

# THE PREDICAMENT OF INDIAN FARMING: CAUSES AND REMEDIES

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10033558>

**Accepted:** 09.11.2022

**Published:** 01.12.2022

**Keywords:** Indian Farming, Agriculture Crisis, Farmers' Predicament.

## Abstract

*Indian agriculture, often regarded as the country's economic lifeblood and a crucial component of its food security, is in the midst of a severe crisis. This abstract delves into the many problems that Indian farmers have to deal with, such as low income, high debt loads, limited access to markets, obsolete technologies, and irrigation facilities, as well as private sector encroachment on farmland, climate change, and recurrent droughts and floods. The tragic rise in farmer suicides is a sobering indicator of the hopelessness that permeates the agricultural industry, and it is cause for grave worry. Despite the government's best attempts to reduce suicide among farmers through a variety of schemes and technological advances, the number of suicides committed by farmers, especially marginal and smallholder farmers, is on the rise. This study highlights the critical nature of resolving these issues and proposes a comprehensive strategy to do so. Some solutions include expanding access to markets, upgrading infrastructure and road connections, subsidizing medical treatment and education for farmers and their families, distributing subsidized food packages, and expanding access to health insurance. Primary purpose objective of this study is to bring*

*attention to the situation of Indian farmers by providing a roadmap toward a more secure and prosperous future for the agricultural industry and the people who work the land to feed the nation.*

## Paper Identification



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## Introduction

Agriculture is the most vital and rapidly expanding business. Over the years, the agriculture sector around the world has been modernized, with every country making efforts to provide the best possible conditions for the farmers who produce their food and for the agriculture sector as a whole, thanks to technological advancements, the introduction of equipment and mechanisms for bringing efficiency, and shifts in the nature of how we grow crops and cultivate the land. Agriculture is the backbone of any sustainable economy. Agriculture encompasses a wide range of disciplines, from horticulture and poultry production to animal husbandry and farming to fishing and forestry to agricultural chemistry and apiculture and aqua

farming and agricultural communication and agricultural engineering. In addition to many others, the GDP of a country benefits greatly from these industries. Each government has introduced new initiatives and altered existing ones to help the industry reach its full potential. Increases in productivity are being made around the world as a response to the global food and water crisis brought on by climate change-related phenomena like drought, famine, prolonged dry seasons in some regions, and extreme rainfall in others. Adopting what is now commonly known as "sustainable farming" has helped with the reduction or elimination of greenhouse gas emissions, the decrease or elimination of water and chemical fertilizer use, and the prevention of deforestation and soil erosion, among other things. As a result, farmers and residents of the area now have more job prospects than ever before. The economies of South Asian countries like India and Bangladesh, which are examples of developing nations, are weak and reliant on agricultural growth. Almost the entire population of Bangladesh relies on agriculture for their livelihood, and because of the country's reputation for regular flooding, farmers there have turned to more environmentally friendly farming practices, including the use of floating farms. These countries also have active agricultural research institutions, which have discovered weather- and disaster-resistant crops. Due to the limited size of their farms, many marginalized farmers are unable to secure even a subsistence level of revenue. Large-scale demonstrations around the country were in response to the new farm laws, although they ultimately had no effect. Farmer suicides have become a serious problem in today's India. About three hundred thousand farmer suicides have occurred in the last few years. The practice of contract farming in India has not benefited farmers in any way, and has instead made their lives more difficult by limiting their access to markets. Farmers in these areas have a high degree of autonomy and poor farm income as a result.

