parts of India during recent period are linked with increasing indebtedness through non institutional sources.”⁷

Objective of the present chapter is to study the trends of farmers’ suicide, factors responsible to increase epidemic of suicide and policy measures taken by government for preventing farmers’ suicide in India and Maharashtra.

The chapter is divided into three parts, first deals with trends of farmers’ suicide, factors responsible to increase epidemic of suicide among farmers' in India and in state of Maharashtra, second consists of factors responsible for increasing farmers’ suicide in India and third deals with preventing measures introduced by government in Maharashtra.

5.2 Farmers’ suicides in India

Suicide is an universal and the oldest concept in India. Many foot prints of suicide are found in Indian literature. Social custom “Sati” in which women used to often kill themselves on their husbands’ death. “Samadhi” is one of the universal examples of suicide found in Indian literature.⁸ Buddhist taught that the highest bliss was self distraction in Nirvana.⁹ A data published by NCRB, has classified according to nature of occupation since 1995 as well as study is restricted for 1991-2011 period. Therefore, detailed study of suicide trends has made from the year 1995 in this chapter.

The large number of farmers’ committed suicides in various parts of country is most distressing phenomenon observed over last two decades in India. During the 20 years of period 1995-2014, as many as 294966 farmers’ are committed suicide in India, excluding absence of 1996 data. (See table 5.1). Thus, on an average 15520 farmers had committed suicide in India. During the first decade of 1995-2004, an average 15855 and in second decade of 2005-2014, on an average 15226 farmers had committed suicide in India. It is indeed, actual number of farmers’ suicides may be higher than reports of government. It is observed

⁷ Planning Commission (2008), “*Eleventh Five year Plan, Vol. 3*” Government of India. Pp. 33

⁸ Emile Durkheim (1951),”*Suicide: A study in Sociology*”, Free Press, New York, Pp. 219

⁹Emile Durkheim (1951),”*Suicide: A study in Sociology*”, Free Press, New York, pp. 223

during field visit, police department has recorded a suicide case as a farmers suicide according to norms declared and provided by respective state government.

Table 5.1: Number of farmers' suicides in India (by gender)

Year	Male		Female		Total farmers' Suicide		Percent female farmers' suicide to total farmers' suicide
	Number of suicide	Indices	Number of Suicide	Indices	Total suicide	Indices	
1995	8295	100	2425	100	10720	100	22.6
1996	NA	NA	NA		NA		NA
1997	11229	135.4	2393	98.7	13622	127.1	17.6
1998	12986	156.5	3029	124.9	16015	149.4	18.9
1999	13278	160.1	2804	115.6	16082	150	17.4
2000	13501	162.8	3102	127.9	16603	154.9	18.7
2001	13708	165.2	2576	106.2	16284	151.9	15.8
2002	15308	184.5	2663	109.8	17971	167.6	14.8
2003	14701	177.2	2463	101.6	17164	160.1	14.3
2004	15929	192	2312	95.3	18241	170.1	12.7
2005	14973	180.5	2158	89	17131	159.8	12.6
2006	14664	176.8	2396	98.8	17060	159.1	14.0
2007	14509	174.9	2123	87.5	16632	155.1	12.8
2008	14145	170.5	2051	84.6	16196	151.1	12.7
2009	14951	180.2	2417	99.7	17368	162	13.9
2010	13592	163.8	2372	97.8	15964	148.9	14.9
2011	12071	145.5	1956	80.6	14027	130.8	13.9
2012	11951	144.1	1803	74.3	13754	128.3	13.1
2013	10489	126.4	1283	52.9	11772	109.8	10.9
2014	10889	131.3	1471	60.6	12360	115.3	11.9
Total	251169	151.4	43797	90.3	294966	137.6	14.8

Source: nrb.nic.in, various reports of Accidental and Suicidal deaths in India, National crime Records Beuro, New Delhi.

Note: percentage and indices are calculated.

In Maharashtra, title of the land registered on name of suicide victim is basic criteria for registering a suicide victim as farmers' suicide. Moreover, following norms should be fulfilled for getting immediate help of government.

1. Suicide victim must have registered land possessed before one year (7/12)
2. Post mortem report of civil hospital must represent suicide victim.
3. Death certificate of suicide victim.
4. A suicide victim must have outstanding institutional credit or situation of crop failure during current year.

If a suicide victim of farmers' household could not fulfil any one of the above criteria, he is not liable for government help. Similarly, in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and other states have different or something same criteria. Therefore, actual numbers of suicide victim are confidently more than present data.

Suicides as whole are largely concentrated among males, but the degree of concentration here is significantly higher in the case of male farm suicides. It is also worth noting that the indices of male suicides among farmers have increased quite rapidly than female farmers' suicide during 1995-2014 in India

One of the important reasons of high concentration of farm suicides among male found that the criteria adopted for identifying as farmers suicide in many states of India. Suicide victim should have registered land on his name have important criteria for registering suicide as farmers' suicide in most of the states in India. As well as, male head of household is generally "Bread Winner" and he is point towards economic distress.¹⁰ Therefore, economic distress of family is heavily loaded by male in India. Consequently, large number of male farmers' committed suicide in India.

It is found that growth rate of farmer's suicide is not same in all states of India. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have been found relatively large number of farmers' suicide (see table 5.2). These five states accounts average almost 65 percent farmers' suicides of India during 1995-2014, but it contributes only 30 percent population share of nation.¹¹

¹⁰ Nagraj K. (2008), "*Farmers' Suicides in India: Magnitudes, Trends and Spatial Patterns*", Madras Institute of Development Studies, Madras. Pp. 07

¹¹ Government of India (), "*Census of India 2011: provisional population totals*", Registrar General Commissioner, New Delhi, Pp. x & xi

Table 5.2: Absolute number and relative share of farmers' suicide in major states of India

