

POST SUICIDAL CONSEQUENCES WITHIN FAMILY AFTER SUICIDAL DEATH OF THE FARMERS IN YAVATMAL DISTRICT OF VIDARBHA

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in highly suicide hit Yavatmal districts of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra with exploratory design of social research. Total 60 victim's households were interviewed from 58 villages of 16 talukas of Yavatmal district during 2012-2013. The results revealed that after death of family head by suicide in younger age, whole family was disturbed and faced so many consequences. The major consequences are among 46.66 per cent victim's households, poor economic condition compelled their children to leave the school and go for wage earning for sharing the consumption expenditure of family. Amongst the 66.66 per cent victim's households, severe anxiety and stress was developed about future life, which leads to mental instability. Over half (68.33%) of the households recognized that their family income was lowered after death of family head and 40.00 per cent families expressed loss of interest in farming work. Majority of the victims' family members suggested for remunerative prices to their farm produce and provision/creation of irrigation facilities, abundant electric supply, timely credit, crop insurance with affordable premium, and complete ban on alcohol where the important measures to be taken to prevent the recurrence of suicide tragedies. These consequences and suggestions need to be taken into consideration by policy makers and social workers while planning various measures for rehabilitation and avoiding the suicide tragedies.

KEYWORDS: Suicide, Victim, Households, Consequences, Suggestions

INTRODUCTION

"On average, one farmer commits suicide every 30 minutes in India," (Sainath, 2007 and Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2011). Government of India had declared 31 districts as distressed district where the Prime Minister's special rehabilitation package was implemented. In these 31 districts there are six districts from Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. (Anonymous, 2006). The Vidarbha region of the Maharashtra state is the epicenter of the farmers' suicide in the country. As per the government record in Vidarbha particularly in six districts namely Yavatmal, Amravati, Buldana, Washim, Akola and Wardha since 01, January 2001 to 15, December 2016, total 13,425 farmers committed suicide.

This is what we have been hearing from Vidarbha and other part of the country over the last sixteen years. This is now the researchable issue. This research paper deals with the specific objectives to study the consequences within family after suicidal death of family head or victim farmer in due course of time. And to collect the suggestions from victim's households, for avoiding the tragic phenomenon of suicide.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Present research investigation was carried out in Yavatmal district of Maharashtra where percentage of farmer's suicide was found relatively more than other districts. The present study was based on Exploratory Design of Social Research. In this study, respondents were the households of the selected victim who committed suicide, during 1, January 2012 to 31, December 2012 and had declared as a legal victims by district level committee headed by collector of Yavatmal district, for allotting compensation of Rs. 1 lakh and had got Rs. 1 compensation. The time period 1st January to 31st December 2012 was selected purposively so as to match the similar farming condition with all victims.

Before sampling, researchers had contacted personally to the collector office of Yavatmal district and obtained the complete list of farmers who committed suicide during 1, January 2012 to 31, December 2012. In all there were 175 total suicide cases in Yavatmal district, out of which 98 cases were declared as illegal and 77 cases were declared as legal victims. From the list of 77 legal suicide cases, researcher had selected 60 victims by proportionate method of random sampling. It covers 58 villages and 16 *talukas* of Yavatmal district. The detail *taluka* wise list of the selected victims has been given in following Table 1.

Data were collected by personal interview method with the help of structural interview schedule. Interview was conducted at residence of respondent so as to review overall situation of the family by researcher. In addition to personal interview, RRA (Rapid Rural Appraisal) technique, time line study for historical perspectives, observations, discussion with family members and discussion with key informants (*Police Patil, Sarpanch*, local leaders, other farmers of the village), reviewing victims actual record of institutional debts etc. were some important methods used for data collection.

Table 1: Taluka Wise List of the Selected Victims

Sr. No.	Talukas	Total Suicide Cases	No. of Cases Declared As		No. of Cases Selected
			Illegal	Legal	
1	Pusad	09	06	03	03
2	Umerkhed	08	04	04	04
3	Wani	20	18	02	02
4	Maregaon	11	07	04	02
5	Ghatangi	15	04	11	09
6	Mahagaon	14	07	07	06
7	Zarijamani	09	08	01	00
8	Dharwa	18	09	09	08
9	Kelapur	12	05	07	06
10	Ralegaon	05	00	05	04
11	Arni	13	05	08	07
12	Kalamb	11	05	06	04
13	Babulgaon	06	04	02	00
14	Ner	07	05	02	00
15	Digras	10	06	04	04
16	Yavatmal	07	05	02	01
	Total	175	98	77	60

CONSEQUENCES

Conceptually, a consequence is defined as the result or effect of an action. Operationally, in present study of farmers' suicide consequences refers to the changes that occurred within the family after suicidal death of family head or victim farmer in due course of time. The changes occurred within family and that also recognized by the family members have been ascertained. While discussing the issue, with victim's households, the different consequences that are presented

by family members and also probed by researcher are collected and noted in interview schedule time to time before forgetting the things or leaving the place.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Post Suicide Consequences

Suicide is a social phenomenon; it creates several personal, social and economic consequences within family (Jacob 2006). In Yavatmal district, the farmers, who committed suicide, were mostly the family head and the main bread earner of the family members. These suicides have happened mostly due to the low income level of the households, crop failure, indebtedness and their deteriorating socio-economic status in the society (Kale, et.al., 2015). Though the family head left the severe agrarian crisis, it is very difficult for his family members to survive in the worst hit zone of Yavatmal district. Every moment of life has been a struggle for them. The present field survey has identified various severe consequences or changes that occurred after death of family head within the family and are recognized and perceived by family members. The data pertaining to the identified consequences are presented in three main heads as mentioned in Table 2.