## Literature Review

Changes in agricultural production, land ownership, and deregulation have catapulted agriculture to the forefront of the economy and ensured the industry a place in the global market. India is not only a major player in the global agricultural sector but also the largest producer of cotton, bananas, and milk, among many other staples. Since the country's independence, the government has introduced numerous programs and policies to better the lives of farmers. The green revolution, the white revolution, the brown revolution, the yellow revolution, the blue revolution, and many other names have been used to describe similar initiatives. This is because agriculture includes so many specialized areas. Even though the horticulture industry has improved, India has become the world's second largest producer of fish, new technologies have been introduced, and regional banks and agricultural banks have been set up to help farmers, farmers remain the country's most economically vulnerable group. Farmers of all sizes—from the most marginalized to the largest—are feeling the effects of the farms bill. The government launched the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai program to provide farmers with additional decision-making power. The Sichai Yojan is an effort to improve irrigation infrastructure in order to raise crop yields. The goal is to ensure that people have access to irrigation, and to that end, farmers are being taught about the most up-to-date tools and techniques used by people who already have access to irrigation. In reality, the North Eastern Region has established a novel plan to promote organic farming, and data suggests that somewhere about 90% of the region's farmland is farmed in this manner. The goal of the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna initiative is to help farmers make the switch to organic farming methods. To back up market intervention for price command in the agri-horticultural industries, 500 crore have been allocated to Price Stabilization Funds. Next, we have the Gran Jyoti Yojana, which will provide constant

energy to the farmers. This will improve the farmers' standard of living and their access to educational opportunities, as well as stimulate the economy. Both the economy and the farmers' quality of life will improve as a result of this. Farmers may now get help with fertilizers, soil fertility, and irrigation through a soil health card, eNam, and a plethora of other websites, not to mention regular SMS and phone calls. Slowly but surely, less than 4% of the population has adopted sustainable farming practices, which not only helps the environment but also provides new jobs for farmers. A legally enforceable pact The government has implemented farming in the hopes that it will boost farmers' prosperity and revenue. This was followed by the dismantling of Mandis in several states, resulting in unmediated trade between shoppers and farmers. There are now groups representing farmers' interests that negotiate together for a better remuneration for their members. Farmers, fishers, producers, weavers, crafty men, and rural artisans are all included in this category of creators.

### Objectives of the study

- Having an understanding of the issues facing Indian farmers.
- What steps has the Indian government taken to enhance the living conditions of the country's farmers?
- Why so many farmers are taking their own lives each and every year.
- What possible options are there for resolving this issue?

### Research Methodology

This investigation makes use of a hybrid approach, combining two standard applications of research techniques in the social sciences; both are reliable and effective ways to collect data from a large number of respondents in a structured and manageable fashion. Surveys, interviews, and focus groups were conducted,

with questions directed at the general public's youth, public policy analysts, rural residents, and farmer respondents.

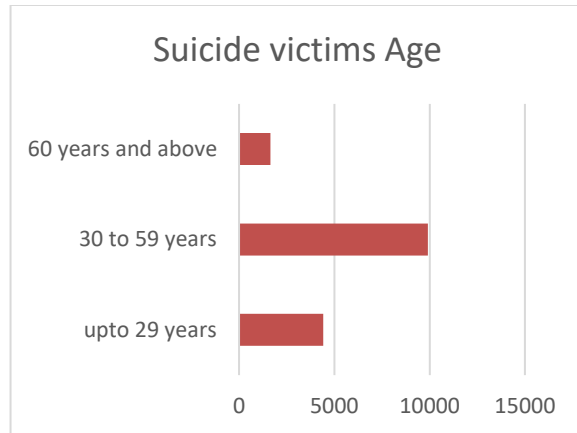
### Findings

The frequency of farmer suicides has increased dramatically; annually, thousands of farmers take their own lives because they can't make ends meet. Seventy-six percent of farmers are leaving farming for non-farming occupations in search of higher wages and better working conditions. The number of farmer suicides has increased dramatically despite the many government programs designed to help them.