Year	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Maharashtra	% of five States	All India
1995	1196 (11.15)	2490 (23.2)	1299 (12.1)	1239 (11.6)	1083 (10.1)	68.2	10720
1996	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1997	1097 (8.05)	1832 (13.4)	1204 (8.8)	2390 (17.5)	1917 (14.1)	61.95	13622
1998	1813 (11.3)	1883 (11.8)	1514 (9.5)	2278 (14.2)	2409 (15.04)	61.8	16015
1999	1974 (12.3)	2379 (14.8)	1431 (8.9)	2654 (16.5)	2423 (15.6)	67.5	16082
2000	1525 (9.3)	2630 (16.1)	1295 (7.9)	2660 (16.3)	3022 (18.5)	68.2	16603
2001	1509 (9.2)	2505 (15.3)	1035 (6.3)	1372 (8.4)	3536 (21.55)	60.7	16284
2002	1896(10.55)	2340 (13.0)	1533 (8.5)	1340 (7.5)	3695 (20.5)	71.2	17971
2003	1800 (10.5)	2678 (15.6)	1583 (9.2)	1445 (8.4)	3836 (22.3)	66.1	17164
2004	2666 (14.6)	1963 (17.8)	903 (4.95)	1638 (9.0)	4147 (22.7)	62.04	18241
2005	2490 (14.5)	1883 (11.0)	1118 (6.5)	1248 (7.3)	3926 (22.9)	62.25	17131
2006	2607 (15.3)	1720 (10.1)	1124 (6.6)	1375 (8.1)	4453 (26.1)	66.1	17060
2007	1797 (10.8)	2135 (12.8)	1232 (7.4)	1263 (7.6)	4238 (25.5)	64.1	16632
2008	2105 (13.0)	1697 (10.5)	820 (5.06)	1379 (8.5)	3802 (23.5)	60.5	16196
2009	2414 (13.9)	2282 (13.1)	896 (5.1)	1395(8.0)	2872 (16.5)	56.8	17368
2010	2525 (15.8)	2585 (16.2)	895(5.6)	1237 (7.7)	3141 (19.7)	65.00	15964
2011	2206 (15.7)	2100 (15.0)	830 (5.9)	1326 (9.45)	3337 (23.8)	69.85	14027
2012	2572 (18.7)	1875 (13.6)	1081 (7.9)	1172 (8.5)	3786 (27.5)	76.2	13754
2013	2014 (17.1)	1403 (11.9)	972 (8.25)	1090 (9.25)	3146 (26.7)	73.3	11772
2014	632 (5.1)	768 (6.2)	807 (6.5)	1198 (9.7)	4004 (32.4)	59.9	12360
Total	36838 (12.5)	39148 (13.3)	21572 (7.3)	29699 (10.06)	62773 (21.3)	64.4	294966

Source: ncrb.nic.in, various reports of Accidental and Suicidal deaths in India, National crime Records Beauru, New Delhi.

Note: percentage and indices are calculated.

5.3 Farmers' suicides in Maharashtra

Maharashtra is developed state of India, although it could not avoid tendency of citizens towards suicide. It is indeed, Maharashtra is also most distressed state of India. The number of farmers' committed suicide during 1995-2014 periods had 51837, which contributes 22.5 percent of general suicide of Maharashtra. The number of farmers' suicide has increased rapidly than any other states in Maharashtra. Considering base year 1995, farm suicides have net increased by 284 percent during first decade (1995-2004) and 270 percent during second decade (2005-2014). Therefore, we can conclude that indices of farmers suicide has declined merely during second decade compared to first decade in Maharashtra.

Table 5.3: Number of farmers' suicides in Maharashtra 1995-2014

Year	All Maharashtra			
	Male Farmers Suicide	Female Farmers Suicide	Total Farmers Suicide	Male Female Farmers Suicide Ratio
1995	978 (100)	105 (100)	1083 (100)	90.3
1996	NA	NA	NA	
1997	1600 (163.6)	317 (301.9)	1917 (177)	83.5
1998	1938 (198.1)	471 (448.6)	2409 (222)	80.4
1999	2050 (209.6)	373 (355.2)	2423 (224)	84.6
2000	2492 (254.8)	530 (504.8)	3022 (279)	82.5
2001	2945 (301.1)	591 (562.8)	3536 (326)	83.3
2002	3155 (322.6)	540 (514.3)	3695 (341)	85.4
2003	3381 (345.7)	455 (433.3)	3836 (354)	88.1
2004	3799 (388.4)	348 (331.4)	4147 (384)	91.6
2005	3638 (372)	288 (274.3)	3926 (362)	92.7
2006	4111 (420.3)	342 (325.7)	4453 (411)	92.3
2007	3968 (405.7)	270 (257.1)	4238 (391)	93.6
2008	3573 (365.3)	229 (218.1)	3802 (351)	94.0
2009	2692 (275.3)	180 (171.4)	2872 (265)	93.7
2010	2947 (301.3)	194 (184.8)	3141 (290)	93.8
2011	3093 (316.3)	244 (232.4)	3337 (308)	92.7
2012	3483 (356.1)	303 (288.6)	3786 (349)	92.0
2013	3020 (308.8)	126 (120)	3146 (290)	96.0
2014	3726 (381)	278 (264.8)	4004 (370)	93.0
Total	56589	6184	62773	89.1

Source: ncrb.nic.in, various reports of Accidental and Suicidal deaths in India.

Note: i) Indices are based on 1995 as a base year and shown in parenthesis, ratio is calculated

ii) Total is addition of number of farmers' committed yearly.

However, number of male farmers' suicides has been much higher than the female farmers' suicides in Maharashtra. In 1995, the number of male farmers' suicide had 978 and 3020 in 2013, which contributes 90.3 percent and 96 percent respectively of total farmers committed suicide in Maharashtra.

Here, compound annual growth rate of farmers' suicide has calculated for male, female and total farmers. The compound annual growth rate of farmers' suicide has 6.8 percent for 1995-2014 periods. This CAGR had 14.4 percent during 1995-2004 decade and 1.9 percent for 2005-2014 period. It is important that CAGR of male farmers is comparatively high than female farmers. The compound annual growth rate of male farmers' suicide and female farmers' suicide had 6.9 percent and 5.0 percent respectively during 1994-2014 in Maharashtra.

Table 5.4: Number of farmers' suicides and liable for government grants in Maharashtra

Year	Number of Farmers Suicide	Indices of farmers suicide	Number of liable for govern. Grant	Percent of liable
2001	59	100	29	49.15
2002	123	208	78	63.4
2003	175	296	102	58.30
2004	632	1071	343	54.3
2005	595	1008	364	61.2
2006	2377	4028	1035	43.5
2007	2069	3506	834	40.3
2008	1952	3308	759	38.9
2009	1608	2725	585	36.4
2010	1739	2947	580	33.4
2011	1262	2138	366	29.0
Total	12591	-	5075	40.30

Source: Government of Maharashtra, Sector officer, Dept. of Disaster Management (Farmer suicide), New Administrative Building, Mumbai.¹²

Note: i) Total of the farmers' suicide is calculated from addition of 2001-2011

ii) Percentage and indices is calculated

¹²Government of Maharashtra, "*Sector officer, Department of Disaster Management (Farmer suicide)*", New Administrative Building, Mumbai.

However, government of Maharashtra has reported much lesser number of farmers' who committed suicide in state. The number of farmers committed suicide and liable for government grant was 12591 and 5075 respectively during 2001-2011 in Maharashtra (see table 5.4).

The number of farmers' suicide was 59 in 2001 and peak level of 2377 in 2006 in Maharashtra. However, farmers' suicide continuously declined since 2007 and it had 1262 in 2011. Similarly, numbers of suicide victims liable for immediate relief grants of state government were more than 50 percent prior to the announcement of packages, although it had declined continuously and touched to 29 percent in 2011. Therefore, researcher has concluded that government has strictly followed criteria of registered farmers' suicide and its positive impact has seen in the declined number of farmers' suicide declined in Maharashtra. On the contrary, assessment of suicide cases may be strictly and its negative impact has seen on number of suicide victim households received immediate relief grant from government in Maharashtra.

