

**GOVERNMENT'S NEW INITIATIVES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FARMERS**

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**Abstract:**

Agriculture is a predominant sector in Indian economy. It has been facing various problems such as low productivity, lack of financial and marketing facilities and lack of unity among farmers. Low productivity, uncertainty and other causes lead to farmer suicides.

Farmer suicides became a major concern in Telangana State as well as in India that has resulted in profound implications on the farmers quality of life. According to NSSO's Situation Assessment Survey in 2003 and 2013 and National Crime Records of Bureau (NCRB) in 2015, the deterioration of farmers and rural artisans' household status was clearly brought out. The five states, Maharashtra, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka, together accounting for 90 per cent of farmer suicides (5056) during 2014. The unfortunate incidence of farmer suicides continued in the subsequent years despite the efforts made by the Central and State Governments. But among these states, reduction in farmer suicides was observed in Telangana state in recent years.

**Introduction:**

Many research studies addressed the causes for farmer suicides from various angles. A detailed perusal of the literature in India suggests various causes for building the agrarian distress. This may be due to the pressure of increasing cost of cultivation, climatic factors, low productivity and market failures both in factor and product markets. But among these, the farmer indebtedness was considered as the major triggering factor by analysts.

But the present study focused on reduction of farmer suicides and the major causes for this good augury in Telangana state. Even though rural indebtedness along with low productivity and market failures have triggering the agrarian distress, farmer suicides have come down due to implementation of new programmes initiated by Telangana state as well as Central Governments.

In order to prevent farmers suicides and the distress of agriculture, Central and State Governments implementing several schemes. The prominent among them were Rythubandu scheme, RythubheemaPathakam and Aasara Pension scheme by the Telangana State and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bheema Yozana and other schemes by Central Government. As a result of this farmers suicides recently dropped in our state.

According to Anneshi and Gowda (2015) found that both small and medium farmers borrowed relatively higher proportion of the non-institutional credit sources as compared to institutional sources. Accessibility to institutional borrowing is relatively lower for small farmers and higher for large farmers and Bhende and Thippaiah (2010), in their study, concluded that most of the farmers in the suicide-prone districts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra states were aware of the PMs package and benefited from it. However, their capacity to cope with the drought conditions has been weak and the PM's package through its multiple schemes had limited positive impact on this front.

The present study paper considered 5 years between 2014-2019 to capture the budget of the financial assistance provided in implementing various programs by the government of Telangana.

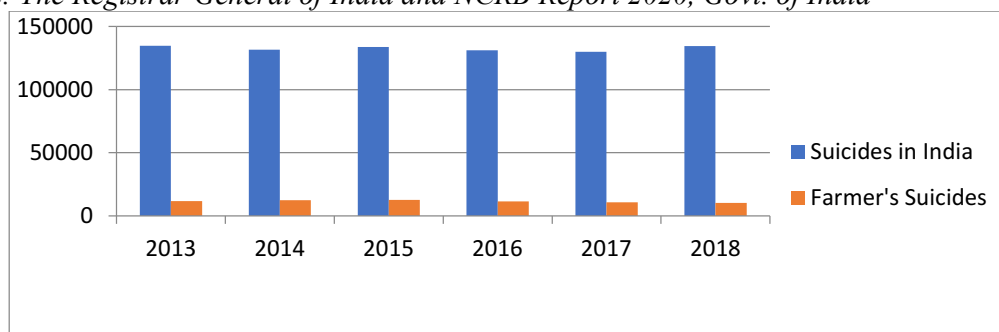
An attempt is made in this chapter to analyse the socio-economic profile of the sample units. This profile includes: Place, Age, Education, Gender, Economic Status, Occupation and nature of the family. It is observed that 55 percent of sample unit farmers are found in the age group of 31-50 years followed by 35 percent from the age range of up to 30 years and 10 percent respondents are found to be relatively elders. It is observed that 93 percent respondents are male and 7 percent are female. It is observed that 94 percent of farmers are marginal farmers and 6 percent are found as

small farmers. It is concluded that majority of the respondents, farmers, are drawn from poor families, marginal farmers and equipped with low level education.

Trends in Farmers Suicides in India during 2013-2018

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Farmer's Suicides	11772	12360	12602	11379	10655	10349
Total Suicides	134799	131666	133623	131008	129887	134516
Percentage of Farmer's suicides	8.7	9.4	9.4	8.6	8.2	7.7

Source: The Registrar General of India and NCRB Report 2020, Govt. of India

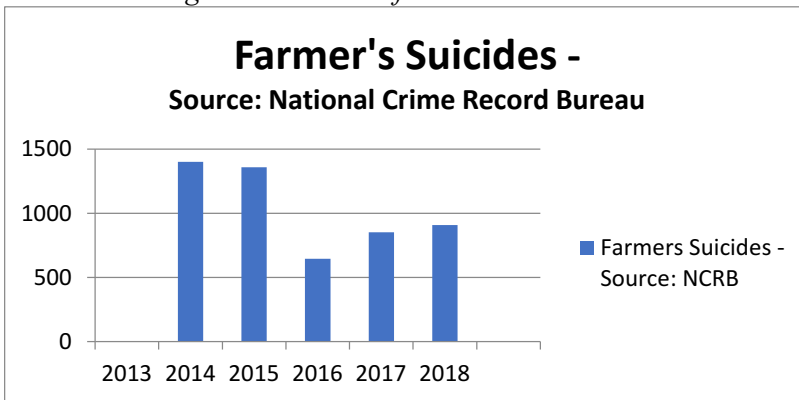


It is observed that farmer's suicides in India are gradually reducing since 2016 year.

