

## Farmers' Suicide as a Multidimensional Malaise: A Case Study of Farmers' Suicide in India

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### ABSTRACT

The aetiologies of farmers' suicide that rocked India from 1995-2015 are located in biological, genetic, psychological, social, economic, cultural and environmental factors. The reasons for farmers' suicide in India are both multiple and complex. This paper is an attempt, engaging interpretivist critical methodology, to suggest that farmers' suicide in India should be recognized as a multi-dimensional malaise vis-à-vis the efforts to construe farmers' suicide in India as mono-causal (indebtedness) or explain it in binary (suicide as an individual act or as a social fact - psychological and sociological perspectives on suicide) terms.

**Keywords:** Farmers' Suicide in India, Multi-dimensional malaise, Muicide, Wayanad

### INTRODUCTION

The tsunamic waves of farmers' suicide that rocked India between 1995 and 2015 were unprecedented in human history. Speaking of the most tragic face of India's agrarian crisis, Sainath [1] states, "we have been undergoing the largest catastrophe of our independent history - the suicides of nearly a quarter of a million farmers since 1995. We are talking of the largest recorded rate of suicides in human history".

It is the mind-numbing reality of farmers' suicide in India and its magnitude that arrested the researcher's attention and the researcher felt that the mass suicide of farmers in India calls for academic discourse, engagement and intervention.

In the course of a qualitative research on farmers suicide in India, the researcher has come to the conclusion that suicide and by extension farmers' suicide is multiple and complex. It is a 'multidimensional malaise' vis-à-vis the efforts to construe farmers' suicide in India as mono-causal (indebtedness) or explain it in binary (suicide as an individual act or as a social fact - psychological and sociological perspectives on suicide) terms.

### PHILOSOPHICAL AND RESEARCH PARADIGM

The philosophical paradigm of interpretivism "associated with the philosophical position of idealism and is used to group together diverse approaches, including social constructivism, phenomenology and hermeneutics; approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness" [2] informs this research. Phenomenology, the philosophical tradition that seeks, "to understand the world through directly

experiencing the phenomena" [3] and symbolic interactionism that accepts symbols as culturally derived social objects having shared meanings and that symbols provide the means by which reality is constructed, are two important forms of interpretivism.

The philosophical paradigm of interpretivism, as it "allows the researcher to explore the subjective meanings through which people interpret the world, the different ways in which reality is constructed (through language, images and cultural artefacts) in particular contexts" [4] enables the researcher in the present research to go beyond "fixed and specific procedures" [5]. It helps the researcher to explore the hidden, the unseen and the unspoken as regards the phenomenon of farmers' suicide in India, unencumbered with reliability, validity and generalizability that are associated with the positivistic and realistic philosophical paradigms of social studies research.

The research bases itself on Interpretivist research paradigm. Interpretive research is concerned with subjective social issues and has its roots in the phenomenology of Husserl and Schutz [4] the understanding of social action or *verstehen* approach of Weber [6] and symbolic interactionism as Mead

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and Blumer [5] formulated it. The approach emphasizes the need to understand society as social actors perceive and interpret it, and interpretations of social phenomena can vary markedly according to the standpoint of the social actor [4]. The Interpretivist research strategy expedited the researcher to look at farmers' suicide in India as the relatives of the suicide perceive and interpret it and thus understand society and farmers' suicide from their shared constructs and meanings.

### **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Interpretivist and critical theory formed the theoretical framework of this study. Thus, this study is an interpretive critical inquiry into farmers' suicide in India. It is a form of interpretative inquiry carried out with praxis or social change as a goal. Drawing both from the interpretative and critical theory paradigms it is a response to the criticism that interpretivist aim of coming to understand the lived experiences of the researched stops short of questioning how their world is so and what can be done to address any social conflict in their world [7]. "In particular, it is argued that the interpretive model neglects questions about the origins, causes and results of actors adopting certain interpretations of their actions and social life, and neglects the crucial problems of social conflict and social change" [8].

