Chapter V
Findings, Summary & Conclusions
FINDINGS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Suicide is a human act of self inflicted, self intentioned, untimely cessation of life. It's a human act, with a conscious wish to be dead; his or her action carries out that wish.

Emile Durkheim published his monumental work, Le Suicide in the year 1912, wherein he explained suicide as a social fact inversely related to the degree of social cohesion. Suicide has emerged as an increasing public health problem in India. According to National Crime Records Bureau’s latest statistics (2009), 1.22 lakh suicides take place every year in India. Suicide is a complex problem for which there is no single cause, no single reason. It results from a complex interaction of biological, genetic, psychological, social, cultural, financial and environmental factors.

Farmers’ Suicides in India & Karnataka: Farmers’ suicide in India is a phenomenon that emerged as a sequel to globalization and other economic reforms. According to National Crime Records Bureau between 1997-2007, 1, 82,936 farmers have committed suicide. Of these, two thirds suicides have occurred in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. During 1999-2001, it was estimated that 110 farmers committed suicide in Karnataka. According to one estimate, 3,000 farmers committed suicide in Karnataka between 1998 and 2006.
It is sad to note that such enterprising farmers are led to commit suicide, because they felt they have pawned the future of their families by making wrong choices. It is because of the belief that they have lost control over their lives, their developed a sense of helplessness, in them forcing them to take the extreme step of ending their lives.

The suicides of the farmers, has posed severe challenge to the governments. The interventions brought in were aiming to provide relief to the families of the farmers who have committed suicide. The implications of the suicides of the farmers do not end with that. It is of vital sociological interest to know, as to how these households are trying to cope up with the suicides of their bread winners? Was the relief provided adequate enough? The Widows of the farmers are now a disadvantaged group with indebtedness and the social stigma of widowhood. How do these women cope up to wriggle out of the socio, economic and psychological distress, is the issue the present study seeks to examine.

Widowhood is a crisis in a women’s life, involving new social adjustment for the family as well as for her. The life of the women whose husband dies while she is alive has been institutionally made miserable by the norms of patriarchy. She faces emotional trauma, familial exploitation and social stigma.

A widow is an inauspicious person. Her very presence at any social ceremony ranging from marriage, child birth to sowing of seeds, is considered very inauspicious. In addition to this, Widows are forced by the society to give

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up working, withdraw from social activities, and become dependent on others. As different studies reveal, the problems faced by Indian widows are unique, as they are socialized for traditional stereotypic roles and their mobility is bound by temporal and spatial limits.

It is of sociological interest to see how do the widows of farmers coping up with the trauma of sudden demise of their spouses and the loss of companion? As she is forced to play multiple roles stepping into the shoes of their spouses, to continue debt ridden agriculture, clear off the debts and to lonely shoulder the responsibilities of the family. It has to be brought into light whether they are reeling under the load and pressures, or are they able to come out of the melancholic situation? How are they managing the family and the debt ridden agriculture with their changed status as widows, with so many socio-cultural restrictions? All these issues need to be probed, so as to evolve suitable comprehensive social intervention to stem further suicides from the farmers’ households.

From the above discussion it is crystal clear that the society has been very harsh towards women particularly widows, who lost their husbands and live without dreaming of re-marriage. They have been ill-treated, abused, accused and considered as ‘Amangalis’ whose very presence spells bad omen. The quantum of cruelty to widows has been very severe among those who belong to higher castes.

It is evident that the death of a husband in India changes the very fate of women. When she is pondering in deep depression, the society instead of
consoling her adds salt to the wound. Her very presence is considered as inauspicious. According to Hindu Dharma Shastras the widows are forbidden from using Sindoor and Bindi, bangles, nose -ring and Mangalasutra. Some women are forced even to tonsure their head. She must wear white sari only. Adding to her vows, she is isolated from the public life. She should not laugh or even talk loudly. Moreover she should not speak with outsiders. Most of the widows suffer from one form or the other form of social discrimination the widow is in young age her plight in life is unimaginable.

More over in most cases, widow is personally held responsible for the death of her husband and is treated as the personification of the inauspicious and the profane. Her very presence at any social ceremony unwarranted. Resulting in social isolation, psychological alienation or emotional depress. From marriage, child birth to sowing of seeds her very presence is considered as inauspicious. In addition to this Widows are forced by the society to act the role of the useless and unproductive, to give up working, withdraw from social activities, and be depended on others and so on.