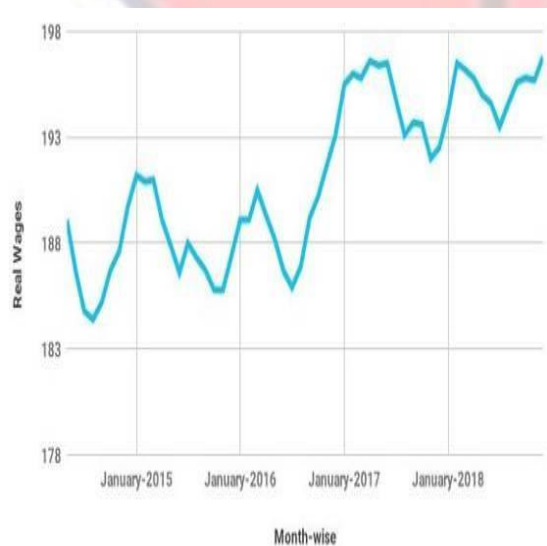
Between 1995 and 2015, more than 300,000 farmers committed suicide; however, many activists believe this number is too low. They estimate that more than three lakh farmers have committed suicide over the past two decades, and that the situation has worsened dramatically since 2016. If the rains are plentiful during the monsoon season, farmers are able to harvest a bountiful harvest. However, whether or not farmers receive adequate rainfall this year, they will still likely incur losses. Most Indian farmers only own a few acres of land, and the unpredictable monsoons only add to the stress. The monsoon rains have grown even more erratic and unpredictable as a result of climate change. A mismatch between supply and demand is to blame for this situation. The government does not want there to be an increase in the cost levels, therefore even when output levels are strong, farmers are forced to sell their commodities at the lowest feasible rates. This is because the government will either release the food grain inventories it already holds or begin to import them if there is a rise, which will eventually lead to a reduction in the cost of prices. In 2017, India, for instance, produced enough pulses (also known as dal) to meet the entire country's demand at a record 22.95 million metric tons. It shows the administrative ineptitude of the administration that despite this, they imported 6.6 MMT of pulses with no input duties, causing a nationwide glut and plunging prices that



were felt especially hard by the country's farmers. In addition, the government did not take adequate measures.



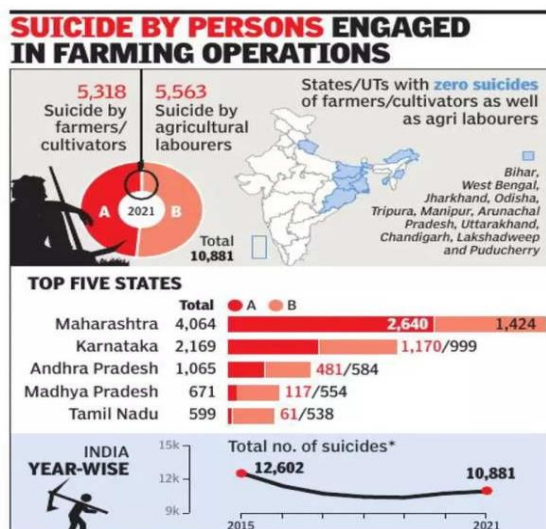
Minimal backing If farmers are unable to sell their crops on the open market, the government will buy them from them at a predetermined price. Annually, the government revises the MSP it set for 26 different crops. CRISIL, a rating agency, has produced a report showing that the average rate of growth in the MSP was 19.3% from 2009 to 2013, but just 1.9% from 2014 to 2017. This is in contrast to our observation that the growth rate of MSP has plummeted to very low levels in recent years. Meanwhile, in 2018, the administration instituted a significant increase in MSP, shattering all prior records in the process



Farmers' income comes from three sources: cultivation, wages, and allied activities; the income they earn from

cultivation is relatively low, and this is a major factor in why so many farmers take their own lives: they have no other means of supporting themselves. Over the previous five years, we've noticed that their revenue has either stayed about the same or declined. The rate at which the disease is spreading throughout the country is increasing. Today, the average monthly revenue from farming is only Rs. 566 for marginal farmers, Rs. 1488 for small farmers with less than 0.4 ha of land, and Rs. 7572 for large scale farmers with more than 2 ha of land. A marginalized farmer would have a hard time making ends meet on just 500 rupees per month. Monthly income for large-scale farmers is 7,572 rupees. Wages make up 34% of a farmer's income, but they haven't budgeted in years, leaving farmers unable to invest in anything beyond maintaining their current setup. 52% of farmers have taken out loans, with the average amount of debt per farmer coming in at 1,04 thousand rupees. There won't be a noticeable change in the farmers' financial status even if the government doubles the amount of money it allocated to agriculture in the budget.

