



Farmers Suicide in Maharashtra: Reasons and Remedies

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Introduction:

Farmers' suicide is a serious social and economic problem in India, particularly in drought-prone regions like Marathwada and Vidarbha. The main cause is agrarian distress resulting from crop failures and low productivity. Erratic rainfall and frequent droughts reduce yields and push farmers into crisis. Dependence on expensive chemical fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides increases the cost of cultivation. Falling groundwater levels and lack of irrigation worsen farming conditions. Farmers often fail to get fair prices due to weak market systems and middlemen exploitation. Minimum Support Price benefits do not always reach small farmers. Heavy debts from private moneylenders at high interest rates trap them in a vicious cycle. Crop insurance schemes are either inadequate or poorly implemented. Psychological stress and lack of alternative income sources deepen their despair. The pressure of family responsibilities and social expectations adds to their burden. In some regions, monocropping like cotton increases risks due to pest attacks and price fluctuations. The absence of timely institutional credit pushes farmers into financial helplessness. Farmer suicides reflect rural poverty, inequality, and weak policy implementation. The issue requires comprehensive solutions including water management, debt relief, and sustainable farming practices.

Marathwada Region:

Maharashtra is the second-most populous state of India and one of the most industrially developed. It was formed on 1st May 1960 with Mumbai as its capital, which is also the financial hub of the country. The state covers a large area with diverse geography including the Sahyadri ranges, Konkan coast, Deccan plateau, and Vidarbha plains. Marathi is the official language and the state is culturally rich with traditions, literature, art, and festivals. Maharashtra has 36 districts divided into regions like Konkan, Western Maharashtra, Vidarbha, and Marathwada. The economy is strong, driven by agriculture, industry,



services, and trade. Mumbai and Pune are major centers of IT, education, and manufacturing. The state leads in automobile, textiles, sugar, and steel industries. Agriculture remains important with crops like cotton, soybean, sugarcane, jowar, and pulses. Maharashtra has well-developed transport with expressways, ports, railways, and airports. It is home to historical sites like Ajanta–Ellora, forts of Shivaji Maharaj, and religious centers like Shirdi and Pandharpur. Bollywood and the entertainment industry thrive in Mumbai, giving it global recognition. The state has high literacy and progressive educational institutions. Maharashtra also faces challenges of drought in Marathwada and Vidarbha.

Issue of farmer's suicide in Maharashtra state

Farmers' suicide in Maharashtra is a critical socio-economic issue affecting regions like Marathwada and Vidarbha. Frequent droughts, erratic rainfall, and poor irrigation facilities lead to repeated crop failures. Rising costs of seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides push farmers into heavy debts. Many depend on private moneylenders charging high interest rates. Low market prices and lack of fair returns further reduce their income. Crop insurance schemes are often ineffective or poorly implemented. Social pressures and mental stress add to their burden. As a result, many farmers see suicide as the only escape from unending distress.

Reasons for Farmers' Suicide in Maharashtra

1. Erratic Rainfall and Drought

Maharashtra, especially Marathwada and Vidarbha, faces frequent droughts. Rainfall is irregular and unreliable, directly affecting crop yields. Without irrigation, farmers depend solely on the monsoon. Crop failures due to water scarcity push them into distress. This natural uncertainty creates constant financial and emotional pressure.

2. Rising Cost of Cultivation

Seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides have become increasingly expensive. Farmers often buy these inputs on credit hoping for good returns. Poor yields make it impossible to recover costs. Margins shrink as input costs keep rising. This imbalance deepens the financial crisis.

3. Dependence on Moneylenders

Many farmers lack access to institutional loans. They depend on private moneylenders who



charge very high interest. Repayment becomes impossible after crop failures. The debt trap creates unbearable psychological stress. Farmers see no escape from financial burden.

4. Low Market Prices for Crops

Agricultural produce often fetches prices below the Minimum Support Price. Middlemen exploit farmers in local markets. Lack of storage forces distress sales at throwaway prices. Farmers rarely get the real value of their produce. This results in low income despite hard work.