**Statement of the Problem:** A review of the related studies reveals that the studies made on distress suicides of farmers have ended up with documenting the causes of suicides and the amount of debts these they have accumulated. The relief that was provided to farmers was based on these reports. They did not try to go beyond and see as to how these widows and her family cope up with loss of the bread winner? The studies that were made on widows by different authors, have examined widows and their problems mostly in urban
contexts in a superficial way. None of them have examined the plight the widows of farmers' suicides, the new social pathological phenomenon that has emerged in the rural India, as to how do these widows cope up with the trauma of their spousal suicide and the management of the farm and the family activities, is the issue the present study seeks to examine.

Objectives: The specific objectives of the present research study are:

1) To examine the incidence of Farmers Suicides in Karnataka with special reference to Tumkur, Chitradurga and Davanagere districts of Bangalore division of Karnataka State during the period 2001-07.

2) To portray the socio-economic profile of the farmers who had committed suicide and their spouses.

3) To examine the amount and nature of assistance received from Government and other sources.

4) To indentify the nature of problems faced by the widows of farmers and the extent to which these could be solved.

5) To analyze in depth as to how the wives of the victims are coping up with the suicides of their spouses. To document the mechanisms adopted by the widows to cope up with the situation and manage their families as well as farming.

6) To suggest suitable policy interventions.

With the above objectives, the present study chose to study 227 widows of farmers’ suicides in Chitradurga, Davanagere and Tumkur Districts of Bangalore division of Karnataka state to examine how the widows of farmers’ suicide are coping up with the loss of their spouses and managing their families and farms.
The following are the major findings of the study:

♦ The suicides of the farmers in Karnataka were reported in 1999. During the years 1999 -2001. It was estimated 110 farmers committed suicide in Karnataka. According to another estimate, 3000 farmers have committed suicide in Karnataka state between 1998- 2006.

♦ The incidence of farmers’ suicides in the three districts of Chitradurga, Davanagere and Tumkur during the period 2001-2007 was reported to be 315 according to official records. Among this Tumkur registered highest suicides of farmers amounting to 126 deaths. Next comes Chitradurga with 110 suicides and Davanagere a well irrigated district registered 79 deaths.

♦ The higher suicide deaths in Tumkur and Chitradurga districts might be due to their proximity to Anantapur district where highest number of far suicide were reported in Andhra Pradesh and also might be due the similar topographical and cultural similarity found in these two districts similar to that of conditions of Anantapur district.

♦ It was found that 66per cent of the farmers were committed suicide less than 50 years of age. This means they have died at relatively young and most productive part of their lives.

♦ All the farmers who committed suicide belong to predominantly backward communities 88.9 per cent and SCs and STs were 11.01 per cent.

♦ The literacy levels of farmers’ shows 35.25 per cent as illiterates while 55.04 are schooling primary and secondary level, 10.03 are degree level. The literacy levels of farmers are relatively low.
The size of land holdings of the farmers is predominantly (76.22%) less than 5 acres. Very few have more than 11 acres. The average size of the land holdings on the sample is around 4.28 acres. This means the farmers where predominating small and marginal.

The income levels of the farmers is predominately 80.61% of the farmers income level of less than Rs.50,000 per annum. It indicates their low level and corresponding levels of living and costs of conclusion.

The annual expenditure of 88.10 percent of the farmers of ranging from 20,000 to 50,000. Which means their income levels and expenditure are just equal. In case of health or events like marriage they had to borrow. Even the income was not certain at the face of failure of rains or crops. Thus the agriculture was mainly of subsistence in nature.

Most of the farmers 88.9 per cent they have been cultivating the mono crop of groundnut while a tiny fraction of 11.01 per cent tried sunflower and paddy.

As much as 85.02 per cent were banking upon dry land farming which went away due to vagaries of nature. For others to the scanty and failed monsoons deprived them of water sources for their cultivation.

All these 82.8 per cent of the farmers married before 25 years of age and had 20 years of marital life. They not only died young but also left behind young widows and children.