Table 5.5: Absolute and relative number of farmers' suicides in various divisions of Maharashtra during 2001-2011

Division	Number of Farmers Suicide	Percent to Total Number	Liable for grant	Percent of liable for grant to total suicides
Konkan	12	0.1	12	100
Pune Division	585	4.6	321	54.9
Nasik	1040	8.3	598	57.5
Aurangabad	1713	13.6	866	50.55
Nagpur	1967	15.6	796	40.5
Amravati	7274	57.8	2469	33.9
Maharashtra	12591	100	5062	40.2

Source: Government of Maharashtra, Sector officer, Dept. of Disaster Management (Farmer suicide), New Administrative Building, Mumbai.

Note: Percentage is calculated

The table 5.5 shows that relative share of farmers' suicide in different regions of Maharashtra. Almost, 58 percent farmers' suicide was from Amravati division, followed by 16.5 percent in Nagpur division and 13.6 percent in Aurangabad division. It means Vidarbha accounts almost more than 73 percent

farmers' suicides in Maharashtra. However, Konkan division accounts lowest 0.1 percent, Pune (4.6 percent) and Nasik (8.3 percent) share in total farmers' committed suicide during 2001-2011 in Maharashtra.

The number of farmers' who committed suicide in various districts is not same in Maharashtra. Despite of Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudarg districts of Konkan region, all other districts of Maharashtra are facing issue of farmers' suicide. A number of farmers' had committed suicides largest in Yawatmal district contributing 18.2 percent of total farmers' committed suicide overall Maharashtra, followed by Amravati district 14.3 percent, Buldhana 9.6 percent and Akola district 8.6 in Maharashtra.

Table 5.6: Absolute and relative number of farmers' suicides in districts of Maharashtra during 2001-2011

District	Farmers suicide		District	Farmers' Suicide	
	Number	Percent to state		Number	Percent to state
Thane	12	0.1	Parbhani	180	1.4
Raigad	0	0	Nanded	389	3.1
Ratnagiri	0	0	Osmanabad	234	1.9
Sindhudarg	0	0	Latur	88	0.7
Pune	88	0.7	Hingoli	76	0.6
Satara	170	1.4	Nagpur	403	3.2
Sangli	144	1.1	Wardha	789	6.3
Solapur	109	0.9	Chandrapur	323	2.6
Kolhapur	74	0.6	Gadchiroli	59	0.5
Nasik	195	1.5	Bhandara	280	2.2
Dhule	233	1.9	Gondia	113	0.9
Jalgaon	487	3.9	Amravati	1798	14.3
Nandurbar	14	0.1	Akola	1079	8.6
Ahmednagar	111	0.9	Buldhana	1212	9.6
Aurangabad	98	0.8	Yawatmal	2289	18.2
Jalana	123	1.0	Washim	896	7.1
Beed	525	4.2	Maharashtra	12591	100

Source: Sector officer, Dept. of Disaster Management (Farmer suicide), New Administrative Building, Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai.

Note: i) Number of farmers' suicide of individual district is addition of farmers' suicide of 2001-2011

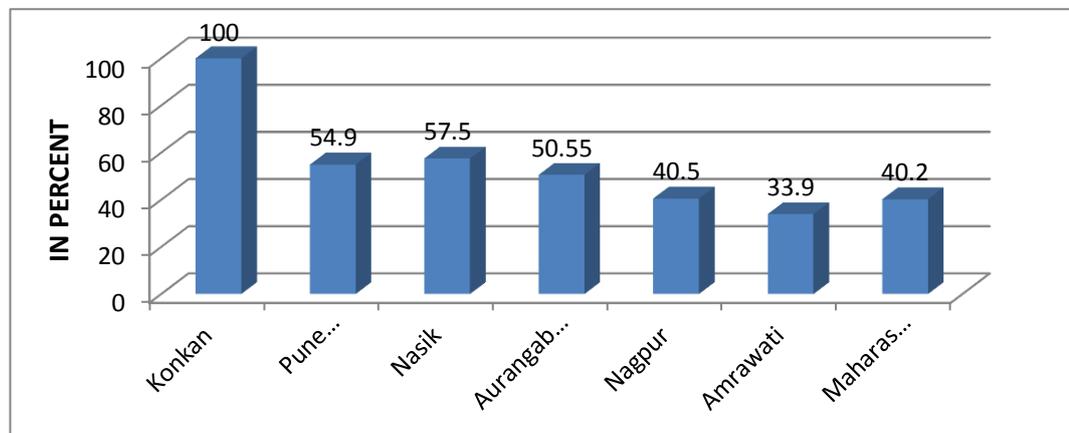
ii) Percentage is calculated.

In short, largest number of farmers' who committed suicide are from the districts of Vidarbha, which contributes almost 73 percent of total farmers' suicide

of overall Maharashtra. Therefore, Akola, Amravati, Buldhana, Gadchiroli, Gondia, Nanded, Nandurbar, Osmanabad, Wardha, Washim and Yawatmal were considered in list of 100 less agriculturally developed and distressed districts of India. Similarly, Amravati, Yawatmal, Buldhana, Akola, Washim and Wardha of Vidarbha region have been considered in prime ministers rehabilitation package announced for 31 most distressed districts all over India.¹³ These 6 most suicide prone districts account for almost 64 percent of total farmers' suicide committed during 2001-2011 in Maharashtra.

Figure 5.1

Suicide victims eligible for immediate relief during 2001-2011 in Maharashtra



Source: Sector officer, Dept. of Disaster Management (Farmer suicide), New Administrative Building, Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, taken from table 5.5

It is found that the percentage of eligible suicide victim for immediate relief scheme of state government had in Konkan region (9100 percent), followed by Nasik division 57.5 percent, Pune 55 percent, Aurangabad 50.5 percent, Nagpur 40 percent and lowest 34 percent in Amravati division (see figure 6.5). It means that higher the number of suicide victim farmers, lower is the percentage of eligible suicide victim for government grant.

5.4 Strategies adopted for preventing farmers' suicides in India and Maharashtra

The central and state government have announced many packages to preventing the incidents of suicide among farming community and to increase

¹³ Gupta Anil (2009), *“Development of village knowledge Management System: Mitigating extreme socio-economic stress causing suicide among farmers”*, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad, Pp. 18

confidence among them. The comprehensive package announced by government has attempted to address most of the issues and aims to release farmers' from the clutches of unscrupulous money lenders, put an end to indebtedness, arrange for fresh capital from banks to improve farm productivity, bring desirable changes in cropping pattern, encourage organic farming and measures to reduce the cost of cultivation, provide financial assistance and encourage community marriages with the help of social organisations and encourage value addition by supporting cooperative processing units.

1. PM's package of central government

Prime Minister visited the Vidarbha region in July 2006 and announced a package of Rs.3750 crores to the identified six most suicide prone districts of Vidarbha namely Yawatmal, Amravati, Buldhana, Washim, Akola and Wardha of Maharashtra. Under the package, an additional credit of Rs.1275 was earmarked for disbursement. This amount must be spent within three years of period. An entire interest on overdue loan was waived and principle amount rescheduled for 3 to 5 years.

