



## A Research Investigation into the Agricultural Sector and its Attendant Challenges Affecting Farmers

Dr. Dipali Gupta<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Gajanand Modi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>\* Professor-RNB Global University-Bikaner

<sup>2</sup>Associate professor-RNB Global University-Bikaner

\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Dipali Gupta

\* Professor-RNB Global University-Bikaner

### Abstract

Farmers, the backbone of the Indian economy and guardians of food security, face an alarming crisis marked by escalating suicides due to meager income and overwhelming debt. Hindered by limited access to markets, technology, and irrigation, coupled with encroachment of their lands by private entities, contract farming, and the challenges of climate change, droughts, and floods, farmers are enduring immense suffering. With dwindling incomes, many are compelled to abandon agriculture for alternate livelihoods, exacerbating the plight of marginal and smallholder farmers, who are the hardest hit.

Despite government initiatives and technological advancements, the epidemic of farmer suicides persists unabated. Currently, 76% of farmers have relinquished cultivation, underscoring their vulnerability. Urgent action is imperative. Comprehensive measures are needed, including improved market access, enhanced infrastructure, and better road connectivity. Additionally, provisions for free healthcare, education, special food packages, and medical insurance for farmers and their families are imperative. It is imperative to prioritize the well-being and livelihoods of our farmers, who are the lifeline of our nation.

### Introduction

Agriculture is the largest growing industry and the most important sector for living, over the years with advance in technology, introduction of equipment and mechanism for bringing efficiency and changes in the nature we grow crops and cultivate the land, there have been modernization of the agriculture sector across the world where each and every country has worked to bring maximum provisions for the farmers who are producer of food and the whole agriculture sector, The agriculture sector involves a lot of items like horticulture, poultry industry, animal husbandry, farms, fishery, forestry, agricultural chemistry, apiculture, aqua farming, agricultural communication, agricultural engineering and many others, the sector comprises of branches which contributes a good amount to the GDP of a country. Every government has introduced different schemes and taken measures to improve the sector for its best. Due to Climate change which has badly affected the weather conditions resulting in drought and famine, prolonged dry seasons in some regions whereas in some regions extreme rainfall, which has resulted in food and water crisis eventually, in order to tackle this disaster, the world are taken measures to enhance their productivity. The word had adopted to sustainable farming which has helped to combat a lot of problems from deforestation to soil erosion, less emission or no emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and less amount of water and chemical fertilisers, which has open doors for opportunities for the farmers and local communities are being employed. South Asia countries like India and Bangladesh which are poor countries and are highly dependent on agricultural for their economy growth, where in Bangladesh 90 % of the people are farmers, the country insist of being prone to floods have shifted to sustainable methods of farming in particular adopted floating farms methods followed by they have agricultural research institutions working and have identified crops which are climate tolerant and natural calamities tolerant which has also helped them to remove poverty to a great extent from their country, it has the 8<sup>th</sup> largest population, where as in India the scenario is different which has the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest agriculture country in the world, here the agriculture sector is under developed in some ways, which has made the life of the farmers miserable, Today India is a victim of farmers suicide cases, we have experienced over the past few years like 3 lakh cases of farmer suicide, the land holding is so small, the small and marginalised farmers have no access to a minimum income, the new farms laws resulted in huge protest across the country still no change took place. Farms have extreme low income and control over the land regions, contract farming in India has no provided any kind of benefit to the farmers instead made it miserable with no access to market for many farmers and regions.

### Research Methodology

For the purpose of this exploration, I have used a amalgamation of two of the archetypical social sciences research tools application –as they are authentic and brilliant method to assemble statistics from multiple appellants in a methodical and convenient way. Question were asked to the common youth, public policy Analyst, rural people, farmers ,survey, interviews –consisting of several interrogation which were dispersed among representative of each contender group.

### Objective of the Research Paper

The main areas of exploration in this paper incorporates Understanding the farmers problem in India.

What has the government done to improve the conditions of farmers in India.

Why so many farmers are committing suicide each year.

What can be the solution to this problem.