Though most of them 95.15 per cent exhibited religiously but at the face of concurrent losses and debts drove them suicidogenic.
• Most of the farmers 93% were not members of farmers association. Thus depriving them of a group support which could have save their lives.

• It was found only 13.84 per cent of the farmers had some political learning while the predominant others didn’t. Having more than 75 per cent people in agriculture the country and the politicians could not be sensitive to the problems of farmers in globalization era.

• Most of the suicides in these three districts, 72.68 per cent of the suicides of the farmers had taken place between 2003 and 2006. However they declined consequently and rose in 2006 and later started to ascend mainly due to consequent years of drought and scanty rainfall.

• The incidents of suicides month wise reveal that August, September and January of the months which registered higher suicides. More so because of the sense of depravity crop loss, linger large in their minds at the point of time when it used to be happy movements.

• The suicides families in the case of 45.8 per cent families and 71.8 per cent in their villages seem to have influenced the farmers in their being simple and sensitive easily become susceptible to imitative behaviour.

• The widows reported that 69.16 per cent of the farmers seem to have hinted about their suicides to the family members. While 30.84 per cent didn’t hint about their suicides at any time.

• Economic problem of debts seem to have been a major problem for 83.26 per cent of the farmers. 9.25 per cent sited psychological problems while 7.49 per cent gave sociological problems.
♦ It was found that 77.08 per cent of the farmers had debt of less than Rs. 2 lakhs.
♦ The farmers had borrowed predominantly 50.66 per cent from private money lenders who had charged exorbitant rates of interest. Only 16.30 per cent had borrowed from banks.
♦ Only 29.52 per cent had support of relatives and friends. The absence of institutional credit enforced by demands of structural adjustments deprived the farmers of loan at low level of interest.
♦ As per as main causes of suicides economic cause has been sighted by many 68.72% and followed by social reasons by 26.87 per cent by the farmers.
♦ It was reported by the widows of 96.91 per cent of farmers that were in to depression prior to committing suicides.
♦ It was reported that 98.68 per cent were gazing blank for quite some time before their suicides.Probably in deep depression.
♦ The nature of interactions by the deceased farmers with their wives and their wives and their children were reported to be very cordial and loving in the case of more than 93 per cent of the farmers.
♦ The widows of the farmers 89.43 per cent of them were aware of the accumulated debts which were shared by their spouses. The others had very little or no idea of debts.
♦ It was reported that 96.92 per cent did hint that they are going to take away their lives some day. While 3.08 per cent didn’t.
♦ It was found that 87.23 per cent of the farmers were experiencing the feeling of status loss due to their debt ridden status. They were experienced the feeling of alienation due to this.

♦ The widows reported that 51.98 per cent of farmers were terribly worried and depressed about crop failure while they rest bother about the debts.

♦ It was also reported by widows that 74 per cent of the suicide victims were introverts not mingling freely with others. They were mainly loners were mostly away from group, most drove to suicidal tendency.

♦ It was found that 80.62 per cent of the widows of farmers were less than 45 years of age. Out of which 33.04 per cent were less than 35 years of age. The inference here is that they become widows at the prime phase of their lives.

♦ The widows of famers 63.88 per cent had no schooling at all. The rest have 20.70 per cent secondary and 11.45 per cent of primary education. 3.96 per cent have above PUC level.

♦ It was reported that 93.83 per cent still persist with agriculture. Carrying on farm where their spouses had left. While others have taken up petty business and few in Anganwadies. 3.97 per cent are not involved in any activity.

♦ It was found that 77.54 per cent had married before they were 20 years. The average age being 40 most of them had between 15 to 20 years of marital lives.
• The deceased farmers had married 50.22 per cent of them from among their relatives and the rest have married strangers.

• 71.80 per cent had 5 to 20 years of marital lives. Only 20.71 per cent had more than 20 years of marital lives.

• It was sad to find that about 64.76 per cent of the farmers' wives have become widows before they were 35 years of age, thus indicating the marital, mental and physical depravity experience in their lives.

• It was found that 59.47 per cent are widows they experience widowhood for a period of 6 to more than 9 years. The others widows for above 6 years.

• Most of the widows 59.47 percent of them had been experiencing widowhood for a period for more than 6 years and above which indicates a possibility that the women are coping up with the loss their spouses.