PM's package goal

The main goal of PM's package had establishment of sustainable and viable farming, livelihood support system through complete credit cover through institutional credit sources, debt relief by restructuring overdue loans and interest waiver, assured irrigation facilities, effective watershed management, seed replacement programme, subsidiary income opportunities through horticulture, livestock, dairying, fisheries and better extension and farming support services and improved marketing facilities

Targets of PM's packages

1. Ex-gratia assistance from PMNRF – Rs. 50 lakh per district
2. Debt relief to farmers, rescheduling of outstanding loan as on June 30, 2006
3. Fresh credit to farmers.
4. Entire outstanding debt interest as on July 1, 2006 to be shared equally by centre and state government for interest waiver.
5. Completion of all major, medium and minor irrigation projects sanctioned under AIBP and RIDF within 3 years period.

6. 50 percent subsidy for quality seed over 3 years (entitlement 1 ha / farmer)
7. Construction of check dams 500 per district per year for 3 years.
8. Area treatment under watershed development 15000 ha per district per year for 3 years.
9. Construction of rain water harvesting structures by SC/ST/SF/MF beneficiaries with 50 percent bank loan and 50 percent back ended subsidy to 1000 beneficiaries per district per year for 3 years.
10. All districts to be covered under National Horticulture Mission and launching of Technology Mission on citrus.
11. All districts to be covered under scheme of micro irrigation for propagation of drip and sprinkler irrigation.
12. All districts to be covered under ATMA (Agriculture Technology Management Agencies) to ensure extension support and convergence at district level.

Table 5.7

PM's relief package outlay objective and actual outlay as on 31st April 2008

Sr.No.	Item	Outlay Objective	Actual Outlay	Percent
1.	Interest Relief	712	837.5	117.63
2.	Assured Irrigation Plan	2177	1684.04	77.35
3.	Micro Irrigation	78	68.81	88.22
4.	Check Dam	180	87.28	48.49
5.	Watershed Development	54	9.58	17.74
6.	Water Harvesting	6	0.62	10.33
7.	Extension Services- Agricultural Technology Management Agencies	3	7.46	248.6
8.	Distribution of Seeds	180	68.8	38.22
9.	National Horticulture Mission Programme	225	64.20	28.53
10.	Agro supporting Business	135	15.80	11.7
11.	Total	3750	2844.09	75.84

Source: Narendra Jadhav (2008), "Report on Farmers Suicide and Issues before Agriculture Sector: Debt Relief and All Maharashtra Balanced Agriculture Development Action Plan", Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, Pp. 93

The PM's package funds primarily spent on assured irrigation plans, interest relief and immediate relief for suicide victim households. The amount of Rs. 2177 crores (58 percent) will be spent under assured irrigation plan for constructing large and medium dams, Rs. 712 crores (19 percent) will be spent on interest relief to farmers' community and remaining 23 spent on immediate relief to suicide victim farm households. It is indeed, package could not produce assurance among the suicide victim farmers because of only 23 percent amount was reserved for immediate relief to suicide victim farmers.¹⁴ However, this package has long term benefits to most distressed districts of Maharashtra.

According to department of disaster management and rehabilitation, government of Maharashtra, actual amount spent on PM's package was 115 percent till June 2011 year. Similarly, Dr. A. K. Sikka, a member of National Rainfed Area Authority, New Delhi had visited most suicide distressed districts and reported that PM's package has implemented properly in these district.

2. Package of state government

Government of Maharashtra announced the special package of Rs.1075 crores in 2005. The major objectives of package were to release farmers from the clutches of unscrupulous money lenders, put an end to indebtedness, arrange for fresh capital from banks to improve farm productivity, bring desirable changes in cropping pattern, encourage organic farming as a measure to reduce cost of cultivation, provide financial assistance and encourage community marriages with the help of social organisations and encourage value addition by supporting cooperative processing units. The package has implemented as under.

1. Immediate relief to the family members of the farmers who committed suicide (Rs. 1 lakh to each family).
2. Rescheduling of the outstanding crop loan and subsidy on interest to the indebted farmers (Rs.225 crores).
3. Ban on illegal private lending and legalizing of licensed moneylenders.
4. Limiting the interest payable to the original principal amount.
5. Disbursing crop loan through farmers Self Help Groups.

¹⁴ Narendra Jadhav (2008), "*Report on Farmers Suicide and Issues before Agriculture Sector: Debt Relief and All Maharashtra Balanced Agriculture Development Action Plan*", Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, Pp. 19-20.

6. Rs. 30 crores for enhancement subsidy on crop insurance premium.
7. Financial assistance (for land development) to acquire farm equipment, inputs like seeds/ pest control measures and bio-fertilizers (Rs.150 crores)
8. Promotion of agro based subsidiary livelihood options (loans to farmers for Dairy, Goatery and Poultry) (Rs.30 crores).
9. Promotion of agro-processing industries through cooperative system.
10. Promotion for joint cotton farming.
11. Financial assistance for mass community marriages (Rs.6 crores).
12. Repayment of amount for capital operation fund (Rs.370 crores).
13. Financial assistance to cotton growers (Rs.134 crores).
14. Organic Farming Technology Mission (Rs.30 crores).
15. Vidarbha Watershed Mission (Rs.100 crores).
16. Establishment of helpline for farmers.

Table 5.8

State government package targets and actual outlay as on 31st April 2008

Sr.No.	Item	Target for three years	Actual Outlay	Percent
1.	Refund of Share Capital under Cotton Monopoly Procurement Scheme	370	438.58	118.54
2.	Relief to Cotton Farmers	134	130.22	97.18
3.	Interest Subsidy on Rescheduling of Loans	225	239.12	106.28
4.	Direct Assistance to Farmers (25,000/- to 60,000 farmers)	150	146.99	97.99
5.	Agriculture related occupations	30	24.22	80.73
6.	Community Marriages	6	19.13	318.83
7.	Organic Farming	30	17.84	59.46
8.	Subsidy for Crop Insurance	30	12.24	40.8
9.	Vidarbha Watershed Development Mission	100	81.54	81.54
10.	Total	1075	1060	98.6

Source: Narendra Jadhav (2008), "Report on Farmers Suicide and Issues before Agriculture Sector: Debt Relief and All Maharashtra Balanced Agriculture Development Action Plan", Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, Pp. 94.

However, according to department of disaster management and rehabilitation, government of Maharashtra, actual amount spent on state package

had 128 percent till June 2011 year. However, this package had criticised by many editors of news paper. The goats, cow and bullock provided under this scheme were only pressure on heads of suicide victim household due to high age of animals.