Trends in Farmer's Suicides in Telangana State

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Farmer's Suicides	2014	1400	1358	645	851	908

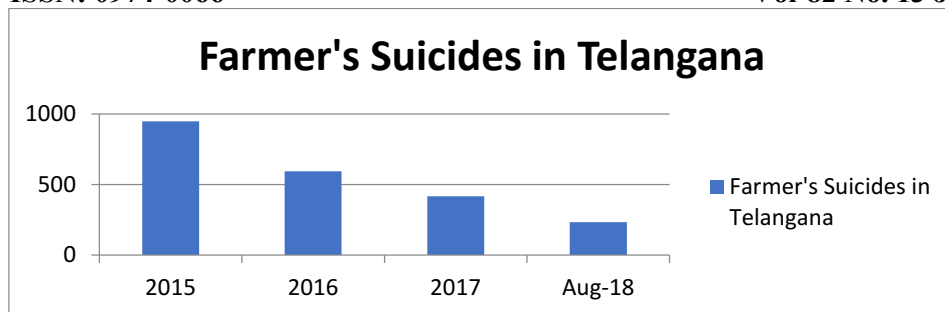
Source: The Registrar General of India and National Crime Records Bureau, Govt. of India



Trends in Farmer's Suicides in Telangana State

Year	2015	2016	2017	Up to August 2018
Farmer's Suicides	948	593	417	232

Source: Suicides data from the Telanagangovernmennt's Police department in reply to a Right to Information request filed by Activist Kondal Reddy between 2014 (when the new state Telangana came into existence) and 2018.



It is concluded that farmer's suicides in Telangana State are gradually reducing during 2015 to 2018 as per the records of national crime Record Bureau and Police Department of Telangana Government.

Impact of Government's New Initiatives on Farmers Suicides in Telangana State

Impact of Central Government's Schemes

Schemes	Impact on reduction of farmer's Suicides (Percent)
E-NAM	2.0
National Mission For Sustainable Development (NMSA)	--
Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yozana (PMKSY)	--
Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yozana (PMKY)	--
Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yozana (PMFBY)	2.0
Any other, specify (Minimum Support Prices)	10.0

Source: Primary Data 2019

It is observed that 10 percent of sample units felt that due to minimum support prices announced by central government, farmers suicides are reducing and followed by 2 percent sample units felt that there is a least effect of Electronic National Agriculture Marketing (E-NAM) system.

The Seed Village Programme is one of the important components of the Sub Mission on Seed and Planting Material (SMSP) under National Mission on Agriculture Extension & Technology (NMAET) being implemented by Central government. The Seed Village programme ensures supply of quality seed of notified varieties to the farmers in time at their places at affordable prices besides ensuring quick multiplication of new seed varieties in a shorter time in that mandal/district based on the crop situation.

Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) – the Indian government introduce a new Additional Central Assistance scheme to incentivise States to draw up plans for their primary sector more comprehensively, taking Agro-climatic conditions, natural resource issues and technology into account and integrating livestock, poultry and fisheries more fully.

Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) Scheme is in implementation in 7 States and 33 districts in Telangana with 60:40 central and state share, with the objective to develop an efficient, effective, demand driven, research integrated and financially sustainable public extension system.

PM Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY). The Government of India has introduced an Old Age Pension Scheme for all land holding Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) in the country, PM-KMY, as a voluntary and contributory pension scheme for the entry age group of 18 to 40 years. The Scheme is effective from the 9th August, 2019. This Programme provides for an assured monthly pension of Rs. 3000/- to all land holding Small and Marginal Farmers, whether male or female, on their attaining the age of 60 years.

Some other programmes by the government of India are, Rainfed Area Development Scheme (RAD) under national mission for sustainable agriculture, Farm Mechanisation Programme and National Food Security Mission (NFSM) have greater impact on farmers development in the country.

Impact of Telangana Government's Schemes:

Schemes	Impact on reduction of farmer's Suicides (Percent)
RythuBandhu	61.0
Mission Kakatiya	32.0
Kalyan Laxmi/Shaaadi Mubarak	12.0
Aaasar Pension	5.0
House to Poor	2.0
Rythu Bheema	6.0
Sheep distribution	11.0
Any Other, Specify	--

Source: Primary Data 2019

It is observed that 61 percent of sample units felt that due to RythuBandhu initiated by Telangana government, farmers suicides are gradually reducing as their Investment and Financial support increased with this program.