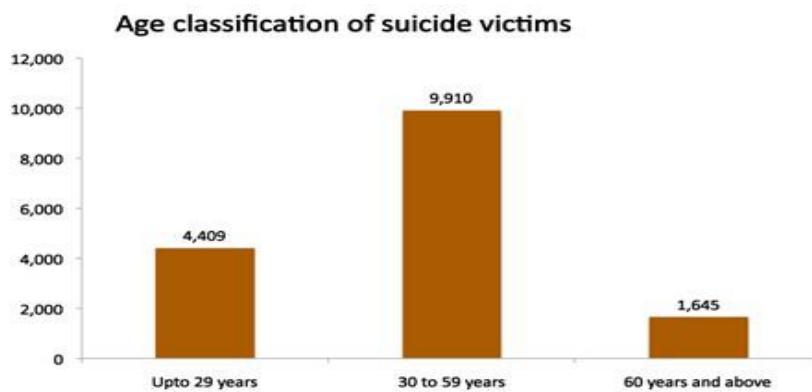
### Literature Review

The changing pattern of growing crops, land holding, liberalisation has brought Agricultural sector into the fore front and have got a position in the global market. India is one of the leading producer of many crops and even the largest producer of cotton, bananas, milk and many other. Since Independence the government has initiated many measures and schemes for the upliftment of farmers and making their lifestyle better from green to white revolution, brown to yellow revolution, blue revolution and make others, as the agriculture sector comprises of many branches. We have seen an improvement in the horticulture sector, India is the second largest producer of fish in the world, Advance technologies have been brought in, we have regional banks and agricultural banks for the farmers, still farmers are the poorest in the country, the small, marginalised and large farmers everyone is suffering, the farms bill, the result was we see maximum farmers came out and started protesting against the bill. In order to empower the farmers the government has introduced he Pradhan Mantri krishi Sichai Yojan which aims to improve the productivity by providing better irrigation facilities. The motive is to ensure that have access to the means of irrigation, in fact famers are being educated on the modern equipment and methods of modern irrigation users. Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna has been launched to encourage farmers to adopt organic farming, In fact a special scheme has been introduced in the North Eastern Region to promote organic farming and reports says North East Region practices organic farming to 90%.Price Stabilisation funds with a corpus of 500 crore have been introduced to support market intervention for price command of agri-horticultural Industries followed by which we have Gran Jyoti Yojana which will supply continuously electricity to the farmers which will not only boost economic but also influence the overall lives of the farmers and also make life better where education will also be enhanced, soil health card was also introduced, then we have eNam and many other online sites and normal SMS and calls to guide the farmers on the use of fertilizers ,soil fertile, irrigation. We are adopting to organic farming part by part with less than 4 % of the people have adopted to sustainable farming which also opens job opportunity for the farmers. Contract Farming has been introduced which according to government is a way to up lift the farmers and increase their income followed by in some states the same of Mandis has been removed and we see a direct contact between the consumers and producers that is with the farmers, Farmers Producer Organization have which ensures better salary for the producers if not individually but as a group which includes farmers, fishermen, Producers, weavers, craft men and rural artisans.

