



## FARMER'S SUICIDE - GS III MAINS

**Q.** India has seen an increase in farmer suicide over the years, discuss the reasons for the same and bring out the steps taken by government to address the rising farmer suicide in India. (15 marks, 250 words)

**News:** *Reeling under drought & loan burden, Karnataka reported 456 farmer suicides so far this year*

### What's in the news?

- Of the 456 suicides reported so far, authorities have disbursed compensation in 354 cases.

### Key takeaways:

- Almost all of Karnataka is reeling under drought. The government has declared 223 out of 236 taluks as drought-hit.
- Farmers who kill themselves due to debt get Rs 5 lakh in compensation and the deceased's spouse gets a monthly pension of Rs 2,000.
- Of the 456 suicides reported so far, authorities have disbursed compensation in 354 cases.
- The thumb rule while deciding to pay compensation is that the farmer must have borrowed a bank loan and death must be due to suicide.

### Causes of Farmer's Suicide:

#### 1. Natural disasters:

- Due to factors like excessive rain, floods, droughts, delays in the rain, heavy cyclones, etc., farmers are unable to harvest both qualitative and quantitative output from their farms as a result of global warming, deforestation and other man-made factors.
- Farmers frequently struggle to recoup the cost of their goods. These factors make agriculture a guaranteed loss-making venture.
- The marginal and small farmers, however, are without an alternative source of income. They continually give agriculture their whole attention. They become insolvent as a result of ongoing losses and the frustration of this drives them to take their own lives.

#### 2. Water level fall:

- Sufficient irrigation infrastructure is required for the sector to expand sustainably.
- Water shortages lead to the discontinuation of irrigation and watershed development projects since there is no institutional system in place to conserve the rainwater.

#### 3. Low Productivity and Monsoon Uncertainty:

- Changes in the monsoon have an impact on farmers' livelihoods and agricultural output.



- Due to the uneven distribution of arable land and the unpredictable nature of the monsoon, the majority of farmers are marginal farmers.
- Farmers commit suicide as a result of finding it impossible to meet family needs.

#### **4. Farmer's debt as a result of crop failure:**

- The growing disparity between the expense of cultivation and the cash received from the prices of produce has made agriculture unprofitable.
- For all crops, the average difference between cultivation costs and receiving prices is a significant percentage.
- However, the returns from agriculture were out of proportion to the investment, as a result, farmers were unable to use their agricultural income to pay for the expense of cultivation.
- Agriculture-related social structures make the issue even worse. Farmers who work as renters from time to time and who cannot support their families due to high daily expenses that exceed their income or who are unable to meet their needs commit suicide.

#### **5. Costly methods used in modern agriculture:**

- Following the green revolution and the development of new technology, farming has been much simpler and more productive thanks to hybrid seeds, insecticides, pesticides and farm growing techniques.
- But since they are so expensive, these breakthroughs and technologies are out of reach for poor small and marginal farmers.

#### **6. Reduced agricultural subsidies:**

- Agricultural subsidies may also encourage producers to misuse fertilizers and pesticides, which could have a severe influence on the environment by causing soil degradation, groundwater depletion, and other issues.
- Due to market volatility, the government eliminated various sorts of subsidies.
- Agriculture has suffered as a result of subsidy reductions and fertilizer regulation. It raised input costs and decreased the profitability of agriculture.

#### **7. Insufficient education:**

- Farmers are unable to give their children the required education because of their poverty.
- As a result, the farmers' sons also become farmers, and this pattern continues. They suffer as a result because they are uninformed of the programs or do not know how to use the government advantages that are available to them.

#### **8. Lack of transit systems:**

- It is the main barrier to effective marketing. There are no highways connecting the rural areas to the market. Transport issues result in a large amount of wasted agricultural product.

#### **9. Lack of essential infrastructure:**

- The lack of suitable social support infrastructure at the village and district levels, uncertainty surrounding the region's agricultural sector and lack of infrastructure



amenities like power and clean drinking water have an impact on the farmers' mental and physical health.

- They occasionally start abusing drugs and drinking more. All of these items drew deadly illnesses and caused them to perish.

## 10. Economic policies of India:

- India's economic policies are typically driven by urban consumers, as seen by the necessity to enact price restrictions in the event of a price increase and to remove them once the price is under control.
- Such regulations reduce profit margins and harm farmer's ability to escape the debt cycle.

## Government responses to India's Farmer Suicides:

The following is a summary of some of the significant debt alleviation and debt cancellation programs announced by the government:

### 1. Relief package for 2006:

- It targeted primarily at 31 districts in the four states of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka that have a high relative incidence of farmer suicides.

### 2. 2008 agricultural debt relief and waiver program:

- Over 36 million farmers benefited from the Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme in 2008, which cost 65000 crore rupees (\$10 billion). With this money, the farmers' interest and a portion of their loan principal would be written off.

### 3. 2013 package to diversify income streams:

- For the farmers in the Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala regions that are prone to suicide, the Indian government introduced the Special Livestock Sector and Fisheries Package in 2013.
- The package was designed to help farmers diversify their sources of income.

### 4. Maharashtra assistance program, 2010:

- In 2010, the Maharashtra State Government declared it unlawful for unlicensed moneylenders to demand loan payback.
- A low cost crop insurance scheme, whose premium will be covered by farmers and the government equally, as well as the introduction of other sources of income for farmers in areas with a high risk of suicide, such as poultry, dairy and sericulture, were also announced by the State Government.
- The government also said that it would allocate \$10 million year per district under the Samudaik Lagna to support a marriage fund for community wedding celebrations, which are a contributing factor in farmer suicides.

### 5. Regional projects:

- Several Indian state governments have started their own programs to lessen farmer suicides. In order to address farm hardship, the Maharashtra government established the Vasanttrao Naik Sheti Swavlamban Mission in Amravati in 2006.



- The Government of Karnataka also established a group to investigate farmer suicides, which was led by Dr. Veeresh, a former vice chancellor of an agricultural university, and included Prof. Deshpande as a member.

6. The central government has implemented a **number of initiatives** in recent years, including the PM Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), PM Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY), electronic National Agricultural Market (e-NAM), Soil Health Card, and Neem-coated urea, among others.

#### 7. Pradhan Mantri Kisan-Samman Yojana:

- A farming household is entitled to 6,000 rupees in annual cash aid from the central government under PM KISAN.
- Direct bank deposits of the funds are made into the beneficiaries' accounts in three equal installments of Rs 2,000 each.
- An electronic database linked to Aadhaar that has information on all farm households whose names appear in land records is used to conduct the scheme.
- 12 crore farmers nationwide benefit from the PM KISAN Yojana.

As an agrarian economy, India has seen an increase in farmer suicide over the years, thus we need to prevent it for a variety of reasons. To overcome a helpful remedy for farmer's suicide, institutional support is required. The government must provide favourable conditions for small and marginal farmers to get timely and adequate support through lending to farmers, with a focus on helping these farmers acquire modern equipment for increased agricultural productivity.