5. Crop Failures due to Pests

Crops like cotton are highly vulnerable to pest attacks. Excessive pesticide use increases costs but does not guarantee yield. Unscientific farming methods worsen the damage. Repeated crop loss breaks the morale of farmers. It adds another layer of financial stress.

6. Small and Fragmented Landholdings

Most farmers own very small plots of land. This prevents them from using modern machinery or irrigation systems. Low scale of farming means low returns. They cannot compete with large commercial farms. Fragmentation keeps productivity and income very low.

7. Soil Degradation and Poor Fertility

Continuous monocropping depletes soil fertility. Excessive use of urea and chemicals further harms the land. Yields decline over time even with heavy inputs. Soil health cards are often ignored. Declining productivity reduces farmer confidence in agriculture.

8. Lack of Crop Insurance Benefits

Crop insurance schemes exist but are poorly implemented. Compensation is delayed or inadequate when crops fail. Many farmers are unaware or unable to claim benefits. This leaves them unprotected against natural calamities. Lack of security worsens their vulnerability.

9. Social and Family Pressures

Farmers carry the burden of providing for large families. Expenses for education, marriages, and health are high. With low income, these responsibilities become unbearable. Social expectations of success add to the stress. Failure to meet them causes hopelessness.

10. Psychological Stress and Hopelessness

Repeated failures erode mental health. Farmers feel trapped in debt and poverty. Lack of



counseling or community support increases isolation. They often see suicide as the only way out. This reflects the deep human side of the crisis.

Remedies for Farmers' Suicide in Maharashtra

1. Expansion of Irrigation Facilities

Government should invest in canals, drip irrigation, and watershed development. Reliable water supply can reduce dependence on rainfall. Community-based water conservation can support small farmers. Micro-irrigation subsidies must reach the needy. Better water use efficiency will stabilize farming.

2. Affordable Input Supply

Subsidies on seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides must be strengthened. Government agencies should ensure quality inputs at fair prices. Promotion of organic and bio-fertilizers can reduce costs. Farmers need training in low-cost scientific methods. Affordable farming increases sustainability and profit.

3. Strengthening Institutional Credit

Easy access to bank loans at low interest is essential. Cooperative credit societies should be expanded in rural areas. Digital platforms can simplify loan distribution. Loans must be linked with repayment flexibility during crop loss. This will reduce dependence on moneylenders.

4. Fair Pricing and Market Reforms

Minimum Support Price should be effectively implemented. Farmers must have access to regulated markets without middlemen. Cold storage and warehouses should be developed in villages. E-NAM and digital platforms can connect farmers to bigger buyers. Fair prices will encourage investment in farming.

5. Promotion of Crop Diversification

Farmers should not depend on a single crop like cotton. Diversification into pulses, oilseeds, and horticulture reduces risk. Mixed cropping systems improve soil health. Government incentives can encourage diversified farming. It spreads income sources and reduces vulnerability.

6. Soil Health Management

Soil testing and balanced fertilizer use must be promoted. Awareness of soil health cards should be increased. Use of compost, bio-fertilizers, and organic matter should be



encouraged. Rejuvenating soil will increase crop productivity. Healthy soils ensure long-term sustainable farming.

7. Effective Crop Insurance

Insurance schemes must be simplified and transparent. Compensation should be timely and adequate. Awareness campaigns should reach even small farmers. Use of satellite data can speed up damage assessment. Security against loss will reduce farmer distress.

8. Alternative Rural Employment

Non-farm jobs like dairy, poultry, and agro-processing can be developed. Employment guarantee schemes like MGNREGA should be strengthened. Rural skill development will provide supplementary income. This reduces total dependence on farming. Diversification of income reduces suicide risks.

9. Mental Health and Counseling Support

Counseling centers should be established in rural areas. Farmer helplines can provide guidance during crises. Community groups can offer emotional and social support. Awareness about stress management must be spread. Mental health care can save lives along with financial aid.

10. Strong Policy Implementation

Schemes for farmers must be properly monitored. Corruption and delays should be eliminated through transparency. Farmer producer organizations (FPOs) can empower small farmers. Long-term policies should focus on sustainability, not just relief. Effective governance will restore farmer trust in agriculture.

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