A) Family Disturbance

In Yavatmal district, majority of the farmers, who committed suicide, were from the economically and socially disable groups. After death of family head by suicide in younger age, whole family was disturbed and faced so many consequences. In 46.66 per cent victim's households, poor economic condition compelled their children to leave the school and go for wage earning for sharing the consumption expenditure of family, while very less proportion of families 11.66 per cent children were sent to live with relatives either for education or for wage earning.

Table 2: Distribution of the Victim's Households According to Their Consequences

Sr. No.	Consequences	Number	%
A	Family Disturbance		
1	Children's of the victims had left the school and went for wage earning	28	46.66
2	Children's were sent to live with relatives	07	11.66
B	Psychological Impact		
1	Develop an anxiety and stress which leads to mental instability	40	66.66
2	Illness of family members	12	20.00
3	Developed a sense of hopelessness	07	11.66
C	Effect on Working		
1	Lowered the income of family	41	68.33
2	Loss of interest in work	24	40.00

B) Psychological Impact

After sudden and confidential act of suicide by family head or young member of family, severe psychological impact was observed on other family members. In majority of victims households 66.66 per cent, due to death of family head, severe anxiety and stress was developing about future life, which leads to mental instability. In 20.00 per cent households, some family members became sick after death of family head and in 11.66 per cent cases sense of hopelessness was reported

C) Effect on Working

Over half 68.33 per cent of the households recognized that their family income was lowered after death of family head and 40.00 per cent families expressed loss of interest in farming work.

SUGGESTIONS TO PREVENT SUICIDE

Suggestions for avoiding present spate of suicides were one of the important aspects of this study. It refers to the opinion of the family members about what action should be taken for avoiding recurrence of suicides, which can help to some extent for finding out ground realities of suicides and help to suggest different measures to solve farmer's suicides in Yavatmal districts. The responses received from the family members of the deceased farmers were noted and are presented in Table 3.

It is clear from Table 3, that majority 85.00 per cent family members of the deceased farmers suggested for remunerative prices to their farm produce and provision/ creation of irrigation facilities (70.00%) as the important measures to be taken to prevent the recurrence of suicide tragedies.

Sizable (53.33%) family members of the deceased farmers suggested for complete ban on alcohol, family counseling for increasing self-confidence through local leaders/ social workers were suggested by 58.33 per cent households, abundant electric supply for farming (40.00%), complete waiving of old loans (26.66%), provision of easy, timely and sufficient credit at low interest rate (43.33%), creation of subsidiary occupations and other income sources (50.00%), crop insurance (75.00%), availability of information about agricultural technology (20.00%), mass marriage system should be encouraged in society (15.00%), timely employment by creating non-farm employment opportunities (13.00%), immediate government help in natural calamities and in losses by wild animals (18.33%) and compensation of rupees one lakh should be stopped (21.66%) were the measures suggested by family members of the deceased farmers to solve farmers' distress in Yavatmal district.

Table 3: Suggestions to Prevent Suicide as Perceived by the Family Members of the Deceased Farmers

Sr. No.	Suggestions to Prevent Suicide	Frequency	%
1	Remunerative prices to farm produce	51	85.00
2	Provision/ creation of irrigation facilities	42	70.00
3	Complete ban on alcohol	32	53.33
4	Family counseling for increasing self-confidence through local leaders/ social workers	35	58.33
5	Abundant electric supply for farming	24	40.00
6	Complete waiving of old loans	16	26.66
7	Provision of easy, timely and sufficient credit at low interest rate	26	43.33
8	Creation of subsidiary occupations and other income sources	30	50.00
9	Crop insurance	45	75.00
10	Availability of information about agricultural technology	12	20.00
11	Mass marriage system should be encouraged in society	09	15.00
12	Timely employment by creating non-farm employment opportunity	20	33.33
13	Immediate government help in natural calamities and in losses by wild animals	11	18.33
14	Compensation of Rs. One lakh should be stopped	13	21.66

Thus, it is concluded that, majority of the victims' family members suggested for remunerative prices to their farm produce and provision/ creation of irrigation facilities for their farming as the important measures to be taken to prevent the recurrence of suicide tragedies. The present findings are in line with the findings reported by Kumar and Rao 2002, Deshmukh *et. al.*, 2007, Anonymous, 2007, Kale, 2008, and Kale, *et.al.*, 2014. Farmers' suicides are the result of the

agrarian crisis, which cannot be solved only with firefighting techniques. A well thought concerted strategy for both the short and long term is needed. While planning short and long term measures, the government should focus on above suggestions made by the family members of deceased farmers. Majority of the family members suggested remunerative prices for their farm produce and creating irrigation facilities. That means in short term measures there is an urgent need to declare immediately the remunerative prices for all crops and secondly, in long term measures, the government should focus more on increasing rural infrastructure particularly irrigation facilities in Yavatmal district, because irrigation and other infrastructure facilities are very poor in Yavatmal district.

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