This research is carried out following the qualitative research methodology in Social Studies. Qualitative research methodology developed across a range of disciplines, on varied and even conflicting philosophical and theoretical mores and cores, including cultural anthropology, interpretative sociologies (such as symbolic interactionism), phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical theory, feminism, post-colonial theory, cultural studies, post-structuralism and postmodernism [4] helps the researcher to understand the phenomenon of farmers' suicide from the perspective of the relatives of the actors, avoiding the imposition of the researchers' own preconceptions and ideas.

### **SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SUICIDE**

The "tantalizing phenomenon" [9] of suicide is probably "as old as murder and almost as old as natural death" [10]. Therefore, the topic of suicide, over millennia, has been of interest to people of very different categories: doctors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, sociologists, lawyers, clergymen, teachers, the police, writers, philosophers, and politicians [11,12]. Therefore, the perspectives on suicide are multiple and mind boggling to be condensed in a particular research on farmers' suicide in India. Consequently, the researcher clearly defines the boundaries of this research and limits the research to the pre-defined boundaries.

In an attempt to provide a theoretical platform to understand suicide in general and farmers' suicide in India, the research reviews relevant literature. Western literature available in

English in the fields of sociology and psychology post-renaissance and post-suicide of Lord Castlereagh (1822) and Abel Griffiths (1823) and a tinge of Indian literature is reviewed for the purpose. The suicides of Lord Castlereagh and Abel Griffiths are defining moments in ushering in a paradigm shift in the attitude towards suicide in the western world, particularly in England. The research also has a glimpse at the Indian understanding of suicide. For farmers' suicide in India review of literature focuses on understanding all the major factors that have contributed to the self-destruction of farmers in India.

### **THE INDIAN AGRARIAN CRISIS AND FARMERS' SUICIDE IN INDIA**

Though the researcher argues that farmers' suicide in India is to be understood as a category in itself; farmers' suicide in India is positioned in the context of Indian Agrarian Crisis. India has an unenviable situation of agrarian distress triggering farmers' suicide and farmers' suicide aggravating the agrarian crisis.

India is on the verge of being a major economic power (an economic tiger) in the world, with gross domestic product growth rate reaching striking levels and the poverty ratio coming down significantly. However, Indian agriculture and agrarian activities is in the clasp of an acute agrarian crisis with low productivity, high rural unemployment and food insecurity. This agrarian crisis in Indian agriculture is "unparalleled since independence and reminiscent only of the agrarian crisis of pre-war and war days" [13]. The most tragic upshot of India's agrarian calamity is the increasing number of farmer suicides, not just in the hotspot areas of Andhra Pradesh, Vidarbha and Wayanad but in the allegedly prosperous agricultural zones of Punjab and Karnataka as well.

Conversely, dramatic rise in the suicides of farmers in different parts of India over the last two decades has deepened the crisis in Indian agriculture. It has brought increased discussions among academics and policy makers [14] about the causes that such a phenomenon may have with wider processes of change at the national and international levels. "For the past couple of years, farmers' suicide has become a major issue in the academic narratives, policy analysis and in the everyday discourses" [15]. The issue came at a time when the debate on the agrarian economy was shifting from the debate on the mode of production of the 1960s to the growing crisis of the economy in the 1980s and to the farmers' suicide in recent years.

The agrarian crisis in India needs to be understood against the context of agriculture sector playing an important role in the Indian economy and the crucial role agriculture play for inclusive growth. Though at present this sector contributes only 13.9 per cent of the GDP, it provides employment to 56.6 per cent of the Indian work force [16].

One of the major problems of the Indian economy is that the decline in share of agricultural workers among total workers has been slower as compared to the decline in the share of agriculture in GDP. The share of agriculture in GDP decreased from nearly 60 per cent in 1951 to 25 per cent in 2000 and 20 per cent in 2005 and further to 17 per cent in 2013. However, between 1950 and 2010 there was a nearly 40 percentage decline in the share of agriculture in GDP, while the decline in share of agriculture in employment was only 18 percentage points [17]. The labor productivity in agriculture has increased at a much lower rate compared to other sectors.