Since contract farming has opened the door for multinational businesses to enter the agriculture industry, it has become a big problem for small farmers. Because of this, these firms now own vast tracts of property. Pastoralists often do not own property on which to graze their cattle, therefore they must travel to neighboring communities or farms in order to graze their animals. This is due to the fact that as commercial interests seize land, there would be nowhere to keep livestock. As a result of increased mechanization, the need for farm labor has decreased, contributing to rising rural unemployment. Because of this, the middle class views farmers as exploitable because they can't sell their products.



About 85 percent of the farmland in the United States is owned by farmers who only tend to plots smaller than five acres in size. Small farmers are responsible for 51% of the output, and they manage 46% of the land. Drought, the problem of swamping, and a lack of available inputs are just some of the production dangers farmers face because of the small size of the land and the absence of land rights, which have exploited the farmers. Market risks, high transaction costs, low price realization, and the inaccessibility of mandis emerge after the lack of irrigation and crop failures, among other things.

The high farmer suicide rate is a direct result of the interdependence of the MSP and its dependence on cheaper intensive crops. Even though farmers own most of the land in the country, the lives of farmers have gotten more difficult as a result of liberalization and the involvement of the private sector in the industry. Governments and private companies are appropriating farmland to make room for urban sprawl and renewable energy infrastructure like solar panels and wind turbines. Soil degradation, salinization, and deforestation follow, rendering the land unfit for cultivation and leaving the farmers with nowhere to turn except to the urban poor. They are powerless victims of the global market for agricultural products because they lack the education to effectively defend

their rights and land in court. There is an obligation on our part to enhance farming operations and create new rules that will lead to better facilities for farmers.

### The Next Steps

They require access to the market, which would provide a channel directly between buyers and sellers as well as between farmers and the market. Separate farmer land rights that forbid the private sector from entering or using the property for any sort of development are necessary if farmers are to be given the right to the land. Roads should be built, infrastructure should be built for markets, rural areas should have easy access to rural banks without having to travel far, farmers should be educated on their legal protections, and special agents should be assigned to train and assist farmers in adapting to modern farming techniques. A legally enforceable pact Instead of farming, we should be encouraging sustainable agriculture, which will raise farmers' incomes and give them better access to the land, machinery, and other resources they need to grow food. Different states grow different crops and have distinct climatic circumstances, and states have more sway in national policymaking than the federal government, thus they each need to take action to enhance agricultural conditions. Farmers, being the ones actually doing the labor in the fields, should have a voice in decision making processes and be able to offer their perspectives on what is needed. Additional safety measures, a health care package for pregnant farmers and their children, and free health care facilities once per month for all farmers should be made available to them. Further, in the countryside, there should be dedicated farming schools, with attendance a necessary requirement. In addition to teaching farmers how to use modern agricultural tools and techniques, these institutions should also inform them on the advantages and disadvantages of various fertilizers and pesticides.

### Conclusion

They are the most exploited group because while working around the clock, their pay is so poor that they can't afford to buy food for a month. This has led to a rise in the number of reported incidents of farmer suicide, and most of those currently working in agriculture are actively seeking employment in other sectors. Agriculture, the largest sector in India and the key source of economics for the country, may soon suffer from a food crisis due to a number of issues, the most prominent of which being food waste. Agriculture is the backbone of the economy. There are several issues that arise when farmers leave their farms, but one of the most pressing is how the nation's requirement for food security will be met without farmers. By expanding farmers' access to new markets, the government can help reduce the suicide rate among farmers and boost the agricultural sector as a whole.

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