

Socio-economic, Psychological and Situational Causes of Suicides of Farmers in Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken for identification of various causes of suicides of farmers in highly suicide prone six districts of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra with exploratory design of social research. Total 200 victim families were selected by proportionate method of random sampling. It covers 178 villages and 34 *tahsils* of six districts of Vidarbha. The study revealed that low education level, large to medium family size with nuclear type of families, small and marginal rainfed holding with no source to access the irrigation, low productivity due to monsoon vagaries, low annual income, indebtedness, low socio-economic status, inability to fulfill important family responsibilities due to poor economic condition, alcohol drinking habit, personal and family members health problems and disputes, were causes of suicides among farmers of Vidarbha. All these causes were interrelated and they feed into each other and aggravate each other. All these identified causes were not common in all victims, but overall it reflects the poor socio-economic condition of the deceased farmers of Vidarbha. For improving this situation, policy makers have to think critically and take appropriate measures for improving economic condition of the farmers of Vidarbha.

Keywords: Psychological factors, situational factors, Suicide, socio-economic status, causes

INTRODUCTION

Farmers' suicide has become a major issue in the recent times, even though both state and central governments have tried to tackle the crisis. This is now public policy concern and has been drawing scholarly attention. According to Kaplan *et al.*, (1994) suicide is not a random or pointless act but, on the contrary, it is a way out of problem or a crisis that is invariably causing intense suffering. Suicide is associated with thwarted or unfulfilled needs, feeling of hopelessness and helplessness, ambivalent conflicts between survival and unbearable stress, a narrowing of perceived options, and a need for escape.

In Vidarbha region of Maharashtra state, particularly in six districts namely Yavatmal, Amravati, Buldana, Washim, Akola and Wardha, the incidence of suicide of farmers has increased tremendously. Since January 2001 to December 2008, total 5038 farmers committed suicide out of which 1940 suicide cases were reported legally at Government level for allotting ₹ one lakh compensation from Prime Ministers' Package (Anonymous, 2009). This is what we have been hearing from Vidarbha and other part of the country over the last eight years. Why does this happen? For finding out the answers to these questions the present study was undertaken with the following objectives.

1) To study the personal, socio-economic, situational and socio-psycho characteristics of the farmers and

families of the farmers who committed suicides.

2) To study the socio-economic, psychological and situational causes which compelled the farmers to commit suicide.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was based on exploratory design of social research and carried out in six districts of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra where percentage of farmers' suicide was found relatively more than other districts. These districts were Yavatmal, Washim, Buldana, Akola, Amravati and Wardha. In this study respondents were the households of selected victims who committed suicide during 1st January 2006 to 31st December 2006 and had been declared as legal victims by district level committee headed by Collector of the respective district, for allotting compensation of ₹ one lakh and received ₹ one lakh compensation. The time period 1st January to 31st December 2006 was selected purposively as in this period maximum numbers of suicides occurred in selected districts of Vidarbha. Before sampling researcher had contacted personally the collector offices of the selected districts, and obtained the complete list of farmers those who committed suicide during 1st January to 31st December 2006. In all, there were 1448 suicide cases in selected six districts, out of which 874 cases were declared as illegal and 574 cases were declared as legal victims. From the list of 574 legal suicide cases, 200 victims were selected by proportionate method of random

sampling. It covers 178 villages and 34 *tahsils / talukas* of six districts. As suicide is a sensitive social issue and thus, the investigation has to be made with very guarded and careful manner, and without hurting the sentiments of the family. Data were collected by personal interview of victim family with the help of structured interview schedule. Interview was conducted at residence of respondents so as to review overall situation of the family. In addition to personal interview, RRA technique, time line study for historical perspectives, observations, discussions with family members and discussions with key informants (*Police Patil, Sarpanch*, local leaders, other farmers of that village), reviewing victims' actual records of institutional debts etc. were some important methods used for data collection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1 Distributional analysis

It indicated that distribution of the victims according to personal, socio-economic, situational and socio-psychological characteristics.

