



## REVIEW ARTICLE

### A HOLISTIC OVERVIEW OF FARMERS' PROBLEMS IN VIDARBHA REGION OF MAHARASHTRA

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#### ABSTRACT

If one were asked to write an essay on India; what would be the general opening line? Agriculture is an integral part of our identity. Then why are our farmers the victims of neglect from state as well as the society? Why is it that if you state your vocation as farming, the banks and insurance companies that are usually too enthusiastic regarding your dream house and car lose their interest? These are the serious questions raise in the mind of man before starting the detail study on framers situation in Maharashtra.

**Aim:** This project aims to study the condition of farmers from five dimensions-social, economic, political, psychological and technological perspectives.

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#### INTRODUCTION

About 70% of our population is economically dependent on agriculture. It is the largest employer. However, its contribution to GDP has steadily declined to a mere 13.9%. The service sector that employs around 17% of the population contributes nearly 60% to the GDP. This discrepancy has led to income imbalance, loss of respectability for agriculture as a profession and destruction of dignity of farmers. Farmers' suicide has become a so severe an issue that it occupies a constant precious space in the daily fleeting media. Vidarbha region of Maharashtra has become notorious for this catastrophe that is slowly killing the spirit of our farming community. Even in Marathwada region, farmers are in marginal status and having extreme poverty.

#### Following are the important points for perusing the study on farmers problems of Maharashtra

- 1.To study the position of farmers in social hierarchy.
- 2.To study the community support or lack of it.
- 3.To study the economic inclusion of farming community.
- 4.To study the productive and unproductive transaction of farmers.

- 5.To study the political organization of farming.
- 6.To study the perception of local politician with regards to the farming community.
- 7.To study the degree and impact of farmers-administration interaction.
- 8.To study the perception of self of farmers.
- 9.To study the mindset of farmers towards change and adaption.
- 10.To study the accessibility to new technology.
- 11.To study the lab to field disconnect in agricultural research and means to mend it.

#### Significance of the study

Farmers are the backbone of India. Around 65% Indian economy is depending on agriculture sector. Therefore it is a need of time to be concentrate on farmer's problem. This research mainly will be focused on various problems of farmers in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.

To do the deep study of various problems of farmers and provide suggestions from all the levels to eradicate the those problems. This research will be useful to enhance the status of farmers in Vidarbha as well as Maharashtra.

## Geographical Area of Study: - Vidarbha

### Location

Formerly known as Berar, is located in the Eastern part of Maharashtra. It comprises of the administrative divisions of Amravati and Nagpur. It occupies 31.6% of total area and holds 21.3% of total population of Maharashtra. It shares its boundaries with the state of Madhya Pradesh to the north, Chhattisgarh to the east, Telangana to the south and Marathwada and Khandesh regions of Maharashtra to the west. Vidarbha has total population of 2,30,31,79 according to the 2011 census of the government of India. Hinduism is the predominant religion in this region. Buddhism is second most followed religion. Vidarbha has its own rich cultural and historical background distinct from rest of Maharashtra. It boasts of the rich tribal culture of the Gond, the Maria and several other tribes.

### Natural resources

Vidarbha holds two-thirds of Maharashtra's mineral resources and three-quarters of its forest resources, and is a net producer of power. It is famous as the Tiger capital and can boast of several wildlife sanctuaries and tiger projects like Tadoba Tiger project, Melghat Tiger Project, Pench Tiger Project, Bor Wildlife Sanctuary, Navegaon National Park, and Nagzira wildlife sanctuary near Gondia district.