India's economy is, thus, in a strange position. Services account for over half of GDP, with the agriculture sector accounting for only 17 per cent of GDP, while employing more than half of the total labor force (57%). Over 90 per cent of agricultural employment is in the informal sector, a mere 6 to 8 per cent in the formal sector of which two-thirds is government jobs. After more than seventy-one years, the promise of successful industrial development to dent the unemployment menace remains unrealized. The slow growth of the industrial sector and diversification away from agriculture to industry has been a clear failure in India [18].

India's journey towards becoming an economic superpower, post-reform (1991), is accompanied by "stagnation, even retrogression, in the agriculture sector" [19]. The effect of Green Revolution, distinctly visible during the decades of 1970s and 1980s, has almost completely ebbed off. "Decelerating agricultural growth rate, falling productivity of the farm sector, surge in food grains prices, reduced per capita food grain availability, widening rural-urban divide and above all, the alarming increase in the incidence of farmers' suicide" [19] are contemporary realities that confront Indian agriculture and stares at the Indian nation state.

Government spending in agriculture has been reduced to meet World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) recommendations. For example, the government spending on rural development including agriculture, irrigation, flood control, village industry was reduced from 14.5% in 1985 to 9.0 to 6 per cent in 1995 to 2001. On irrigation, annual growth in spending was 2.6 per cent in the 1980s, which was reduced to just 0.5 per cent per annum in 1992 to 2008. Since 1992 the government has cut subsidies, and as a result the cost of production has increased. Bank loans are not easily available; this has forced farmers to rely on money lenders, which has further increased the cost of borrowing especially for small and marginal farmers. When farmers are unable to pay back loans with high interest rates, they are drawn into a debt trap.

A farmer committing suicide in a particular state or region may not attract our attention, as Durkheim points out "a given number of suicides are expected in a given type of society" [10] but when it turns-out to be of epidemic proportion, three lakh and nine thousand four hundred and twenty six (309426) suicide of farmers from 1995 to 2015 as per National Crime

Records Bureau account, serious concerns has to be raised"[20]. There is a need to see sense in the statement again of Durkheim "but where the rate increases rapidly, it is symptomatic of the breakdown of the collective conscience, and of a basic flaw in the social fabric" [10]. The increasing numbers of farmers' suicide points to a malaise in the Indian system that calls for in depth study, analysis and adoption of remedial measures. Suicides of tens of thousands of farmers in India points to the fact that the phenomenon of farmers' suicide can no longer be considered isolated cases of farmers' deaths but as a symbol of a deepening crisis of Indian Agriculture [21]. In this paper the researcher makes a sincere attempt to study in depth, to assess and analyze farmers' suicide in India.

#### DEFINITION OF A FARMER IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

In India a farmer is defined as a person who is actively engaged in the economic and/or livelihood activity of growing crops and producing other primary agricultural commodities and include all agricultural operational holders, cultivators, agricultural labourers, sharecroppers, tenants, poultry and livestock rearers, fishers, beekeepers, gardeners, pastoralists, non-corporate planters and planting labourers, as well as persons engaged in various farming related occupations such as sericulture, vermiculture, and agro-forestry. The term also includes tribal families/persons engaged in shifting cultivation and in the collection, use and sale of minor and non-timber forest produce [16].

#### Meaning and definition of the term suicide

The research on farmers' suicide falls within the overall framework of suicide. Therefore, it's important to understand the general concepts, ideas, definitions and theories related to suicide. An attempt therefore is made to look at the etymology of the term suicide and also to present some of the most widely accepted definitions and descriptions of suicide. Psychologists, sociologists, philosophers and others have defined suicide in their own terms. In this paper, two definitions, a description and a philosophical pondering of suicide are presented for the purpose of our study.

The word suicide in English is derived from the Latin word *sui* meaning "of oneself" and *caedere* meaning "kill" thus collectively meaning "to kill oneself". Thus, suicide is the act of intentionally causing ones' own death.

Suicide is defined as "the conscious act of self-induced annihilation best understood as a multidimensional malaise, in a needful individual who defines an issue for which the act is perceived as the best solution" [22].