1.1 Age

Age was an important factor as suicide rate differs dramatically by age, (Jacob 2006). It is observed from Table 1 that nearly equal percentages of the victims were young (36.50%) and middle (37.50%) age category. Whereas, remaining over one-fourth (26.00%) victims were found under old age category. It is inferred that young and middle age group seem to be more prone to suicides as compared to old. Probably this is the age where major decisions of family responsibilities have to be borne by an individual particularly in nuclear type of family system.

Table 1: Distribution of victims according to their age n=200

Age category	Age in Years	Number of victims	Percentage
Young	Up to 35	73	36.50
Middle	36-50	75	37.50
Old	Above 50	52	26.00
Total		200	100.00

Basic Particulars of the Deceased Individual

Gender:

It was observed from Table 2 that among the 200 suicide cases, 97.00 per cent were male and remaining 3.00 per cent were female. It was also observed that a majority of the victims were the family heads and a majority of victims (91.50%) were married whereas, 8.00 per cent were unmarried and remaining one victim (0.50%) was widow.

Table 2: Distribution of victims according to their gender n=200

Gender	Number of victims	Percentage
Male	194	97.00
Female	06	03.00
Total	200	100.00

Method of Committing Suicide

Method followed by the victims for committing suicide has been presented in Table 3. It is inferred from Table 3 that consumption of insecticides to commit suicide is higher (65.50%) among farmers. Probably this is due to the easy availability of insecticides to farmers.

Table 3: Distribution of victims according to their method of committing suicide n=200

Method of suicide	Number	Percentage
Consumption of insecticide	131	65.50
Hanging over rope	49	24.50
Drowning (In water)	15	07.50
Immolation (Burning)	04	02.00
Others (Lay down under railway)	01	00.50
Total	200	100.00

1.2 Education

It is observed from Table 4 that 16.50 per cent respondents were illiterate and remaining 83.50 per cent were literates. Within the literates, 27.00 per cent victims were having education upto high school level and 24.00 per cent were educated upto primary level. While 19.00 per cent had middle school level education and 9.50 per cent victims had higher secondary school level education. Only 4.00 per cent possessed college level education.

Table 4: Distribution of selected victims on the basis of educational level n=200

Educational level	Number of victims	Percentage
Illiterate	33	16.50
Primary school	48	24.00
Middle school	38	19.00
High school	54	27.00
Higher secondary school	19	09.50
College	08	04.00
Total	200	100.00

1.3 Family Size

The data in Table 5 revealed that a majority of the suicides were concentrated between medium (61.00%) and large (25.00%) family size.

Table 5: Distribution of victims according to their family size n=200

Family Size	Number of victims	Percentage
Small (Upto 3)	20	10.00
Medium (4 to 6)	122	61.00
Large (7 to 9)	50	25.00
Very large (Above 9)	08	04.00
Total	200	100.00

1.4 Family type

Family type is an important social aspect. Now a days, big families are divided into small families. This not only hampers the development of individual, but also minimize the chances of sharing the feeling among the members of family. It is observed that 63.00 per cent victims were from nuclear type of families and 37.00 per cent victims belonged to joint family (Table 6).

Table 6: Distribution of selected victims according to their family type

n=200		
Family type	Number of victims	Percentage
Nuclear	126	63.00
Joint	74	37.00
Total	200	100.00

1.5 Farming experience

Farming experience plays an important role in bearing various risks in farming business. It is assumed that the farming experience increases the risk bearing capacity of an individual in his farming. Table 7 indicates that more or less in all categories of farming experience, suicides had happened. Secondly, it was also noticed that as the farming experience increased, the suicide rate declined.

Table 7: The distribution of the selected victims according to their farming experience

n=200		
Farming experience in years	Number of victims	Percentage
Up to 10	76	38.00
11 to 20	51	25.50
21 to 30	41	20.50
Above 30	32	16.00
Total	200	100.00

1.6 Land holding

The data presented in Table 8 showed that a majority (43.50%) of the victims were small farmers having land holding between 1.01 to 2.00 hectares, followed by 23.50 per cent marginal farmers possessing land upto 1.00 hectare. Whereas, 20.50 per cent and 12.50 per cent of the victims had semi medium (2.01 to 4.00 ha) and medium (4.01 to 10.00 ha) land holding, respectively.

