



The impact of globalisation and farmers' suicides: A study on Kubeer Mandal, District, Adilabad

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Abstract: The phenomenon of suicides in Andhra Pradesh dates to 1987-88, when desperate cotton growers took their lives in Guntur and Prakasam district. There was a boom in cotton cultivation in the early 1980s, bringing good profits to the farmers. The farmers called cotton "white gold". But from mid 1980s onwards, the cotton farmers suffered heavy losses due to crop failure. However, the area under cotton cultivation continued to grow in the state, expanding to other regions of the state especially Telangana. To overcome the Agrarian Crisis in general and suicidal deaths in farm sector in particular. Many states currently offer financial relief packages only to the families of deceased farmers will farmers will unable to manage payments on their bank loans

Key Words: Globalization, Agrarian Crisis, suicide, financial relief, white gold

Introduction:

A number of farm management studies of late, particularly after the implementation of reforms has revealed that Globalization has affected the farm sector in India severely in a range of adverse ways. The most evident is the squeeze of farmer's incomes and the threat to the viability of cultivation which has come about because of rising input costs and falling output prices. This reflects the combination of reduced subsidy and protection to farmers and trade liberalization has further expose these farmers to combination, along with deflationary policies which have hit rural public expenditure created unprecedented agrarian crisis in India. The globalization process has also affected Indian agriculture in many respects on rural income, employment and livelihood security. The agricultural sector seems to slide down in its importance in terms of the linkage effects and employment potential. The growing costs of inputs couples with the shrinkage

of markets for agricultural produce have had their adverse bearing on the rural economy.

However, until now, the Indian agricultural sector had been relatively spread from the most extravagant excesses of neo-liberal interference, in the form of the corporatization of agriculture. That reprieve now seems to be over, as the central government and several state governments in India are gradually won over by the dubious charms of contract farming.

In recent years, the agricultural economy of the country to be under great stress. Low rate of investment, low level of resource use efficiency, technological inertia, groundwater depletion, unregulated futures trading, lack of co-ordination between different policies, increasing emphasis on ommercialization and diversification of agriculture without a proper institutional support system, poor rural infrastructure of roads, electricity, market, storage and godown facilities, schools and hospitals and poor



services delivery system and government and governance are impacting agricultural growth and food security adversely. Several unorganized sector workers are losing their jobs livelihood. The policy makers and planners must take note of these dynamics of development and make the reform process more inclusive, broad based and poor friendly.

Globalization and the Extinction of Farmers:

In 1997 India experienced it first about of farmers' suicides and since then over 25,000 farmers taken their own lives. The crisis has stemmed from a number of hardships which have led to the irreversible indebtedness of small and marginal farmers from even the most historically produce regions of the country. India's agriculture has turned into a negative economy due largely to three main factors; rising cost of cultivation, plummeting prices of farm commodities, and lack of credit availability for small farmers. Most of these factors can be attributed to corporate globalization and unjust free trade policies implemented by the World Trade Organization.

Farmers Suicides between 1997 and 2011:

On average, one Indian farmer committed suicide every 32 minutes between 1997 and 2011. Since 2007, that has become one suicide every 30 minutes. However, the frequency at which farmers take their lives in any region smaller than the country-say a single State or group of States- has to be lower. Because of the number of suicides in any such region would be less than the total for the country as a whole in any year. Yet, the

frequency at which farmers are killing themselves in many regions is appalling.

On average, one farmer took his or her life every 53 minutes between 1997 and 2011 in just the State of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh (including Chhattisgarh). In Maharashtra alone, that was one suicide every three hours. It got even worse after 2001. It rose to one farm suicides every 48 minutes in these Big Four have together seen 89,362 farmers' suicides between 1997 and 2011, or 44,102 between 2002 and 2011.

K. Nagaraj of the Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), who has studied farmers' between 1997-2005 based on the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, divided the States into four groups. The worst of these is Group II which includes, besides the Big Four, the State of Goa which shows a high Farmers' Suicides Rate (FSR) – suicides per 1,00,000 population – and have seen large numbers of farm suicides.

Of these, Andhra Pradesh shows some decline in 2011. And the government claims the numbers have fallen further in 2012. But there is no NCRB data to support this as yet. In all, if the NCRB data are valid, then Andhra Pradesh saw 16,770 suicides between 1997 and 2011.

The Reasons for the Suicides

As it comes out from the reports of the farmers' suicides it is economic, ecological and social reasons, which are driving farmers to suicides. The economic causes for suicides as are reported: the faulty inputs such as spurious seeds, pesticides and fertilizers, their high



prices: the low and widely fluctuating prices and inadequate marketability of the output; the failure of yields and lastly the only economic institution that is cited as reason is failure of the institution of credit. Private money lenders and non-institutional credit is often the reason for suicides. The other less cited institutions are the leasing in and out practices. These are the main economic reasons. The iniquitous distribution of land forms the agrarian backdrop. Often, these reason can be traced to the macro-economic policies in these aspects has been relatively less, the neglect of agriculture and allied sectors in Andhra Pradesh was particularly glaring. In Andhra Pradesh the State was increasingly becoming minimalist in some aspects such as agricultural extension and animal husbandry aspects in which the state machinery did provide some support in earlier period of time till mid-eighties.