3. Implementation of recommendations of Narendra Jadhav Committee

The government of Maharashtra had organised committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Narendra Jadhav for assessment of state and central packages announced for most suicide distressed districts of Maharashtra. A committee has made many recommendations to government and 13 were accepted by government. The various departments have implemented these recommendations by the order drawn dated on 20.02.2009 in suicide prone districts of Maharashtra. It has discussed below.¹⁵

i. Department of cooperation

- a. Debt relief of Rs. 2926.13 crores given to 40750 farmers.
- b. Loan rescheduling of 929457 members has made in six district of Vidarbha and Rs. 673.83 crores had distributed among 484575 account holders during 2006-07 as a loan.
- c. Sahakar Sanjiwani Yojana has implemented for unfit 802 primary agriculture cooperative societies on pilot basis.
- d. Debt relief of Rs. 817.63 lakh principle amount and Rs. 132.07 lakh interest relief had given to farmers' under money lender act and 159 cases had registered against illegal money lenders.
- e. 2.78 lakh self-help groups were formed with the help of DCCB up to 31st March 2011 and distributed Rs. 206.66 crores as short term loan and Rs. 4.064 crores as medium term loan to 21087 self help group.
- f. In 2010-11, Rs. 2856.40 crores allocated to farmers against Rs. 3558.04 crores of loan target.
- g. In 2008, MOU was made with the central government and NABARD.
- h. Positive reforms have made in cooperative act and accounting of cooperative societies.

¹⁵Government of Maharashtra, "*Report of Farmers' Suicide*" Sector officer, Farmer suicide, Department of Disaster Management", New Administrative Building, Mumbai.

- i. Recapitalization of 15053 PACS and Rs. 1408 crores grant had given to him, although 5738 PACS had made ineligible for same package.
- j. In 2010, new Money lender prevention act was passed and submit to central government for permission.
- k. Ideal laws, election by eligibility, appointment of expert director, auditing have made compulsory for all financial institutions.

ii. Marketing department

- a. Reforms in agriculture marketing committee development and prevention act, 1963 for giving free license of marketing and contract farming. Similarly, government has given licenses to 40 organizations for contract farming in six most suicide distressed districts of Vidarbha.
- b. Permitted licenses for establishment of private marketing committee through reforms made in cooperative marketing act. Similarly, two private marketing committees are permitted in six most suicide prone district.
- c. Farmers' Production companies are formed under the programme of Agriculture trade, Infrastructure services and development investment of Asian Development Bank. These companies have facilities of packaging houses, Warehouses and Quality Technology etc. for direct marketing of agriculture produce in Amravati, Buldhana and Akola district of Vidarbha. Moreover, 64 sub projects with cost of Rs. 600 crores have formed by financial assistance of International Agriculture Development Fund.
- d. Almost 592 warehouses are renovated and capacity of 1351 new warehouses had increased with the cost of Rs. 9.92 crores under the scheme of National Agricultural Development and Generation Rural Cold Storage.

iii. Irrigation department

- a. In 2008-09, backlog of Marathwada and Vidarbha was reduced by Rs. 264.46 crores and Rs. 322.03 crores respectively and removed special backlog of irrigation development.
- b. Rs. 650 crores were spent on removal of physical backlog of Ratnagiri, Amravati, Akola, Washim and Buldhana district in 2010-11 and provision of Rs. 500 crores had made for 2011-12 year.
- c. Up to June 2011, irrigation capacity of 1, 22,896 hectare has created through 574 projects and amount of Rs. 2177 crores spent under the PM's package.

- d. Centre government has provided Rs. 1556.3 crores funds under AIBP during 2006-2010 period.
- e. Under the PM's Package, 70 state level and 416 local projects has completed in Maharashtra.

iv. Power department:

- a. Rs. 1181.78 crores has spent for remove backlog of agriculture pump sets and provided electricity connections to 112779 pump sets till end of 2011.
- b. Electricity connections have provided to 224273 agriculture pump sets till February 2012 and only backlog of 15229 connections was rest. It was expected to remove before the end of March 2012.

v. Food, urban supply and consumer protection department

Under this department, 193875 BPL and 96600 Antodaya Yojana beneficiaries are selected from 11 districts of Vidarbha.

vi. Department of agriculture

- a. Up to September 2011, total expenditure of Rs. 2699.68 crores made on providing milky cattle to distressed farmers and 25298 milky cattle distributed among 15212 beneficiaries.
- b. Government has spent Rs. 21.27 crores and made 233061 lakh artificial inseminations under the programme of providing cattle procreation facilities and Rs. 13.75 crores spent under animal feed supply programme.
- c. Rs. 85 lakh has spent on innovation on making grass bricks machinery.
- d. Rs. 36 lakh has spent for providing health facilities to milky cattle.
- e. Rs. 175.78 lakh spent on providing bulk coolers to milk cooperative societies and 32 bulk coolers provided to them.
- f. Rs. 30.28 lakh has spent under the programme of construction of fish ponds, repairing and renovation and made repairing of 127 Fish ponds and 28 Cages.
- g. Under the Special Cotton Mission, training given to 220 Farmers Farm Schools, single promoter and provided 937 hectare organic pesticides.
- h. Up to February 2012, Rs. 7.494 crores has spent on construction of wells under the employment guarantee scheme and completed construction of 22303 wells and 19387 wells were under progress.

vii. Women and child welfare department

“Shubhmangal Scheme” have introduced in Maharashtra. Up to January 2011, total amount of Rs. 73.16 crores have spent on this scheme and 62779 farmers are benefited from this scheme. Apart from, revenue department and department of animal husbandry have taken many policy decisions for preventing farmers’ suicide by government of Maharashtra.

4. Agriculture Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme (ADWDRS)

Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief scheme, 2008 was launched in May 2008 to address the problems and difficulties faced by farmers’ community for repayment of loan taken by them and in helping them to qualify for fresh loan. The main highlights of scheme are discussed below.

- a. All agricultural loans disbursed by SCB, RRB and cooperative credit institutions up to March 31, 2007 and overdue as on December 31, 2007 will be written off in respect of small and marginal farmers.
- b. In respect of other farmers, there will be a onetime settlement (OTS) scheme for all loans that were overdue on December 31, 2007 and which remained unpaid until February 29, 2008. Under the OTS, a rebate of 25 percent will be given against payment of the balance 75 per cent.
- c. Agricultural loans were restructured and rescheduled by banks in 2004 and 2006 through special packages are also rescheduled in the normal course as per RBI guidelines and same will also eligible either for a waiver or an OTS on the same pattern.
- d. The implementation of debt waiver and debt relief scheme will be completed by June 30, 2008. Upon being granted debt waiver or signing an agreement for debt relief under the OTS, the farmer would be entitled to fresh agricultural loans from the banks in accordance with normal rules.
- e. Government estimates that about three crores small and marginal farmers and about one crores other farmers will benefit from the scheme. The total value of overdue loans being waived is estimated at Rs.50, 000 crores and the OTS relief on the overdue loans is estimated at Rs.10, 000 crores.
- f. It is proposed to create a fund of Rs. 5, 000 crores in NABARD to enhance its refinance operations to short term cooperative credit institutions.