The average size of holding in marginal, small, semi-medium and medium groups were 0.76 ha., 1.59 ha., 3.11 ha. and 5.50 ha. respectively. The overall size of holding was worked out to 2.20 hectares. Thus, it is concluded that more than two third (67.00%) of the victims belonged to small and marginal land holdings categories. These groups were more vulnerable to risk and uncertainty that prevail in agricultural production.

Table 8: Distribution of selected victims according to land size
n=200

Holding group	Number of victims	Total area (ha.)	Average size of holding (ha.)
Marginal (Upto 1.00 ha.)	47 (23.50)	35.59 (8.10)	0.76
Small (1.01 to 2.00 ha.)	87 (43.50)	138.66 (31.57)	1.59
Semi-medium (2.01 to 4.00 ha.)	41 (20.50)	127.50 (29.03)	3.11
Medium (4.01 to 10.00 ha.)	25 (12.50)	137.44 (31.30)	5.50
Total	200 (100.00)	439.19 (100.00)	2.20

(Figures in parenthesis indicate the percentage)

1.7 Subsidiary occupation

The data presented in Table 9, indicates that a majority of victims (70.50%) were engaged in farm labour for wage earning as a supportive endeavor to farming and a majority of them were marginal and small farmers. While 20.00 per cent victims were having only farming as their main occupation and they did not have a any back up system, mostly they were medium (4.01-10.00 ha.) land holders. Whereas, 6.50 per cent deceased farmers were doing either caste related or other non-professional business with farming. Monthly income from salary/pension was noted in 2.00 per cent victims. Only two deceased farmers (1.00%) possessed dairy as an allied occupation through buffalo rearing in addition to farming. Thus, it could be concluded that a majority of the victims did not have any supplementary occupation.

Table 9: Distribution of selected victim's households according to their subsidiary occupations

n=200		
Subsidiary occupation	Number of victims	Percentage
Agriculture + Labour	141	70.50
Agriculture (only farming)	40	20.00
Agriculture + Allied occupation	02	01.00
i. Agriculture + Dairy (Buffalo)		
Agriculture + Non professional business.	13	06.50
Agriculture + Service/ Pension	04	02.00
Total	200	100.00

1.8 Annual income

Income is a major determinant of the economic status of an individual. Low income creates great difficulty for an individual to manage affairs of the family. Such people become discouraged and cannot perform their functions properly (Madan,1980). Keeping this in view, the annual income was considered for the study. The distribution of selected victims according to their annual income is presented in Table 10. From Table 10 it is observed that a majority of the victims (62.00%) had annual income upto ₹ 25,000/-. This was followed by over one fourth (29.00%) respondents belonging to income group with annual income between ₹ 25,001/- to ₹ 50,000/-. Whereas, 5.50 per cent victims had annual income

between ₹ 50,001/- to ₹ 75,000/- and only 3.50 per cent deceased farmers had annual income above ₹ 75,000/-. The average annual income of all victims' households was ₹ 27,924/-, which includes cultivation, wages, non-professional business income, service/ pension and income from allied occupations. Hence, the low income of the farmers is proved as an important specified cause of farmers' suicide in Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra State.

Table 10: Distribution of victims according to their annual income (2005-06)

n=200		
Annual income	Number of victims	Percentage
Up to ₹ 25,000	124	62.00
₹ 25,001 to ₹ 50,000	58	29.00
₹ 50,001 to ₹ 75,000	11	5.50
Above ₹ 75,000	7	3.50
Total	200	100.00

Mean= 27,924

1.9 Socio-economic status

Scale developed and standardized by Thakare (2004) was used for measurement of socio-economic status (SES). It could be noted from Table 11 that most of the deceased farmers were categorized in very low (67.50%) and low level (29.00%) of socio-economic status. While, remaining only 3.50 per cent victims were in medium level of socio-economic status. Not even a single victim was belonging to higher socio-economic status group. The average SES score was 4.83 that comes under very low SES. Thus, the present research study accepted that nearly cent per cent (96.50%) suicides were concentrated between very low and low level of socio-economic status group.