### Agriculture in Vidarbha

Vidarbha is home for approximately 34 lakh cotton farmers and 95% of these are struggling with the massive debt. Most of the villages in Vidarbha are badly in need of basic social infrastructure like all-weather roads, drinking water, regular electricity, primary health care, and basic education. Majority of suicide cases are from cotton growing areas. The cotton farmers in India paying more prices for inputs like seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, electricity, water, and labour whereas the price of cotton has gone down along with decreased productivity. The main cash crops of the region are cotton, oranges and soya beans. Amravati is the largest Orange growing district. Traditional crops are sorghum (jowar), pearl millet (bajra) and rice. Yavatmal is the largest cotton growing district. Gondia is the largest rice growing district. Gondia is a Rice city. Recently Vidarbha region has become famous for a large number of farmer suicides occurring. There are large number of farmers who have committed suicide in Maharashtra in the last decade, out of which more than 70% farmers belong to the 11 districts of Vidarbha region. This is mainly because of the infertility of the land, lack of ample amount of water resources, lack of new technologies and due to the negligence of the state government towards the farmers' needs. The main crop in Vidarbha is cotton, but the farmers growing it do not get their share from the government, which leads to the high distress among them, leading to the massive suicides. Due to the absence of any responsible counseling either from the government or society there were many farmers who did not know how to survive in the changing economy. Such stresses pushed many into a corner where suicide became an option for them.

## Problems of Farmers

- Absence of adequate social support infrastructure at the level of the village and district.
- Uncertainty of agricultural enterprise in the region.
- Indebtedness of farmers.
- Rising costs of cultivation.
- Plummeting prices of farm commodities.
- Lack of credit availability for small farmers.
- Relative absence of irrigation facilities.
- Repeated crop failures.
- Dependence on rainfall for farming.
- Rural living.
- Lack of political will and insight in the region.

Agrarian crisis in Vidarbha has too many facets: National agricultural policies, Minimum Support Prices debacles, weak political leadership, lack of rational water policy, absence of irrigation, huge irrigation backlog, thirsty and expensive GM cotton, ever increasing cost of inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, diversion of irrigation water from farms to power plants & industries, bad crop insurance policies, hopeless revenue tools of arriving at farm losses, arm twisting by middlemen and the debacle of bazar samitis, issues with household economic management by farmers, opportunistic lenders and opportunistic leaders and an indifferent society as a whole.

### Methodology

There are 11 districts in Vidarbha region. Our sample size is 300 farmers. Total 30 farmers have been selected from each districts of Vidarbha. Observation as well as scheduled questionnaire technique used for data collection.

### Research Design

For this research the analytical research design used as primary resources. Also various records, circulars, gazettes will be used in the research. Relevant data also collected for getting the authenticity in research.

### Analysis, Interpretation and Report

Questioners prepared for data collection. With the help of master chart, tables framed for simplification, analysis and interpretation of the data. Finally report writing has done and expected results would be express of this research.

### Main findings in the research

1. Due to Natural calamities, most of the farmers get suffer and become poor.
2. Lack of irrigation facilities, crop production is so less in that farmers cannot survive properly.
3. The implementation of science and technology only use by rich farmers.
4. Social, cultural, religious and economical causes are also responsible for degradation of farmers.
5. Existing of slavery system, debt, loan etc are hurdles in farmer's life.

6. Separation and fragmentation of land responsible to decrease the agriculture productivity.
7. Joint family system, traditional method of agriculture, seasonal and cyclic unemployment are main factors behind the decline situation of farmers.
9. Unattractiveness or unsuccessful of government and administration mechanism.
10. Traditionally crops, single stage crop production etc are also hampering on agriculture productivity and result into the poverty.

### Suggestions or eradication plan

1. Efforts from government and administration levels.
2. Healthy, effective and positive role of NGOs and co-operatives societies.
3. Provisions of subsidies and loan facilities on less rate of interest.
4. Awareness program, counseling can play an important role for overall development of farmers.
5. Irrigation facilities, various new agriculture techniques should be implementing to enhance the agriculture productivity.

### Conclusion

The issue of farmers' suicide has so far been dealt with in a piece-meal approach, wherein a specific area or problem has been targeted. The long term solution lies in addressing it with a multi-pronged approach, focusing on empowerment of the farmers. The fundamental step must be to instill them and the society at large with a sense of pride and purpose in the productive and creative field of agriculture.

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