The number of small and marginal farmers' accounts and other farmers' accounts were 3.69 crores and 0.60 crores respectively covered under the scheme. As well as cash outgo from government of India for reimbursement had at around Rs. 60416 crores for small and marginal farmers and Rs. 7960 crores for other farmers. The total estimated cost of scheme had at Rs. 65318 crores and 3.69 crores farmers were benefited from this scheme.

Under this scheme 3023000 small and marginal farmers and 1225000 other farmers have benefited and Rs. 8951.33 has been allotted for waiver and debt relief in Maharashtra.¹⁶ It means 28 percent of small and marginal farmers and 41.65 percent other farmers were benefited under this scheme in Maharashtra.

5.5 Causes of farmers' suicides

The central and various state governments have taken initiative to increase confidence among the farmers community to encourage farming sector. Many committees and commission have been appointed to study and suggest measures to resolve the agrarian crisis in India. National commission on farmers is one of the important of it. The government of India set up national commission on farmers in February 2004 under the chairmanship of Dr. M. S. Swaminathan. This commission started work with a declaration of "Serving Farmers and Serving Farming."

The objective to set up the commission for farmers at national level was to prepare a road map for sustainable agriculture development and optimize its contribution to economic development, particularly to improve income and standard of living of farmers. The commission has submitted fifth and final report in October, 2006 to the government. Commission has given many suggestions to accelerate and diversify agricultural development, removal of rural poverty and impart viability and attractiveness of farming as a remunerative and rewarding profession and government have implemented such suggestion for sustainable agriculture development overall India.

Moreover, union and state Governments formulate policies from time to time to articulate clear vision on few basic parameters of agricultural sector.

¹⁶ Government of India (2013), "*Report on implementation of Agricultural Debt waiver and Debt Relief Scheme-2008*", Ministry of Finance, New Delhi, Pp. 07-08

However, the agrarian crisis could not prevent these policy decisions, due to lack of competency among the small and marginal farmers' and government negligence towards agriculture development in policy decision. The Planning Commission of India in its approach paper of XI Five Year Plan states that "Economic growth has failed to be sufficiently inclusive particularly after mid-1990s. Agriculture lost its growth momentum from that point onwards and subsequently entered a near crises situation, reflected in farmers' suicide in some areas."

1. LPG Programme

Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation have created many problems in agriculture sector of India. Large numbers of small and marginal farmers are adversely affected due to LPG programme. This community is on the verge of extinction due to conditions imposed under green, yellow and red boxes by WTO. LPG have been adversely affected not only socio economic status of farmers' but also minimum food for survival of rural people. Government of India has approved genetically modified cotton crop in 2002 and commercialisation of 73 cotton varieties in 2007. This decision have adversely affected cotton growing farmers overall India.¹⁷

2. Absence of extension services

The positive impact of new economic reforms could not be seen in agriculture development, but also it adversely affected not only agriculture sector but also largely survival of farmers in India. Failure of extension services to provide knowledge of policy consists with agriculture sector under new economic reforms programme is largely responsible for increasing distress among farmers and difficult to know the exact impact of policy decision to the government. It is indeed, new economic reforms programme could be positive impact on agriculture sector, if government had taken initiative for creating economic reforms literacy programme in Maharashtra. Similarly, government might be taken proper review of policy changes and it had helpful to draw micro results of new economic reforms period. But, government has to fail to create awareness among farmers in India.

¹⁷ Guillaume Gruere & Debdatta Sengupta (2011), "Bt Cotton and Farmer Suicides in India: An Evidence-based Assessment", *The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 47 (2), Pp. 316-337

3. Illiteracy and traditional education

Illiteracy and traditional education system is largely responsible for increasing economic distress in Maharashtra. An uneducated people do not get knowledge of global changes and educated person is apathy to play role as a farmer in farm business due to absence of skill and educational fatigue. Any single suicide victim and respondents were not found taken formal education of agriculture science during field visit.

4. Transformation of traditional inputs into corporate inputs

Seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and technology are major inputs of farm business. Farm saved seeds were replaced by corporate seeds which needed fertilizers and pesticides. Consequently, cost of production has been increasing and agriculture became a costly affair. The Indian small farmers have failed to adjust with these changes. Managing finance for the agricultural work became a difficult task. Some small farmers leave farming and shifted other occupations due to lack of ability to understand the problems arise and grown in farm sector. The farmers who failed to cope up to the changes were driven to suicide in the distressed states.

5. Indebtedness

Indebtedness is one of the important responsible factor to increase suicidal tendency among farmers. There are many causes of increasing inability to repay the loans among farmers i.e. high rate of interest, low rate of return, crop failure, low level of income and so on. According to the NSSO report, out of an estimated 60.4 percent of rural households 48.6 percent were reported to be indebted at national level. The incidence of indebtedness was higher in Andhra Pradesh (82 percent), followed by Tamil Nadu (74.5 percent), Punjab (65.4 percent), Kerala (64.4 percent), Karnataka (61.6 percent) and Maharashtra (54.8 percent). Moreover, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal each had about 50 percent to 53 percent indebted farmer households.¹⁸ Declining absolute number of SCB branches in rural areas and number of rural account holders, declining share of agriculture credit of commercial banks and cooperative

¹⁸ Government of India (May 2005), “*Situation Assessment Survey of Farmers: Indebtedness of Farmer Households*”, NSSO 59th round (January-December 2003), Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, New Delhi. PP. 10

banks to farm business, marginal coverage of marginal and small farmers by the SCB, ill timed institutional credit supply are leads farmers' towards money lenders, who provide credit at high rate of interest. On the other hand, unproductive use of credit, droughts, floods, low level of net returns from the farming business are also major causes of increasing indebtedness among farmers in India.

It is found that more than 90 percent selected suicide victim farmers' households under the pressure of return either institutional or non institutional loan prior committing suicide. On the other hand, 81 percent selected suicide victims had indebted during 2010-11. The number of indebted suicide victim households has declined after suicide of head family member because of female head of suicide victim household cannot applied for institutional loan and money lenders are taken precaution when providing loans to these households.

6. Addiction of Alcohol and other habits

Addiction of Alcohol, BIDI and Tobacco has found more among suicide victims. Addiction of alcohol is found among almost 28 percent suicide victims.¹⁹ However, more than 30 percent suicide victims had addiction of alcohol in districts Bhandara 14 (35.9 percent), Wardha 17 (34.7 percent), Thane 1 (33.3 percent), Buldhana 19 (31.1 percent) and lowest in district Satara 7.1 percent. An addiction of alcohol creates dispute among family member, increases unproductive expenses, create health issues on one hand, and absence of productive work on the other hand. It leads to economic distress.

7. Declining public expenditure on agriculture sector

Public expenditure on agriculture and irrigation development has declined since 1980 in central and state five year plan of Maharashtra. It has been adversely affected input subsidies, irrigation extension and infrastructure development for agriculture sector in Maharashtra.