Retterstol [11] defines suicide as "an act with a fatal outcome that is deliberately initiated and performed by the deceased himself or herself, in the knowledge or expectation of its fatal outcome, the outcome being considered by the actor as

instrumental in bringing about desired changes in consciousness and/or social conditions”.

Durkheim [10] terms suicide as “all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result”.

Schopenhauer [23] is philosophically poignant when he states, “as soon as the terrors of life reach the point at which they outweigh the terrors of death, a man will put an end to his life”. Moreover the ‘philosopher of pessimism’ was more concerned with the Freudian concept of “will to live” (eros) than the “desire to die” (thanatos).

Suicide, thus, is a conscious act of self-induced annihilation, an act with a fatal outcome, carried out by the victim who knows what the result would be, and carried out perhaps when the terrors of life outweigh the terrors of death. It is a tragic and untimely loss of human life, all the more devastating and perplexing because it is a conscious volitional act.

### OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF FARMER’S SUICIDE

If the proximate cause or the trigger factor for ending one’s life is related to agriculture, then that suicide is a farmers’ suicide.

#### Aetiology of suicide

Most theories of suicide consider suicidal behavior too complex to be explained by a single theory [24]. Most individuals may fit into more than one theory and aetiology for suicide, thus making suicide complex.

Biological, psycho-social, environmental, economic and cultural factors that arise out of and are in turn reproduced or modified as a result of the myriad of interactions and communications between individuals over time influence the phenomenon of suicide [10].

Socio-economic and cultural dimensions - language, ethical and moral codes, laws, beliefs about the nature of the physical and social world, beliefs about the meaning of life and death, marriage customs - and elements of human behavior that stem directly from inner biological, physical or psychological instincts, drives or needs are significant factors that influence suicidal behavior.

Apter better sums up the feeling of the researcher when he speaks of affective disorder, aggressiveness, biochemical abnormalities, borderline personality disorder, childhood physical and sexual abuse, depressive state, dissociation, displacement, genetic factors, history of alcohol or substance

abuse in adult life, humiliation, imperfection, impulsiveness, inability to tolerate failure, low tolerance of frustration, mental illness, narcissism, over sensitivity to minor life events, perfectionism, regression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder, shame, sense of hopelessness, splitting, unconscious anger turned towards the self as triggers for suicidal acts.

Age<sup>a</sup>(Bucknil and Tuke, Saelan, Nielsen), aggression (Maltsberger), agricultural distress (Tuke), alcoholic addiction (Moore and Saelan, Burrows), biochemical or genetic factors and environmental factors (Morselli), bipolar disorder, contagion (Burrows Westcott, Philips, Lester), change in consciousness (Halbwachs, Travis), chronic disease (Savage), clinical problem (Freud, Jung, Binswanger, Adler, Zilboorg, Henry and Short, Beck, Murray, Baechler, Shneidman, and Baumeister), collective sadness (Durkheim), core complex relationship (Glasser), cry for help (Savage), debt, debauchery, desire to avoid legal pursuit, disappointed love (Lisle and Boismont), deliberate decisions (Savage), delusion and delusional thinking (Bucknil and Tuke), depression (Saelan, Eastman, Westcott, Orbach and Maltsberger), manic depression (Savage), distress (Roseman and Kaiser), behavioural economics (Durkheim and Ginsberg), psychic pain (Morselli), psychache (Shneidman, Maltsberger, Ladame) crossed love, jealousy (Westcott), hostility (Stekel, Freud, Zilboorg, Abraham, Menninger, and Brill), an act that takes place in an ephemeral psychotic moment (one second madness) (Maltsberger Ladame), escapism (Baechler, Shneidman and Baumeister), excessive gambling (Moore, Lisle and Boismont), family (Cook), fantasy including suicide fantasy (Freud, Hale and Campbell, Maltsberger and Buie), gender (Nielsen), genetic factors, “suicidal tendency attacking successive generations”, of the propensity to suicide as “often transmitted from parents to children” (Moore, Cook), hereditary (Burrows, Falret and Esquirol, Bucknil and Tuke, Westcott, Savage Tuke), hallucinations (Savage, Bucknil and Tuke), helplessness (Bibring), hopelessness (Savage), innate attitude (Burrows, Falret and Esquirol, Sundt), insanity (Lisle and Boismont), social influences (Burrows), lunacy (Moore), influence of media (Savage, Motto), mental disorders (Savage, Bucknil and Tuke), melancholy (Moore, Burrows, Falret, Esquirol, Bucknil and Tuke, Eastman, Savage, Freud), misery (Morselli), multiple-personality disorder, occupation (profession) (Savage and Saelan), pathological causes, periodicals and journals, physical illness (Callison, Esquirol, Westcott and Savage), privation and individual psychological influences (Morselli), psycho-social factors, social disorganization and social change (Mercier, Falret, Masaryk,