Table 11: Distribution of victims according to their socio-economic status

n=200		
Socio-economic status	Number of victims	Percentage
Very low	135	67.50
Low	58	29.00
Medium	07	3.50
Medium-high	00	0.00
High	00	0.00
Total	200	100.00

Mean SES score= 4.83

1.10 Irrigation facilities

Availability of irrigation facilities and their irrigation potential significantly affect the cropping pattern, production, productivity and ultimately income level of farmers by many folds (Shivappa, 2006). It is observed from Table 12 that nearly three fourth (69.00%) victims were not having any source to access the irrigation. They solely depended on monsoon rains. Nearly one fourth (24.00%) deceased farmers were having only open well as irrigation source. Whereas, remaining 7.00 per cent

victim's had canal (3.00%), tube well (1.50%), river (1.00%) and both canal plus well (1.50%) as the source of irrigation. It is also noticed that most of the wells were either dry or did not have sufficient water for irrigation due to depletion of groundwater and less rains in recent years.

It is, therefore, concluded that a majority of (69.00%) suicide cases were not having any source to access the irrigation. They were mostly depending on monsoon rains only. Secondly due to lack of irrigation facilities, their cropping intensity was also low and ultimately had low-income level.

Table 12: Distribution of victims according to their available Irrigation sources

n=200		
Irrigation sources	Number of victims	Percentage
No source	138	69.00
River	02	1.00
Well	48	24.00
Tube well	03	1.50
Canal	06	3.00
Well + Canal	03	1.50
Total	200	100.00

1.11 Productivity

Production and productivity of farm crops has direct relation with annual gross income of an individual farmer. In present study, it was assumed that in case of most of the deceased farmers, heavy losses occurred in annual gross income due to low productivity or crop failures during preceding years, due to monsoon vagaries and absence of irrigation facilities. Hence, average crop yield of victims' households, in q/ha during 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 was computed and presented in Table 13. While studying the cropping pattern of selected households it was observed that over 70.00 per cent area was cultivated under rainfed cotton and soyabean crops. It is quite evident from Table 13 that the average productivity of all crops during 2004-2005 was very low, which might be due to the drought year. The individual crop wise productivity of the victims' households in terms of yield in q/ha during the year 2004-2005 and minimum and maximum expected yield levels of respective crops under rainfed condition as per the recommendations published in Krushi Samvadini 2007 by Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh *Krishi Vidyapeeth, Akola*; were presented in bracket as : cotton: 2.39 q/ha (7 to 15 q/ha), soybean : 3.17 q/ha (15-25 q/ha), *jowar* : 4.63 q/ha (35-50 q/ha), *tur* : 1.96 q/ha (8-15 q/ha), *mung* : 2.23 q/ha (6-12 q/ha), and in *udid* : 1.50 q/ha (8 -12 q/ha). During 2005-2006 yield were: cotton: 4.38 q/ha, soybean : 6.42 q/ha, *jowar* : 7.85 q/ha, *tur* : 5.86 q/ha, *mung* : 1.67 q/ha, and in *udid* : 3.59 q/ha.

Table 13: Average productivity of major crops of selected victims' households during 2004-05 and 2005-06
n=200

Crops	Productivity q./ ha.	
	2004-05	2005-06
Cotton (<i>Bt.</i> & non <i>Bt.</i>)	2.39	4.38
i) <i>Bt.</i> cotton	3.81	5.94
ii) Non <i>Bt.</i> cotton	2.32	4.16
Soyabean	3.17	6.42
Jowar	4.63	7.85
Tur	1.96	5.86
Mung	2.33	1.67
Udid	1.50	3.59

1.12 Indebtedness

In present study, indebtedness had been considered as the total outstanding debt/loan amount of institutional and non-institutional credit sources towards the victims and his/her households at the time when he/she had committed suicide. The details about indebtedness are presented in Table 14 to 16. It was observed from Table 14 that 98.50 per cent victims were found indebted, that means a majority of the victims had an obligation to pay debts to borrowed agencies/ sources, whereas only 3 victims (1.50%) were not found indebted.