The plan outlay of central government on agriculture and allied activities till 5th five year plan had more than 10 percent, but it continuously less than 6

¹⁹ Mishra Srijit (2006), "*Suicide of Farmers in Maharashtra*", Indira Gandhi institute of Development and Research, Mumbai, Pp. 52

percent since 6th five year plan (see detailed in chapter 3.6)²⁰. Similarly, share of outlay on agriculture and allied sector had 6 percent of total plan outlay during sixth five year plan and declined up to 3.4 percent in ninth five year plan of Maharashtra. However, it had 6.4 percent of total plan outlay during 10th and 11th five year plan (see figure 4.6)²¹. The declining public expenditure on agriculture and allied activities has been affected irrigation extension and net return of farm business in India.

8. Large number of small and marginal farmers

The number of marginal and small farmers are large in India and also in Maharashtra. The cumulative number of small and marginal farmers' had 107.6 lakh (78.55 percent) and operated area had 89.2 lakh hectares (45 percent) in Maharashtra.²² Consequently, an average size of land holding has come down from 4.28 hectare to 1.44 hectare during 1971 to 2011 in Maharashtra.²³ An average size of operational holding of marginal farmers had at 0.47 hectare and small farmers 1.42 hectares in 2010-11.²⁴ The draft of eleventh five year plan mentioned that small and marginal farmers' often lack access to major agricultural services, such as credit, extension, insurance, and market. This is especially true about women farmers since there is pervasive male bias in provision of such services. With almost all sharecroppers and most marginal farmers unable to access credit from the formal system, a key issue relating to agricultural credit is the utter lack of financial inclusiveness. An increasing suicide among farmers in many parts of India is linked with increasing indebtedness through non institutional sources during recent period.²⁵

Large number of selected suicide victim farmers' was reported small and marginal in Maharashtra. It is found that 69 percent selected suicide victim households were marginal and small land holders and only 23.6 percent were

²⁰ Government of India (), "*Tenth Five year Plan*" Vol.II , Planning Commission, New Delhi, Pp. 520

²¹ www.des.org.in

²² Government of Maharashtra (2015), "*Economic Survey of Maharashtra 2014-15*", Directorate of economics and statistic, Mumbai, Pp.

²³ Government of Maharashtra (2015), "*Economic Survey of Maharashtra 2014-15*", Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Mumbai, Pp.99

²⁴ Government of Maharashtra (2015), "*Economic Survey of Maharashtra 2014-15*", Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Mumbai, Pp.79

²⁵ Government of India (2004), "*Eleventh five year Plan*" Volume 03, Planning commission, Pp.33

medium and large. An average size of farm of these selected households suicide victim had 4.7 acre. Most of the selected victim households were unable to meet the basic needs income generated from farm business. Therefore, size of farm land is also responsible for increasing farmers' suicide in Maharashtra.

9. Crop failure

An increasing disaster has adversely affected the agriculture sector in India. Uneven and uncertain rainfall has been a long history and windfall, ill timed rainfall has increased uncertainty of agriculture sector. Variation in any year was within 10 per cent of normal rainfall, the economy was not greatly affected. But when the variation was more than 10 per cent, the normal life of the people was severely affected. Table 5.9 shows the 25 years of 112 years of the period 1877 to 1987 have recorded deficient rainfall.²⁶ Average deficiency in rainfall during these 25 years has almost 15 percent and its adverse impact on agriculture sector had seen near about 36 percent. It further represents that higher the deficiency in rainfall higher the effect of drought. Moreover, excess rainfall also affects the agriculture sector in kharif crop season.

The frequency of deficient rainfall has increased during recent period. The deficiency of rainfall had 7 times during the 20 year period of 1991-2010. The rainfall deficiency from normal had average 12 percent during above 7 years. It means that every 3 years, one year has to face deficient rainfall in India²⁷.

Maharashtra could not be an exception to the above condition. During 2005, excess rainfall has adversely affected agriculture sector in Maharashtra²⁸ and number of farmers' committed suicide have been increased from 1008 in 2005 to 2377 in 2006, showing 4 times rise in number of suicides.²⁹

²⁶ Sivasami K. S. (2000), "*Droughts and Rainfall Pattern 1877-1999*", Economic & Political Weekly, June, 10, 2010, Pp. 1991-1992.

²⁷ Government of India (2012), "*Agriculture Statistics at a glance 2012*" Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi, Pp. 332

²⁸ Government of Maharashtra (2005), "*Status report of Nagpur flood*", Department of Disaster Management and Rehabilitation, Mumbai.

²⁹ Government of Maharashtra (2011), "*Report on the farmers' suicide in Maharashtra*", Sector officer, Dept. of Disaster Management (Farmer suicide), New Administrative Building, Mumbai.

Table 5.9: Departure of rainfall from normal rainfall and area affected by drought during 1877-1999 (in percent)

Year	Percent departure from (-) Normal rainfall	Percent area affected by drought	Year	Percent departure from (-) Normal rainfall	Percent area affected by drought
1877	33.3	59.4	1939	8.7	28.5
1891	6.3	22.7	1941	13.3	35.5
1899	29.4	68.4	1951	18.7	35.1
1901	12.1	30.0	1965	18.2	38.2
1904	11.8	34.4	1966	13.2	35.4
1905	11.4	37.2	1972	23.9	52.6
1907	10.0	29.1	1974	12.0	34.0
1911	14.7	28.4	1979	18.9	34.6
1913	10.0	24.5	1982	14.5	29.1
1915	9.4	22.2	1985	7.1	32.3
1918	24.9	70.0	1986	12.7	19.7
1920	16.7	38.0	1987	19.4	47.7
1925	3.3	21.1			

Source: Sivasami K. S. (2000), "Droughts and Rainfall Pattern 1877-1999", Economic & Political Weekly, June, 10, 2010

Crop failure was the important cause of committing suicide of 209 (32 percent) selected suicide victims in Maharashtra rather than more than 50 percent farmers' suicides had same cause in district Nasik (80 percent) and (Thane 50 percent) district.

10. Low rate of return

The cost benefit ratio of various conventional crops has declined since economic reforms. The rapid increase in the prices of inputs and modernisation of agriculture sector are responsible for increasing cost of cultivation, although prices of agriculture produces could not increased as prices of inputs. Consequently, return from farm business has declined significantly in Maharashtra rather than in India. The national commission on farmers' represents that cost-risk-return structure of farming has becoming adverse to over 80 million farming families who operated small holdings. These families are resource poor and unable to get

benefit from the power of scale at both the production and post-harvest phases of farming.³⁰

Another study made by Mr Sinha reported that, “cotton is major crop of most suicide distressed district and net return of cotton has been found negative and somewhere favourable. A net return from cotton at 1971-72 prices declined from Rs 801 per hectare in 1989- 90 to Rs 217 per hectare in 1995-96. The cost of cultivation of cotton increased from Rs 1,536 in 1972-73 to Rs 17,073 in 1995-96.³¹ In short, declining per hectare net return and size of operational holding per households adversely affected not only annual income of farmers’ but also survival of farmers community.