<sup>a</sup>The names of authors are mentioned without the reference to their works as it is a tedious exercise both for the researcher and the reader to insert all the reference. However, the references are true and based on readings on suicide that the researcher has undertaken in the course of the research. If anyone desires to have further discussion on the matter the

researcher can be contacted at dominic.pendanam@dbuniversity.ac.in



Durkheim, Giddens, Lester), punishment of self and of parents (Freud, Stekel), religion (Savage), result of revengeful and self-destructive states of mind (Freud), schizophrenia and psychosis, seasons (Saelan, Bucknil and Tuke), self-alienation and feelings of self-break-up (Glover, Maltzberger), self-revulsion, sex (Saelan Bucknil and Tuke), sorrow (Morselli), splitting and projective identification (Klein, Maltzberger, Buie), society as well as individual (Sundt), talion (Stekel), *thanatos* (wish to die) and *eros* (will to live) conflict (Freud, Shneidman), weather (Tuke) are all considered as aetiologies leading persons to suicide.

Marx attributes suicide to consumptive illnesses, abused friendship, betrayed love, discouraged ambition, family troubles, and repressed rivalry. He emphasized that the varieties of reasons motivating suicide make a mockery of the moralists' single-minded and uncharitable blaming.

The review of literature has enriched and confirmed the researcher's belief that agricultural distress coupled with biological, environmental, social and psychological reasons cause suicide.

Suicide is a social act intended to communicate to others, an individual's 'summing-up' of his or her life's worth: "It is a statement about themselves, their social relationships and their social world".

#### **FARMERS' SUICIDE AS A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL MALAISE: A CASE STUDY OF FARMERS' SUICIDE IN WAYANAD DISTRICT, KERALA, INDIA**

The researcher justifies the assumption that suicide and suicide of farmers' in India is a multi-dimensional malaise based both on review of literature and findings from the field studies carried out in Wayanad District, Kerala in India. The findings of the researcher concur with Schneidmann, regarded as father of suicidology, who calls suicide a multi-dimensional malaise (quoted in the section on definitions of suicide).

India as a nation is in the cusp of rapid economic augmentation. It aims to become a \$5 trillion economy in the next five years. There seems to be a gaga feeling of prosperity and richness in the minds of a large number of people. Even the researcher seems to be unconsciously drawn to the notion of a prosperous India in a not so distant future. The acclaimed Golden Age of India during Gupta dynasty of old [25] somehow seems to be once again around the corner. 'India shines', and 'make in India' seem to have captured the imagination of a nation. There seems to be a sense of déjà vu of a glorious future for India. It is against such a backdrop of hope and perhaps triumphalism that farmers' suicide in India is juxtaposed. And the contradictions cannot be more glaring. Hundreds of thousands of farmers (322028 according to NCRB records from 1995-2015) have taken their lives in India from 1995 to 2015. It is a human induced disaster of 'epic proportion' [26] Therefore it is imperative to academically probe the reasons that accelerated the suicide

within the farming community in India in a span of nearly two decades and not to overlook or to take a dismissal view of suicide within the Indian peasantry—the largest body of small farmers in the world. There is also a necessity to evolve ways and methods to arrest and if possible, diffuse the ever-occurring phenomenon of farmers' suicide in India. It is this belief that has led the researcher to focus on the issue of farmers' suicide in India. For the purpose of an in-depth study of the phenomenon of farmers' suicide in India, the field was selected in Wayanad district in Kerala, the state acclaimed the world over for its unique achievements in human development index and for Kerala Model of Development [27]. The Paradox!