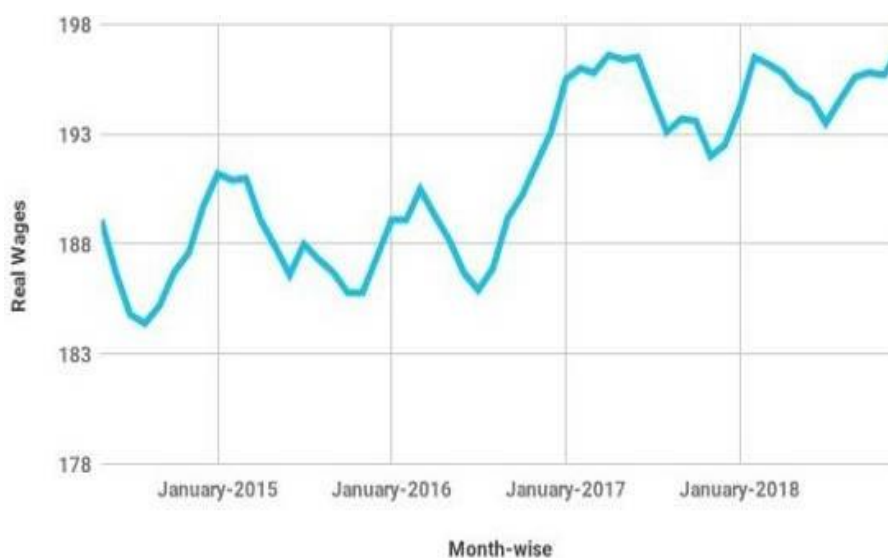
### Findings

In spite of some many schemes launched by the government, we have seen a rapid rise in Farmer suicide cases, every year thousands of farmers are killing themselves and majority are living before poverty line, 76% of the farmers are shifting to non- farm sectors to get a better lifestyle and income.

From 1995 to 2015 more than 3,00,000 farmers have committed suicide, where many activists are of the opinion that is an underestimation, the actual number of famer suicide in these 20 years have been way more than 3 Lakh, after 2016 the situation has become worst.In India most of the farmers have small land holdings and the monsoon rains are very uncertain and due to climate change is has become more uncertain and irregular and it is one of the reason why farming in India doesn't pay well, if monsoon is good, the farmers have a good yield and if the rain isn't good in a year there's a crop failure, but the reality is whether the year experience good rainfall or not the farmers have to beard loses either way.The reason for this is imbalance between supply and demand, even when the production is good the farmer have to trade their crops at minimum cost as the government doesn't want an increment in the cost levels as it will ultimately reduce the cost of the prices it starts to release its stocks, the stocks of food grain that it has or starts to import them, For instance in 2017, India had the highest ever cultivation of Pulses aka Dal 22.95 Million metric tonne of pulses were produced, it was sufficient to fulfil the needs of the whole country, even then the government imported 6.6 million metric tonne of pulses, at zero input duties and it led to an increase in supply and prices crashed all over the country and the farmers had to bear significant loses, it shows the administrative failure of the government, apart from that we lack domestic storage facilities and our market infrastructure is inadequate.



Minimum support Price, the cost at which the government assure to purchase the crops from the farmers if they are unsuccessful in selling the produce in the market, the government decided MSP for 26 crops, it changes every year, whereas we see in the past few years the growth rate of MSP has fallen very low, a rating agency CRISIL has published saying that between 2009 to 2013 the average rate of growth in the MSP was 19.3 % but for the year 2014 to 2017 the rate dropped to mere 3.6%. However in 2018 there was a record breaking increase in MSP from the government



If we talk about Farmer income which comes from three sources Cultivation, Wages and Allied activities, the income which they receive from cultivation is very less and this is the main reason why they commit suicide. In the past years we have seen that their income has remained constant or have decreased over the years. Infliction is increasing the country. Today, The marginal farmers who earns only rupees 566 per month from cultivation, small farmers who have a land less than 0.4 hectares their income is 1488 rupees only monthly income and large scale farmers, those famers who have a land of more than 2 hectares is 7572 per month, for a marginalised farmer it is very difficult to survive a month with just 500 rupees. If we talk about wages it contributes to 34% of the income of the farmers, this has also remained constant and not increased in this way they can't even upgrade their resources ,52% of the farmers are under loan with amounts to rupees 1,04,000 per farmer they are under debt, even if the government increases the Budget allocation for the agricultural sector it can provide much benefit to the farmers.




Contract farming has been a big problem for the small farmers as it has given corporates entry into the agriculture sector, they have captured many lands, Pastoralist do not have their own farms for grazing their cattle they take their animals to the grazing land of the villages or to the farms where even these cattle fertilize them with their cow dungs, as the lands are confiscated by the private sector there will be no place for livestock feed, In contact farming the corporates intends maximum profit and doesn't give any care towards the preservation of land or soil. Contract farming also try to entail foreign varieties crops in this way the local grown crops which has provided nutrition, if gone will result in mal nutrition in India and we have seen this happening across the country, it also results in decrease of farmer labourers as there is more use of mechanism which has led to increase in rural unemployment followed by this farmers don't have access to market which has resulted in the exploitation of farmers, where the middle men and intermediary take away half of the money and earn profit whereas the farmers are provided with less income.