Depicts, the figures of the farmers' suicides between 1997-2005 in the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh are including Chhattisgarh. It is shocking to note that right from 1997 to 2001, a largest percentage of farmers' suicides are observed in the backward areas of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. It is infact more than 31 per cent in 1997. On the other hand, in Andhra Pradesh the percentage was found to be 12.9 per cent followed by Maharashtra is 15.3 per cent and Karnataka 17.9 percent. The trend in the case of Maharashtra is tends to be increasing surprisingly from the 2003 onwards which is higher than that of other states, i.e., 25.4 percent in 2002, 26 percent in 2003 and 28.2 percent in 2004.

The suicide percent is also visible to the extent of 27 percent in 2005.

However, in the case of Andhra Pradesh, the suicides are not higher (percentage wise) than that of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, but it is in disturbing trend. Infact it is the highest in the year 2004 i.e., 19.7 per cent and 19 percent in the year 1998-99. For the remaining year it was ranging between 14 to 16 percent. However in 2005 though the trend is declining but it is still higher than that of Karnataka. Therefore the impact of Globalization in Agriculture Sector is disturbing the rural economy of Andhra Pradesh and most of the farmers are unable to cope up to meet the cost of cultivation on one hand and not getting even minimum support price on the other. Hence suicidal cases more visible.

Division -wise suicides in Adilabad district:

Division	No. of Suicides*	Percentage to total
Adilabad	217	31.49
Manchiryala	242	35.12
Nirmal	105	15.23
Asifabad	76	11.03
Utnoor	49	7.11
Total	689	100.00

*From 1997 December to 2003 August.

The ecological reasons are drought, the fluctuating yields associated with drought and the devastation caused by the natural- scientific establishment, or the facade of it, that is associated with the intensive farming. Mono- cropping associated with the green revolution technology is frequently cited as one



among the major reasons for the crisis. The shift from multiple-cropping and food economy to mono-cropping particularly towards the crop such as cotton and chilly is the major reason for the vulnerability of the Extension Department that has been invariably a failure. Increasing desertification of parts of Andhra Pradesh is also a reason for falling levels of ground water and creation of a hydrological crisis as a subset of ecological crisis. This set of ecological reasons can also be traced to the gradual withdrawal of the state from irrigation, extension and regulation.

Village wise suicides in Kubeer Mandal Adilabad District:

Village	No. of Suicides*	Percentage of total
Belgaon	9	2.66
Chondi	12	3.55
Dodarna	21	6.21
Kubeer	30	8.87
Sirpelli	16	4.73
Ranjini	13	3.84
Palsi	26	7.69
Pardi(K)	14	4.14
Pardi(B)	29	8.57
Chatha	19	5.62
Halda	13	3.84
Godsara	21	6.21
Godapur	18	5.32
Sonari	14	4.14
Nigwa	23	6.80
Antharni	11	3.25

Kupti	09	2.66
Pangra	08	2.36
Brameshwar	17	5.02
Rangashini	15	4.43
Total	338	100.00

*From 1997 December to 2010 October

Actually, the phenomenon of suicides in Andhra Pradesh dates to 1987-88, when desperate cotton growers took their lives in Guntur and Prakasam district. There was a boom in cotton cultivation in the early 1980s, bringing good profits to the farmers. The farmers called cotton "white gold". But from mid 1980s onwards, the cotton farmers suffered heavy losses due to crop failure. However, the area under cotton cultivation continued to grow in the state, expanding to other regions of the state especially Telangana. In 1997-98, a large number of farmers who cultivated cotton, chillies, maize, jawar, paddy, wheat, sugarcane and groundnut committed suicides. Thereafter, it is because a permanent phenomenon in the state with suicides taking place every year, with some variation in the number. Although farmers' suicides have been reported districts are Khammam, Adilabad, Warangal, Mahabubnagar and Karimnagar in the Telangana region.

Suggestions to Stop the Suicides

To overcome the Agrarian Crisis in general and suicidal deaths in farm sector in particular the following suggestions may be implemented.

1. Many states currently offer financial relief packages only to the families of deceased farmers will farmers will unable to manage payments on their bank loans. However, it remains that loans taken



from private moneylenders are the most difficult for farmers to pay. Since, this is the case; over half of the village families who need these relief packages do not qualify for receipt by government standards. The reality of the families' situations must be examined more closely and compensation should be accordingly.

2. Crop Insurance Scheme must be implemented so that farmers who are by crop failure will be relieved of the subsequent financial burden. Specific attention must be given to cover the lost profits of cash crops such as cotton, sugarcane and edible oils.

3. Methods of organic farming and integrated pest management should be introduced to eliminate dependency on commodities such as chemical fertilizers, pesticides and GM seeds. Organic farming methods will also serve to eliminate emerging monocultures and strong diverse agro-ecosystems.

4. The government should modify its policies in order to conserve the legacy of India's farmers and put a stop to farmers' suicides.

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