Between 1st January 2000 and 31st March 2008, the total number of suicides in Wayanad was 1692 as per data received. The year 2006 witnessed the highest number of suicides among the farming community in Wayanad (Forum, p. 35). Almost every day the news of —farmer's suicidal occupied headlines and columns with photographs of the diseased. The suicide of farmers' in Wayanad coincided with the mounting farmers' suicides in different parts of India especially in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka [20].

Wayanad presents itself to the first-time visitor as a perfect tourist destination: A prosperous, fertile and climatically pleasant hill district wrapping under cover of its majestic natural beauty the large number of farmers who have committed suicide in this hamlet like district of Kerala.

Though there have been severe controversies with respect to the causative factors of suicides of farmers in Wayanad and criticisms on the alleged politics of media reporting on the whole issue of suicides in the district, three components, inter-related and inter-dependent, socio-economic, cultural and ecological factors, have been pointed out as responsible for the repeated/recurring crop failures, climate change, pests and insects, droughts and floods in the district and the subsequent farmers' suicide in Wayanad. Greedy attacks on nature, environment and ecology resulted in the wounded nature's backlashes on human future.

Narratives that the researcher elicited from hundred and fifty families of Wayanad who are related to the victims of farmers' suicide, engaging thematic sampling within the interpretivist methodology and the narrative assessment and analysis that the researcher carried out reveals that the major reasons attributed to suicides are: indebtedness, crop failure, depression, alcoholism (**Table 1**).

**Table 1** indicates the number of farmers under study in Wayanad District of Kerala in India who have committed suicide and the aetiologies that could be the reason for their suicide. Of the 150 people studied, 99.33% (149 persons) of them had debt, 88.66% (133 persons) had experienced crop failure, 52.68% (79 persons) had depression and 37.33 per cent persons were under alcoholic addiction. The table shows

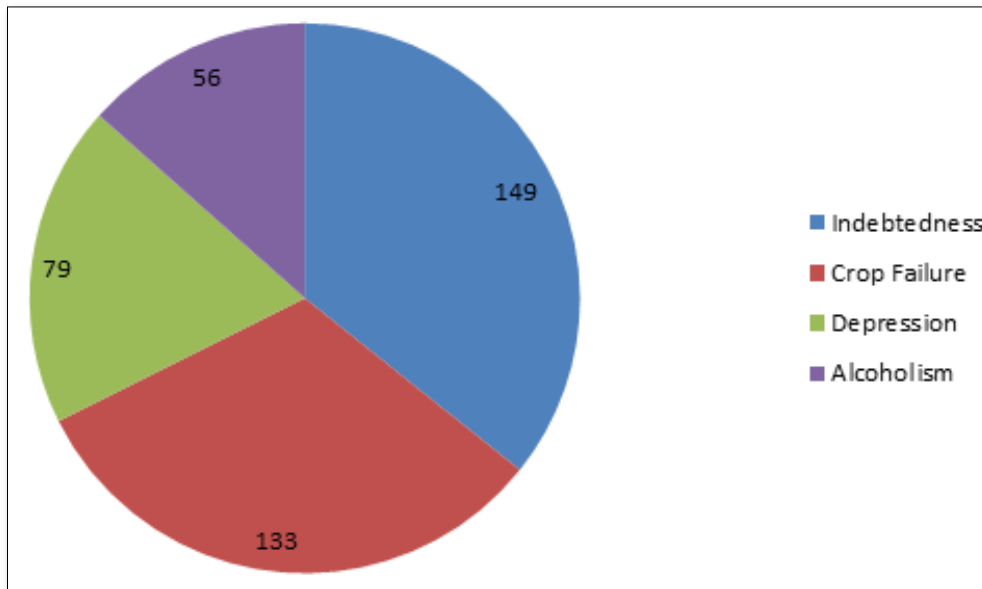
**Table 1.** Aetiologies of Farmers’ Suicide in Wayanad, Kerala, India.