11. Lack of irrigation facilities

An area under irrigation was almost 18 percent during 2001 in Maharashtra. Besides this, there is huge variation in gross irrigated area among different regions. The intensity and frequency of crop failure among rainfed farmers’ have been more in Maharashtra. During field visit, 165 (25 percent) respondents were reported having irrigation facilities, half of them spent pocket money for digging of wells and bore well. A large number of suicide victim households had irrigation facilities were from district Bhandara, Nasik, Satara, Solapur and Jalgaon (see appendix table 6.14). Therefore, extension of irrigation in suicide prone district is essential for giving assurance of income to the farmers’ in Maharashtra.

12. Low level of farm income

Level of income generated through farm business in Maharashtra is comparatively lower than non farm sector. Therefore, farmers are unable to meet the basic needs of our household. It is also found that an average annual per capita income of SVH had Rs. 14620/-, which is almost 25 percent higher than BPL criteria given by planning commission in India. Average per capita annual income of selected suicide victim households of Thane (Rs. 8500), Bhandara (Rs. 9320), Chandrapur (Rs. 10930) and Yawatmal (Rs. 11420) district was lower than below

³⁰Government of India (2004), “*First Report of National commission on farmers*”, Department of Agriculture, New Delhi, Pp. 4

³¹Bose Ashish (2000), “*From Population to Pests in Punjab-American Boll Worn and Suicides in Cotton Belt*,” Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 35(38), September 1, P. 3375-3378

poverty line of India. Therefore, number of below poverty line SVH was actually 355 (54.5 percent), of which more than (287) were card holders (see appendix table 6.11). Most of the BPL suicide victims were either small or marginal farmers. The low growth in agricultural per capita income is a major problem identified by the national farmers' commission in India.³²

13. Social customs and festivals

More than 90 percent suicide victim households are from Hindu community. The social customs and festivals are large among Hindu community in Maharashtra. A farmer' spent large amount on child ceremonies as a custom and demonstration. As well as, various festivals and non productive expenditure on same is big problem among farmers.

Besides, large expenditure on marriages in the form of dowry, food and decoration is big problem in all parts of Maharashtra. It is found that out of 163 farmers' made marriages of their children before committed suicide, 157 were borrowed money from various private money lenders and large number of suicide victim households also found under the pressure of girl marriages.

14. Dominant place of money lenders

Despite of large number of banks opened their branches in rural areas to provide banking facilities to rural people, many farmers' had taken loan from money lenders at the interest rate of 3 percent to 5 percent per month and could not repay due to crop failure and high burden of debt in Maharashtra. The number of suicide victim farmers' taken loan from private money lenders in terms of commodity and cash were 357 (57 percent) of 652 and commit suicide due to shame and pressure of money lenders. Similarly, 187 (28.7 percent) suicide victim households were under the pressure of repay the loan of local money lenders loan in 2011. This dominant place of private money lenders and high interest rate charged by them adversely affect economic environment of farmers in Maharashtra.

³² Government of India (2004), "*First Report of National commission on farmers*", Department of Agriculture, New Delhi, Pp. 33

15. Family dispute

Family dispute among the members of family has been also found immediate cause of farmers' suicide among selected suicide victim. This dispute may be caused by addiction of alcohol, economic distress, love affairs and social stigma. The 91 (14 percent) respondents reported family dispute was the immediate cause of suicide of family member of selected suicide victim.

16. High level of power load shading

The increasing electricity deficiency and its impact on load shading have adversely affected irrigated farmers and rural industrialisation. It is found that more than 18 hours have providing single phase electricity to farmers in Maharashtra during visit. However, electricity pump sets has three phases. Therefore, they could not use either water is available or not.

17. Non-cordial marital relation

Love affairs and non-cordial marital relations were also found responsible for farmers' suicide in Maharashtra. The 23 suicide victims have committed suicide due to non-cordial relations and love affairs among selected suicide victims.

18. Absence of political will power

Political will power towards development of agriculture sector is continuously declined since 1980's in Maharashtra. Similarly, WTO agreement has controlled the government policies for input subsidies and most of the infrastructural facilities are providing through private sector. Not only this, increasing urbanisation adversely affected political will power towards rural development by political security and large funds are allocated for urban development in India.

19. Weak infrastructure facilities

Roads, electricity, market, warehouses, communication means and processing industries are weak in Maharashtra. Most of the high value crops are perishable and damaged during the travelling. Therefore, wastage of agriculture produces is found more and damaged produce could not get higher prices in market. In the words of national commission of farmers, about 77 percent of

marketing costs are estimated to be avoidable losses during handling, storage and transport.³³ Similarly, absence of competition in the market enables to exploit particularly in Vidarbha and Marathwada.

20. Absence of agro subsidiary business

Agro supporting business has an important role in economic development of nation, which is known as insurance against disasters. Despite of agriculture labour, most of the suicide victim households don't have any agro supporting business. Therefore, there is need to increase awareness among the farmers about agro supporting business in distressed areas and government should take initiative for expansion.

Moreover, decreasing interest of the new generation in farming, social stigma, court cases, permanent illness, higher dependency ratio are also found responsible factors for committing suicide by farmers' in Maharashtra.

5.6 Conclusion

In short, agriculture sector in Maharashtra have been in acute distress not only because of long term policy fatigue of new economic reforms but also lack of equilibrium between policy changes and awareness regarding policy change among farming community. Therefore, researcher has concluded that government has failed not only to increase awareness among farmers' about policy changes, but also purposefully neglected towards publicity. It adversely affected confidence of farmers and also government. Similarly, government have been controlled prices of agriculture produce through MSP and export duties for controlling the inflation, but prices of agriculture inputs are according to international market. This dual role of government adversely affects agriculture sector in India. This diplomatic policy should stop by government and try to develop unorganised sector.

Moreover, declining performance of banking sector in rural area, increasing indebtedness, increasing natural hazards, social customs, addiction of alcohol, limited extension of irrigation, large number of marginal and small farmers' and low level of income generated through unviable land are major

³³ Government of India (2004), "*First Report of National commission on farmers*", Department of Agriculture, New Delhi, Pp. 14

responsible factors for farmers' suicide in Maharashtra. It is indeed, farmers community is always worked hard, but they could not get proper return of efforts. A researcher has suggested that government has to provide all the services which gives up to date knowledge of global economic change and basic infrastructural facilities such as irrigation, market, processing industry and credit.

Government has taken initiative for preventing farmers' suicide but efforts made by them are little compared to intensity of issue. Consequently, the issue of farmers' suicide have become more serious day by day in Maharashtra. Many economists also suggests that financial support made by government to victim families cannot solve the problem of farmers' suicide, but structural changes in the agricultural sector through policy decision is essential to increase confidence among the farmers community in India. Similarly, infrastructural facilities are in weak position. These facilities should be improved, upgraded according to the new trends of marketing and demand supply pattern of the world.