• The death of the husband came as a shock to around 85.02 per cent of the respondents. Only in the case of about 14.98 per cent of respondents, the suicides of their spouses were expected.

• In the opinion of the 76.65 per cent of respondents, they were the most affected by the suicides of their spouses more so because of the intimate relations, which they shared with their spouses for about 20 years, their permanent absence from this physical world has made them feel very much for them. Next were the children, in the case of 21.14 per cent cases for whom their father was no more.

• The economic distress for the families of the farmers' suicide in the form of debts revealed that 81.06 per cent of the respondents had debts of less than 166.
1 lakh. Nearly 16.29 per cent of the respondent’s debts are in the range of 1 to 2 lakhs. Only 2.65 per cent of the respondents had debts of more than 2 lakhs mostly borrowed from private money lenders.

♦ It was learnt that 94.27 per cent of the respondents were aware of the debts. Nearly 4.85 per cent of the respondents were unaware of the debts. The respondent’s husbands had shared about the debts with their wives regarding the total amount of debts procured.

♦ In spite of the deaths of their bread winner, vast majority of the respondents 93.83 per cent have agriculture as their primary occupation still bank upon agriculture for sustenance. The attachment to the land and the esteem that once was for the family of small and marginal farmers still, dominates their psyche.

♦ As part of coping up with the predicament forced on them by the suicides of their spouses, 51.54 per cent of respondents have taken up additional sources of income ended in poultry, dairying, petty shops etc and could raise amounts to clear part of the debts.

♦ The present income level of the widows of farmers indicate that 50.23 per cent of the respondents’ income ranges between Rs.25, 000 to 50,000 per year, while about 43.17 per cent of them earn income below Rs. 20,000 per year. The clearance of debt being high in their agenda, the level of income even from additional source indicates the subsistence level of agriculture.

♦ It is heartening to observe that 43.17 per cent of the respondents have repaid debts to the range between Rs 25,000 to 75,000. About 56.83 per
cent of the respondents have successfully repaid the debts below 25,000.

♦ It was found that in 57.27 per cent of the families, it was the respondents, who are managing the family and agricultural activities. In 32.59 per cent respondents’ families, the eldest child managed the family activities. Only in 10.14 per cent of the respondent’s families the brothers of spouses or their parents were found to be managing agriculture and the families of the widows. The widows have the say in the management of farm and family in most of the cases.

♦ It was also found that 89.98 per cent of the respondents take important decisions pertaining to the family and in 8.82 per cent of the families; it was the eldest child that took decisions about the family. The interference from other family though reported but they don’t seem to affect the decision making for the family.

♦ Nearly 85.09 per cent of the respondents have not changed their residence. Only 14.91 per cent of the respondents have changed their residence.

♦ It was found that 83.71 per cent of the children are living with the respondents only. About 16.29 per cent of the children are living with the relatives of the respondents.

♦ Following the suicides of their father only in about 9.69 per cent of families, children dropped out from studies while in 90.31 per cent of the families, children continued their education.
Almost 64.32 per cent of the widows said they keep on advising their children about importance of education and around 35.68 per cent of the respondents advised their children to clear off the debts, which indicates the socialization of the children towards responsibility towards themselves and towards the family.

It was reported by 89.86 per cent of the respondents that they got emotional support from their mostly from their relatives. Only 10.14 per cent of the respondents failed in getting emotional support from their relatives.

Around 41.85 per cent of the respondents received moral support from their relatives. Nearly 18.50 per cent of the respondents owed the moral support to their parents. In 18.06 per cent of the cases the roots of moral support was in the friends. About 8.37 per cent of the respondents had the NGOs as moral supporters. The widows do have support from various quarters which made them to cope up with suicides of their spouses and the latent consequences mainly with the moral support from various quarters of society.

About 64.75 of the respondents got relief from the government and the same was utilized to clear off the debts. 18.50 of the respondents were assisted by the friends and relatives.

Nearly 95.59 per cent of the respondents reported that they never had problems with their fellow beings and they felt they were treated well with concern and fellow feeling. It was observed that 91.18 per cent of the
respondents feel they were never exploited by the society. Only about 8.82 per cent of the respondents feel some were looked down upon as widows.

♦ In more than half of the families the siblings used to interfere in the family affairs of the respondents. The interference aimed at giving valuable suggestions to the respondents to overcome the problems in life.