Table 14: Distribution of victims' households according to Indebtedness

Particulars	Number of victims	Percentage
Indebted victims	197	98.50
Free from debts	03	01.50
Total	200	100.00

Source-wise indebtedness

Table 15 indicates the source-wise indebtedness position of all selected victims. It gives clear idea about type of credit sources utilized by the deceased farmers. It is observed from Table 15, that 47.00 per cent of the victims had outstanding debt of only institutional credit sources. Whereas, over half (51.50 %) victims had outstanding debt of both institutional (co-operatives and banks) and non-institutional (money lender, friends/relatives and traders/ dealers) credit sources, while 1.50 per cent were free from debt.

Table 15: Indebtedness position of the victims' households according to the credit sources

Victims having outstanding debt of	Number of victims	Percentage
Only institutional credit sources	94	47.00
Both institutional & non-institutional credit sources	103	51.50
Free from debts	03	01.50
Total	200	100.00

Distribution of the victim's households according to amount of debt

Researcher tried to distribute indebted victims in four classes as mentioned in Table 16. Out of 200 victims, 196 (98%) had outstanding debt of institutional sources. When the investigator went through the above-mentioned four classes, it was observed that out of 196, a majority 133 (67.86%) victims had the institutional debt upto ₹ 25,000 (minimum debt was noted ₹ 600/- & 900/- in Washim District). This was followed by 36 victims (18.37%) in class of ₹ 25001 to 50,000, while 19 victims (9.69%) came in debt class of ₹ 50001 to 1 lakh and meager 8 victims (4.08%) were having more than ₹ 1 lakh debt (maximum institutional debt was noted ₹ 2,43,809/- in one case in Yavatmal District). It was also revealed that out of 200 victims, 103 (51.50%) victims had the non-institutional debts. While distributing these 103 victims across the four classes of debt, it was noticed that 71 (68.93 %) victims had outstanding debt upto ₹ 25,000 (minimum debt was observed ₹ 2000/- in three cases), followed by 24 (23.30%) victims came under debt class of ₹ 25,001 to 50,000 and remaining only 8 (7.77%) victims had debt in range of ₹ 50,001 to 1 lakh (maximum debt ₹ 1 lakh observed in two cases each from Akola and Washim Districts). While considering total outstanding debt of 197 (98.50%) indebted victims including both institutional and non-institutional sources, it is seen from Table 17 (column 7 and 8) that, out of 197 victims, equal number of 74 (37.56%) victims were, having debt upto ₹ 25,000 (minimum total debt was observed as ₹ 3100/- in Buldana District) and in range of ₹ 25,001 to 50,000, followed by 38 (19.28%) victims who possessed debt in range of ₹ 50001 to 1 lakh, while 11 (5.60%) cases had total debt more than ₹ 1 lakh (maximum debt amount ₹ 2,63,809/- and ₹ 2,92,855/- was noticed in two cases each from Yavatmal and Akola, respectively).

Table 16: Distribution of victims' households by amount of debt
n=200

Volume of debts	Number of cases		(Only indebted victims N=197)		Total Debts (a+b)	
	Institutional sources (a)	%	Non-Institutional sources (b)	%	Total Debts (a+b)	%
Upto ₹ 25,000	133	67.86	71	68.93	74	37.56
₹ 25,001 - 50,000	36	18.37	24	23.30	74	37.56
₹ 50,001 - 1,00,000	19	09.69	08	07.77	38	19.28
Above ₹ 1,00,000	08	04.08	00	00.00	11	5.60
Total number of cases.	196	100.00	103	100.00	197	100.00

1.13 Extent of family responsibility fulfilled

A perusal of the data in Table 17 indicated that out of total 200 victims, 114 (57.00%) victims held the children's education responsibility in family and out of them, over half 58 (50.88%) victims had fulfilled this responsibility to some extent. This was followed by 52 (45.61%) victims who had fulfilled it to little extent and only meager 4 (3.51%) cases fulfilled it to a great extent.