Sl. No.	Aetiologies of Farmers’ Suicide in Wayanad	Number of Persons	Percentage
1	Indebtedness	149	99.33
2	Crop Failure	133	88.66
3	Depression	79	52.68
4	Alcoholism	56	37.33

that the highest number of people committed suicide owing to indebtedness. Crop failure was the second major reason for the suicide of farmers in Wayanad. Depression too was accounted as a reason for farmers’ suicide in Wayanad. Alcoholism too contributed for the suicide of farmers in Wayanad.

The field study and the findings that point to the fact that there is more than one reason for the suicide of farmers in India.

Unfortunately, some use this factor to suggest that there is no farmer suicide in India. It is against this aberration that this researcher has argued that any suicide, the primary cause of which is related to agriculture has to be considered a farmers’ suicide. For farm issues alone need not be the cause for a farmer to commit suicide as suicide is a multi-dimensional malaise.



**Figure 1.** Aetiologies for farmers’ suicide in Wayanad, India.

**TRENDS AND DISTURBING REVELATIONS OF FARMERS’ SUICIDE IN WAYANAD**

Wayanad showed a different trend in the number of suicide when compared to the National and State scenario. The increase in suicide compared to the population was to the tune of 22.50%. Since 1999 there was consistent increase in suicide in Wayanad district.

One of the most disturbing observations is on the enormous number of suicides among the two major communities in Wayanad: The Ezhava/Thiyya community and Christians. As elsewhere in Kerala, they are the most organized, well educated, politically and socially elevated groups in Wayanad, and mostly settlers from the south of Kerala from the 1940s. In spite of all these achievements, the highest

number of community-wise suicides has happened in the Ezhava/Thiyya community. This raises several questions and points fingers at much deeper concerns in society. The inter-community and intra-community dynamics among the Christian groups are much more and are fairly monitored by strong administrative structures and hierarchic orders. However, the study results reveal that none of the afore-said organizational or sectarian regimentations helped the victims in times of abject need or critical situations.

Converse to the common view that there were no suicides among the tribal population, the same study has brought out another disquieting and distressing truth of high number of suicides among the tribal communities. The vulnerability of these marginalized communities may not be capable of

holding the 'cultural shocks' attached to the globalized, market-controlled changes.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The research has presented Interpretivist critical inquiry as a methodological framework for the study of farmers' suicide in India. The study is strictly rooted in the philosophical paradigm of interpretivism and follows Interpretivist critical inquiry and critical symbolic interactionism as theories that guide the research. This is significant because the study on farmers' suicide has adhered faithfully to the qualitative methodological and theoretical framework.

The research aims at establishing a multi-dimensional explanation of the phenomenon of farmers' suicide. This is in contrast to many existing studies that offer mono-causal explanation to farmers' suicide or explains farmers' suicide in binary terms. Thus, the study presents an alternative narrative for the study of farmers' suicide in India.

The study explores the role of individuals and society in inducing farmers' suicide against the debate on whether suicide is a social fact or an individual act. Sociologists and psychologists are divided on the verdict. The study considers psychological, sociological, biological, environmental and economic dimensions of farmers' suicide and provides a wider theoretical framework for the study of farmers' suicide in India.

The research also attempts to acknowledge the contribution of farmers to the nation building and argue that adequate remedial measures needs to be put in place so that the hands that feed the nation are given the right to a dignified life.

The research that is rooted strongly on field research and follows Participatory Action Research and Ethnography as methods within the framework of Interpretivist critical inquiry to study farmers' suicide undoubtedly adds to the existing body of knowledge.

The research aims at influencing policy formulation, decision and execution related to agriculture, farmers and livelihoods.

Finally, the work is useful to other researchers who would be engaged in related research.

### CONCLUSION

The tsunamic waves of farmers' suicide that rocked India from 1995-2015 symptomatic of the agrarian crisis and distress that has plagued Indian agriculture post-1991 neo-liberal economic policies (Liberalization, privatization and globalization) is not a simple act. The actual reasons for farmers' suicide need to be searched within a larger framework of biological, genetic, psychological, social, economic, cultural and environmental factors. Such an inquiry of farmers' suicide in India will help one to recognize that farmers' suicide in India is a multi-dimensional malaise.

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