Around 85% of the farmers have 5 or less than acres of land for cultivation in different parts of the country. Small farmers contribute 51%, and 46% operated land, The small size of the land and no land rights have exploited the farmers, they even undergo production risks like Drouth, issue of swamping, lack of inputs available. Lack of irrigation,

crop failure etc, followed by market risks, high transaction cost, poor price realisation, lack of access to Mandis. The MSP and depends on lower cost of intensive crops which have been the main reasons for suicide among farmers With liberalisation and private sector entering the sector, the life of farmers have been worst with they have control of majority of the land.

<b>SUICIDES IN FARM SECTOR</b>					
<b>SUICIDES BY</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>% CHANGE OVER 2016</b>
Farmers	6,270	5,955	5,763	5,957	-5%
Labourers	5,109	4,700	4,586	4,324	-15%
<b>Total suicides</b>	<b>11,379</b>	<b>10,655</b>	<b>10,349</b>	<b>10,281</b>	<b>-10%</b>

<b>SUICIDES IN STATES IN 2019</b>			
	<b>FARMERS</b>	<b>LABOURERS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Maharashtra	2,680	1,247	3,927
Karnataka	1,331	661	1,992
Andhra Pradesh	628	401	1,029
Madhya Pradesh	142	399	541
Telangana	491	8	499
Punjab	239	63	302

*\* Detailed state-wise data for 2017 and 2018 has not been made available by NCRB*

The government and other private agents are taking away agricultural lands for developing big factories and industries and installation of solar panels and wind tribunals by which we see day by day the size of the agriculture getting smaller, followed by soil erosion, salinization, deforestation which is making the land unfit for cultivation and the farmers are left with nothing to do. Being uneducated they don't know how to react to the court and fight for their rights and lands, they are passive victims of this global market of agriculture. We need to make situations better for farmers and bring in new policies for better facilities for the farmers.

**Way Forward**

Farmers should be given right over the land and there should be separate farmer land rights where no private sector can enter or the land can be used for any development purpose, they need to get access to the market, a direct link between the consumers and producers and also between the farmers and market, eliminating of intermediary ,Roads connectivity should be developed, infrastructure should be created for markets and every rural area should have access to the rural banks within their range and don't have to travel for longer distance, farmers should be informed about their rights as by the laws and they needs to special agents appointed to train and help the farmers in adopting to new method of cultivation, Contract Farming should be stopped and sustainable farming should be promoted where they can get better joy facilitates and equipment required for growing crops, the income of the farmers should be amplified. Grass root involvement in decision making should be adopted where farmers can propose the idea what are the requirement as they are the ones who are working in the fields, every state should take measures to improve the conditions for their agriculture as every state grows different crops and have different climatic conditions where the state can play a wide role than the central. Special security measures should be introduced for the farmers both male and female, Heath care package for pregnant farmers and their children, free health care facilitates once a month for all farmers, in fact special schools for farmers should be open in the villages where it is compulsory for every farmers to attend on the different technologies means and methods introduced and how to use it, education on different fertilisers, pesticides, its positive and negative impact, organic farming, sustainable farming etc.

**Conclusion**

Over the years with change in land holding, involvement of the private sector and above all climate change has made the life of the farmers miserable, they are the most exploited section of the society where they work hard day and night and their income is so less than it becomes impossible to survive a month with that, we have seen a rise in farmer suicide cases and maximum people told who are left as farmers are shifting to non-farms sectors for employment.

Agriculture which is the largest sector in India and which serves as the primary means of economy for the country with soon suffer from food crisis, where we are already facing food crisis because of a number of reasons where food wastage is the main element. With farmers leaving their farms, the first questions arise with lack of farmers how will the country food security be satisfied if we don't have cultivators. The government need to do something to reduce the rate of farmer suicide and enhance the agriculture sector in particular by giving farmers access to markets.

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