Daughter/ sister's marriage is an important obligation of family members, which was held by more than one third 77 (38.50 %) victims and out of them, a majority 33 (42.86%) victims had fulfilled the daughter/ sister's marriage obligation to a great extent. This was followed by 20 (25.97%) victims who had not fulfilled any daughter/ sister marriage's responsibility. While discussing this issue with the family members, they expressed that due to the repeated crop failure, their economic condition was not favorable to fulfill this responsibility. Whereas, 16 (20.78%) victims had fulfilled it to some extent, while very ten cases *i.e.* 6 (2.60%) had fulfilled it to a great extent and 2 (2.60%) victims fulfilled it to little extent.

Responsibility of health treatment of family members had been held by one fourth 50 (25.00%) deceased farmers, and out of them a majority 21 (42.00%) of the victims had fulfilled it to some extent, followed by 13 (26.00%) victims to great extent, 12 (24.00%) victims to little extent, 3 (6.00%) victims to a very great extent and only one (2.00%) victim had not fulfilled any health treatment of family members, even though he had held the responsibility. The responsibility of rituals after death in family had been held by 16 (8.00%) victims, and out of them half of the respondents 8 (50.00%) had fulfilled it to a great extent. This was followed by 4 (25.00%) victims to some extent, 3 (18.75%) to a very great extent and one (6.25%) victim had not fulfilled the responsibility of rituals in family. Responsibility of male child marriages had been held by 15 (7.50%) victims and out of them 6 (40.00%) victims each had fulfilled it to a very great and to some extent, respectively. Whereas, in 6.67 per cent and 13.33 per cent cases it was fulfilled it to a great and little extent, respectively, while meager 5 (2.50%) victims held the responsibility of widow/divorced/disputed, daughter/sister in family, and out of them 2 (40.00%) victims each had fulfilled to a very great and great extent respectively, whereas, one (20.00%) victim fulfilled it to

Table 17: Distribution of the victims according to the responsibilities held and their extent of fulfillment.

Family Responsibilities	Held	Extent of fulfillment									
		Not at all		To little extent		To some extent		To a great extent		To a very great extent	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Children's education	114 (57.00)	0	0.00	52	45.61	58	50.88	4	3.51	0	0.00
Daughter / sister marriages	77 (38.50)	20	25.97	2	2.60	16	20.78	6	7.79	33	42.86
Health treatment of family members	50 (25.00)	1	2.00	12	24.00	21	42.00	13	26.00	3	6.00
Rituals after death in family	16 (8.00)	1	6.25	0	0.00	4	25.00	8	50.00	3	18.75
Male child marriages	15 (7.50)	0	0.00	2	13.33	6	40.00	1	6.67	6	40.00
Responsibility of widow / divorced / disputed, daughter/ sister in family	5 (2.50)	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	20.00	2	40.00	2	40.00

1.14 Victim's habits

It is obvious from Table 18 that more than two third (70.50 %) deceased farmers possessed either one or more bad habits with them, like chewing of tobacco, smoking, alcohol addiction or gambling, whereas 29.50 per cent were free from bad habits. The detailed information about bad habit behaviour of the selected victims is presented in Table 19. It is apparent from Table 19 that relatively higher proportion (44.50%) of the deceased farmers possessed regular tobacco-chewing habit, followed by 42.00 per cent having regular alcohol drinking habit, while 23.00 per cent victims were observed under smoking habit. Out of them, a majority (21.00%) smoked *bidies* and 1 per cent each smoke cigarettes and *ganja*. Whereas, 4.00 per cent deceased farmers were playing *jugar/satta*. It was also observed that a majority of alcohol addicted victims also possessed additional likening of tobacco through chewing or smoking. Thus, it could be concluded that sizable (42.00%) victims were observed under alcohol addiction as one of the identified risk factors of suicide.