♦ As large as 90.31 per cent of the respondents felt that their position of widows is not socially constrained but only 9.69 per cent of the respondents feel they have some social constraints.

♦ As far as 31.3 per cent of the respondents see, clearing off the debts as their burning problem while about 27.3 per cent, continuing the education of their children as their major problem. For about 13.7 per cent of widows, continuing of agriculture as the major problem and for about 23.3 per cent of respondents, burning problems revolved around social obligations such as girls’ marriage, death ceremonies and family responsibilities as the problems looming large before them.

♦ Among the widows, 78.85 per cent of the respondents were feeling stressed to manage a wide variety of responsibilities in and around the family. Nearly 19.38 per cent of the respondents felt that they do not feel stress at all to manage the things. The remaining 1.77 per cent of the respondents could not give a clear cut answer.

♦ 90.31 per cent of the respondents felt over burdened by the responsibilities thrust on her following the suicides of their spouses. Only 1.76 per cent of the respondents felt that they are not over burdened.
Excepting 8.37 per cent of respondents, who have some ailment, 91.63 per cent of the respondents are very healthy.

It was very much evident from the responses of the widows that in spite feeling over burdened, 89.97 per cent of the respondents felt that they don’t want to die. Only a small percentage of 10.13 respondents opined that they feel like dying at times to end their woes. This indicates a positive resolve and determination on their part to overcome the distress to save the family.

As revealed in the about 57.26 per cent of respondents had taken the membership of SHGs and tried to repay debts. SHGs can act to provide social cohesion and a sort of support to families of farmers’ suicides to augment the financial position of their families. Around 42.74 per cent of the respondents have not taken SHG membership.

Analyzing the confidence levels of the widow, it was found that 26.44 per cent of the respondents are very much confident; 40.08 per cent of the respondents are confident and 33.48 per cent of the respondents are somewhat confident. On the whole even the distress the widows could express confidence which only indicative of their firm resolve to swim against the current and bail out themselves and their children.

Most of the widows 59.47 percent of them had been experiencing widowhood for a period for more than 6 years and above which indicates a possibility that the women are coping up with the loss their spouses.
The death of the husband came as a shock to around 85.02 per cent of the respondents. Only in the case of about 14.98 per cent of respondents, the suicides of their spouses were expected.

In the opinion of the 76.65 per cent of respondents, they were the most affected by the suicides of their spouses more so because of the intimate relations, which they shared with their spouses for about 20 years, their permanent absence from this physical world has made them feel very much for them. Next were the children, in the case of 21.14 per cent cases for whom their father was no more.

The economic distress for the families of the farmers’ suicide in the form of debts revealed that 81.06 per cent of the respondents had debts of less than 1 lakh. Nearly 16.29 per cent of the respondent’s debts are in the range of 1 to 2 lakhs. Only 2.65 per cent of the respondents had debts of more than 2 lakhs mostly borrowed from private money lenders.

It was learnt that 94.27 per cent of the respondents were aware of the debts. Nearly 4.85 per cent of the respondents were unaware of the debts. The respondent’s husbands had shared about the debts with their wives regarding the total amount of debts procured.

In spite of the deaths of their bread winner, vast majority of the respondents 93.83 per cent have, agriculture as their primary occupation still bank upon agriculture for sustenance. The attachment to the land and the esteem that once was for the family of small and marginal farmers still, dominates their psyche.
As part of coping up with the predicament forced on them by the suicides of their spouses, 51.54 per cent of respondents have taken up additional sources of income ended in poultry, dairying, petty shops etc and could raise amounts to clear part of the debts.

The present income level of the widows of farmers indicate that 50.23 per cent of the respondents’ income ranges between Rs. 25,000 to 50,000 per year, while about 43.17 per cent of them earn income below Rs. 20,000 per year. The clearance of debt being high in their agenda, the level of income even from additional source indicate the subsistence level of agriculture. It is heartening to observe that 43.17 per cent of the respondents have repaid debts to the range between Rs 25,000 to 75000. About 56.83 per cent of the respondents have successfully repaid the debts below 25,000.