It is a new scheme for providing investment support to Agriculture and Horticulture crops by way of a grant Rs.5000/- per Acre per Farmer in each season (Kharif & Rabi) for purchase of inputs like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, towards labour and other Investments in the field operations of farmers choice for the crop season.

32 percent sample units felt that there is a decline in farmers suicides as they are getting confidence about irrigation facilities at least for a single crop with the implementation of Mission Kakatiya and Soil Health Card Scheme (SHC)- "National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) will be implemented during 12th Plan with the aims, to make agriculture more productive, sustainable and climate resilient; to conserve natural resources and to adopt comprehensive soil health management practices and to optimize utilization of water resources; etc.

Another initiative by the Telangana government is Subsidy Seed Distribution. The major objective of this scheme is to distribute various crop seeds like paddy, jowar, maize, redgram, greengram, blackgram, bengalgram, groundnut, castor and green manure on subsidy to farmers. Subsidy pattern may vary from crop seed to crop seed.

It is also observed that 12 percent and 11 percent of the sample units felt that Kalyan Laxmi and sheep distribution schemes are improving the farmer's economic status in the society and enhancing the financial support by the government without any agitations, respectively and Rythu Bheema Program, Aasara Pension Scheme and House to Poor Programs are also have their positive impact on reduction of farmer's suicides in Telangana State.

The following are the findings:

- Out of the 100 sample units, 25 percent are drawn from each district. It is observed that 55 percent of sample unit farmers are found in the age group of 31-50 years followed by 35 percent from the age range of up to 30 years and 10 percent respondents are found to be relatively elders. It is observed that 71 percent are just literates followed by 21 percent are equipped with up to school level education and 8 percent respondents with above school level education. It is observed that 93 percent respondents are male and 7 percent are female. It is observed that 89 percent of the farmers are from absolutely poor category and 11 percent from poor category. It is observed that 94 percent of farmers are marginal farmers and 6 percent are found as small farmers. It is concluded that majority of the respondents, farmers, are drawn from poor families, marginal farmers and equipped with low level education. It is observed that farmer's suicides in India are gradually reducing since 2016 year. It is concluded that farmer's suicides in Telangana State are gradually reducing during 2015 to 2018 as per the records of national crime Record Bureau and Police Department of Telangana Government. It is observed that 10 percent of sample units felt that due to minimum support prices announced by central government, farmers suicides are reducing and followed by 2 percent sample units felt that there is a least effect of Electronic National Agriculture Marketing (E-NAM) system. It is observed that 61 percent of sample units felt that due to

RythuBandhu (Farmers Group Life Insurance Scheme: (Rythu Bhima)) initiated by Telanagana government, farmers suicides are gradually reducing as their Investment and Financial support increased with this program. 32 percent sample units felt that there is a decline in farmers suicides as they are getting confidence about irrigation facilities at least for a single crop with the implementation of Mission Kakatiya. It is also observed that 12 percent and 11 percent of the sample units felt that Kalyanalaxmi and sheep distribution schemes are improving the farmer's economic status in the society and enhancing the financial support by the government without any agitations, respectively and Rythju Bheema Program, Aasara Pension Scheme and House to Poor Programs are also have their positive impact on reduction of farmer's suicides in Telangana State. The relationship between decreasing farmer's suicides and the Government new initiatives/ programs is found to be statistically dependent. The first hypothesis “. New agriculture development initiatives have directly influenced the agricultural production which is accompanied by a rise in real income of the farm families is accepted. The second hypothesis “There is an accountable effect of governments' new programmes on decline of farmer suicides is accepted.

On the basis of major findings, the following are made to achieve a significant reduction of farmers suicides in our state and they include:

1. One important request of victim households was to improve the access to regulated market and marketing facilities like storage facilities within their reach.
2. Construction and renovation of large tanks, check dams, watersheds, and completion of minor, medium and major irrigation projects as part of Kakatiya Mission has to be given top priority so as to ensure water availability and better water management by local irrigation committees around the state.
3. New marketing methods such as Contract farming, future marketing and training in food processing must be enhanced and made available to rural farmers.
4. One more suggestion of victim household was to establish more markets which facilitate direct relation between consumers and farmers such as Apni Mandi in Punjab and Haryana and Rythu Bazars in Telangana and 5. There should be a timely sanction of financial support and benefits from the government as part of implementation of various schemes, such as Rythubandhu and Ruthu Bheema yozana and others.

### **Conclusion:**

The Shortage of irrigation facilities, Failure of rain and attack of pest and disease leads to crop loss were reported as some of the causes for farmer suicides across states Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal and Telanagana. Hence, there is a need to install weather stations and information centers so that farmers can be alert and informed on natural calamities and they can take precautionary measures. The Government of Telangana implemented **Mission Kakatiya** on 12 March 2015 and **mKISAN** Portal by the Department of Agriculture, Telanagana and the Government of Maharashtra launched the **Crop Pest Surveillance Project (CROPSAP)** during 2009-10. Further proper measures in implementation of the agriculture development programmes can help the farmers in suicide prone states, in which the coordination between states and the central government is utmost important.

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