Table 18: Distribution of victim's according to their bad habits
n=200

Particulars	Number	Percentage
Victim's with bad habits	141	70.50
Victim's free from bad habits	59	29.50
Total	200	100.00

Table 19: Particulars about the existence of bad habits among victims

Habits	Number of victims	Percentage
Chewing of tobacco	89	44.50
Alcoholism	84	42.00
Smoking		
i. Bidi - 42 (21.00)	46	23.00
ii. Cigar - 02 (01.00)		
iii. Ganja - 02 (01.00)		
Gambling (Jugar / Satta)	08	04.00

(Number and percentage is more than hundred due to existence of more than one habits in some victims)

1.15 Victim's health

It could be seen from Table 20 that the personal health problem was noted in 19.00 per cent deceased farmers, while a majority (81.00%) were free from health problems. It was also observed that illness gets aggravated in a majority of the victims due to poor economic condition, a because it makes care seeking difficult and leads to again financial crisis to meet medical expenses. It is observed that out of the total 38 (19.00%) ill health victims, over one fourth 10 (26.32%) victims suffered from mental health problem. The risk of suicide is 3 to 12 times greater in psychiatric illness patients than that of non-psychiatric patients. Sizable (15.79%) victims

were physically handicapped by accidents, while tuberculosis, liver disorder, hypertension (blood pressure), paralysis, diabetes, eczema (skin disease), asthma, anaemia, epileptic fits, cancer, myocardial infraction (heart attack) was noted in 2.63 to 7.89 per cent cases.

Table 20: Distribution of victims according to their health status
n=200

Health status	Number	Percentage
Victims' having health problem	38	19.00
Victims free from health problem	162	81.00
Total	200	100.00

1.16 Family health

A perusal of Table 21 revealed that in case of one-fourth (25.00%) deceased farmers, ill health of their family members was observed, while in three fourth (75.00%) victims, family health was not the problem.

Table 21: Distribution of victims according to their family members' health

Particulars	Number	Percentage
Family members having health problem	50	25.00
Family members were free from health problem	150	75.00
Total	200	100.00

1.17 Family disputes

The data present in Table 22, it is seen that in 16.00 per cent victims, disputes/ quarrel was noticed with their family members due to domestic reasons, whereas a majority (84.00%) victims were free from any domestic disputes/ quarrel with their family members. It was observed that out of 32 victims, in majority (62.50%) dispute/ quarrel were noticed with their spouse due to domestic reasons.

Table 22: Distribution of victims according to their presence of dispute / quarrel with family members

Victims	Number	Percentage
Having dispute / quarrel with family members	32	16.00
Free from dispute / quarrel	168	84.00
Total	200	100.00

CONCLUSION

While going through results of this research study, very dreadful condition of the households came out that a majority of victims had low income level, with very low and low socio-economic status level and nearly about cent per cent were defaulters and indebted. The income that they got from all sources, was not even enough to meet the essential expenditure of the households; hence these farmers were in severe distress. The data about the annual

income of the deceased farmers clearly revealed that as the income level decline the suicide rate is increased. For improving this situation, policy makers have to think critically and take strategic decision in order to bring about improving economic condition of the farmers of Vidarbha. There is an urgent need to declare remunerative prices for all crops of farmers in consonance with the cost of cultivation. Presently, most of the farmers depend on external inputs, that needs initial financial provision with farmers, but mostly the farmers of dry land region cannot save the money from their small and marginal holding. Hence, for every venture, they have to borrow money. Hence, this study implies measure for reducing the dependency of farmers on external inputs. Crop insurance facilities may be provided with low premium affordable by the farmers for all crops. Similarly, Government should give immediate financial help to affected farmers in natural calamities like flood, drought *etc.* The policy makers should design long term measures for uplifting the farmers socially and economically.

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