It was found that in 57.27 per cent of the families, it was the respondent, who are managing the family and agricultural activities. In 32.59 per cent respondents’ families, the eldest child managed the family activities. Only in 10.14 per cent of the respondent’s families the brothers of spouses or their parents were found to be managing agriculture and the families of the widows. The widows have the say in the management of farm and family in most of the cases.

It was also found that 89.98 per cent of the respondents, take important decisions pertaining to the family and in 8.82 per cent of the families, it was the eldest child that took decisions about the family. The interference from
other family though reported but they don’t seem to affect the decision making for the family.

♦ Nearly 85.09 per cent of the respondents have not changed their residence. Only 14.91 per cent of the respondents have changed their residence.

♦ It was found that 83.71 per cent of the children are living with the respondents only. About 16.29 per cent of the children are living with the relatives of the respondents.

♦ Following the suicides of their father only in about 9.69 per cent of families, children dropped out from studies while in 90.31 per cent of the families, children continued their education.

♦ Almost 64.32 per cent of the widows said they keep on advising their children about importance of education and around 35.68 per cent of the respondents advised their children to clear off the debts, which indicates the socialization of the children towards responsibility towards themselves and towards the family.

♦ They still reside in the same house trying to cope up with tragic deaths. It was found that only 14.91 per cent of the respondents have changed their residence.

♦ As revealed from the table 89.86 per cent of the respondents’ got emotional support from their relatives. Only 10.14 per cent of the respondents failed in getting emotional support.

♦ Around 41.85 per cent of the respondents received moral support from their relatives. Nearly 18.50 per cent of the respondents owed the moral support
to their parents. In 18.06 per cent of the cases the roots of moral support was in the friends. About 8.37 per cent of the respondents had the NGOs as moral supporters. The widows do have support from various quarters which made them to cope up with suicides of their spouses and the latent consequences mainly with the moral support from various quarters of society.

♦ About 64.75 of the respondents got relief from the government and the same was utilized to clear off the debts. 18.50 of the respondents were assisted by the friends and relatives.

♦ Nearly 95.59 per cent of the respondents reported that they never had problems with their fellow beings and they felt they were treated well with concern and fellow feeling. It was observed that 91.18 per cent of the respondents feel they were never exploited by the society. Only about 8.82 per cent of the respondents feel some were looked down upon as widows.

♦ Excepting 8.37 per cent of respondents, who have some ailment, 91.63 per cent of the respondents are very healthy.

♦ In more than half of the families the siblings used to interfere in the family affairs of the respondents. The interference aimed at giving valuable suggestions to the respondents to overcome the problems in life.

♦ As large as 90.31 per cent of the respondents fell that their position of widows is not socially constrained but only 9.69 per cent of the respondents feel they have some social constraints.
♦ As far as 31.3 per cent of the respondents see, clearing off the debts as their burning problem while about 27.3 per cent, continuing the education of their children as their major problem. For about 13.7 per cent of widows, continuing of agriculture as the major problem and for about 23.3 per cent of respondents, burning problems revolved around social obligations such as girls’ marriage, death ceremonies and family responsibilities as the problems looming large before them.

♦ Most of the respondents, 90.31 per cent of the respondents felt over burdened by the responsibilities thrust on her following the suicides of their spouses. Only 1.76 per cent of the respondents felt that they are not over burdened.

♦ From the table, it is clear that 89.97 per cent of the respondents felt that they don’t want to die. Only a small percentage of 10.13 respondents opined that they feel like dying to end their lives.

♦ As revealed in the table about 57.26 per cent of respondents had taken the membership of SHGs. Around 42.74 per cent of the respondents have not taken their membership.

♦ Among the widows, 26.44 per cent of the respondents are very much confident. As against this, 40.08 per cent of the respondents are confident and 33.48 per cent of the respondents are somewhat confident.
Conclusion: On the strength of the findings of the study, as a way of conclusion of the discussions, an attempt is made to respond to the issues raised in the statement of the problem.

The study sought to examine the incidence of farmers' suicide in the three districts of Karnataka state. The farmers' suicides and the displacement of the families of the farmers are the aftermath of the process of WTO agreement and the process of Globalization set in motion in the Nineties.

Enticed the new hybrid seeds varieties, costly agriculture inputs made the farmers to borrow money from private money lenders with hope of raising a bouncy crops. The failure of monsoon rains, depleting water resources had dashed their hopes in successive years landing them in debt trap. The economic debts had wiped away their social status. Pushing the small farmers into desperation alienation prior to their suicides.

Displaced by debt of their spouses, the widows of farmers had to don the mantle of managing the farm and family with the ignominy of a debtor. The second issue examined by the study about the coping up spousal suicide by the widows brings forth the fact that these widows hailing from rural areas with low levels of literacy could not only overcome loss of companion but also coping up with the economic and emotional distress befallen on her and her family. Given the social and economic constraints these women could surmount, the crisis by adapting herself to the demands of allied activities, joining SHGs and succeeded in clearing debts to considerable extent. Amidst stressful conditions these women with their resolve hard work and the moral
support of relatives could cope up the distress befallen on her. Without buckling to stress and tough predictent. These widows had stemmed the ruining of the families of small and marginal farmers. With their coping up bahaviour these simple, rural widows with their resolve and hard work have proved themselves “women of substance,” in the real sense of the term. Given the agrarian situation, with majority of the farmers being small and marginal, it is time, that the Government draws up comprehensive plan to protect the farming community with suitable, timely intervention to prevent disasters of farmers’ suicides. It is hoped that, the Gandhian talisman of wiping away tears from every farmers’ eye becomes the agenda of the Government in the coming decades.

SUGGESTIONS:

The study on the basis of findings pertaining to the suicides of farmers and the conditions of the widows of the farmers offers the following suggestions for evolving

Suitable Suggestions:

♦ Organization of Farmer’ Guilds to bring all farmers into a fold to educate them about the farming, management of resources particularly water resources and marketing strategies. This guild is to be the nodal agency between the farmers and the government.
♦ The state should encourage co-operative farming strengthening flow of credit through co-operative farming and the co-operative credit system collapsed in most of the districts in the state should be revived.

♦ Form Self help groups for wives of farmers and also widows of farmers to shield them against alienation and suicide.

♦ Easy accessibility to institutional credit at low rates of interest with quick and liberalized processing.

♦ Provide over all compulsory Farm insurance.

♦ Fixation of minimum support prices should take into account the state of specific conditions of agriculture and cost of cultivation.

♦ Introduction of electronic scale and computerization of market transactions wherever possible, elimination of the role of middlemen or brokers and displaying the prevailing prices of the different commodities in the market yard etc, are the needs of the hour.

♦ Making DWAMA to advice farmers on water management and the judicious use of water and advice at times of identifying points for bore well.

♦ The pesticide industry needs to be much more strongly regulated both in terms of preventing sales of hazardous and toxic pesticides and sale of spurious pesticides.

♦ Proper marketing and storage system, which are free of the control of private moneylenders, to be built in order to improve the economic stature of peasants and preventing distress sales.
♦ Interest on farm loan need to be waived in the drought areas during the years of drought.

♦ Government should make cloud seeding as a permanent programme for drought prone areas.

♦ For a sustainable development of rural poor non-land based agro-processing should be encouraged and financed generate additional income for the farmers.

♦ Identification and promotion of rural non-farm activities based on available local resources and levels of skills among the required to be done.

♦ The agricultural Extension to be made to offer farm and family stressing on distress management.

♦ Ensure food security by linking vulnerable groups to other employment schemes.

♦ The help line at every collectorate shall continue to operate; any farmer or his friend or relatives or family member or a well wisher may bring to the notice of the collector, the livelihood of such extreme act by making use of the helpline.

♦ The study suggests altering or modifying the existing package of relief provided to the families of the victims, which is quite cumbersome and complicated resulting in the confusion in the minds of illiterate family members. In its place a monthly pension scheme to the widows or next to the family kin is suggested to overcome the inherent problems as
experienced by the district administration or survivors of the diseased at the implication level.

♦ It is the felt need that the district administration should mobilize the rural youth in the villages by launching needed welfare programmes. In other words encouraging youth leadership and their participation in local community development programmes is desirable.

♦ Wage employment at least for a minimum period of 100 days per person need to be ensured in rural areas.

♦ Strictly regulate the private moneylenders, specifically in the aspects of interest charged and documentation. These measures gave a considerable relief to farmers in Karnataka.

♦ The NGOs to be encouraged to launch programmes for farmers in sensitization and educational programmes, particularly for the families of Farmers in distress.

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