An empirical study on demographic profiles of families of farmers who committed suicide with special reference to unified Mahabubnagar District, Telangana State

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Abstract: *Farmers are the landowners or tiller who cultivate land and produce food crops and commercial crops. They are being food providers of the world and always they will be in pathetic condition as there are more reasons for their crop failure and low yield. This crop failure and low yield leading to ignorant farmers suicides. Farmers' suicides in India refers to the event of farmers dying by suicide in India since the 1970s, due to their inability to repay loans mostly taken from private landlords and banks. India being an agrarian country with around 70% of its rural population depending directly or indirectly upon agriculture, the sector had a 15% share in the economy of India in 2023, and according to NSSO, around 45.5% of country's labour force was associated with agriculture in 2022.So, researcher has opted this topic to study and in this paper demographic profiles of farmer suicides family members is being presented.*

Key Words: *Farmer Suicides, Coping pattern, Socioeconomic, demographic, agriculture.*

1. INTRODUCTION :

"Farmers' suicides in India refer to the event of farmers dying by suicide in India since the 1970s, due to their inability to repay loans mostly taken from private landlords and banks. India being an agrarian country with around 70% of its rural population depending directly or indirectly upon agriculture, the sector had a 15% share in the economy of India in 2023, and according to NSSO, around 45.5% of country's labour force was associated with agriculture in 2022. Activists and scholars have offered several conflicting reasons for farmer suicides, such as anti-farmer laws, high debt burdens, poor government policies, corruption in subsidies, crop failure, mental health, personal issues and family problems. The National Crime Records Bureau data shows that while 296,438 farmers had died by suicide between 1995 and 2014, in the nine years between 2014 and 2022, the number stood at 100,474. In 2022, a total of 11,290 persons involved in the farming sector (5,207 farmers and 6,083 agricultural labourers) have committed suicide in India, accounting for 6.6% of total suicide victims in the country. Earlier, governments had reported varying figures, from 5,650 farmer suicides in 2014 to the highest number of farmer suicides in 2004 of 18,241. The farmer's suicide rate in India had ranged between 1.4 and 1.8 per 1,00,000 population, over a 10-year period through 2005. However, the figures in 2017 and 2018 showed an average of more than 10 suicides daily or 5760 suicides per year. There are accusations of states manipulating the data on farmer suicides, hence the real figures could be even higher". *(www.wikipedia.com)*

2. BACKGROUND :

"Total No of Farmer suicides reported in India per year as NCRBR, India. Historical records relating to frustration, revolts, and high mortality rates among farmers in India, particularly cash crop farmers, date back to the 19th century. However, suicides due to the same were rare. The high land taxes of the 1870s, payable in cash regardless of the effects of frequent famines on farm output or productivity, combined with colonial protection of usury, money lenders, and landowner rights, contributed to widespread penury and frustration among cotton and other farmers,

ultimately leading to the Deccan Riots of 1875–1877." "The colonial government enacted the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act in 1879, to limit the interest rate charged by money lenders to Deccan cotton farmers, but applied it selectively to areas that served foreign cotton trading interests. Rural mortality rates, in predominantly agrarian areas of colonial India, were very high between 1850 and the 1940s. However, starvation related deaths far exceeded those by suicide, the latter being officially classified under "injuries". The death rate classified under "injuries", in 1897, was 79 per 100,000 people in Central Provinces of India and 37 per 100,000 people in Bombay Presidency."

"The National Crime Records Bureau, an office of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, which has been collecting and publishing suicide statistics for India since the 1950s (as annual *Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India* report) has started separately collecting and publishing farmer's suicide statistics from 1995."

3. OBJECTIVES:

- To examine the demographic profiles of families of farmer who committed suicide.
- To evaluate the coping strategies of families of farmer committed suicide.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Geeta Ozwald Menezes, 2016: Two successive years of drought have battered India's already struggling farming community, with incidents of farmer suicides regularly hitting the headlines. More than three lakh farmers have killed themselves in India since 1995. Declining public investment in agriculture, poor agriculture extension services, inadequate institutional credit, neo liberal agricultural policies, lack of affordable crop insurance schemes, water scarcity, no alternative sources of livelihood, crop losses due to natural disasters, falling market prices, weather uncertainties and the apathy of the government have all contributed to rural distress and farmer suicides.

Lakhwinder Kaur , Preeti Sharma and Lavleesh Garg, 2019: It is suggested to adopt crop diversification (31%), avoid excessive use of fertilizers (27%), avoid sowing of rice (26.5%) and adopt subsidiary occupations (26%) so that to reduce input cost and increase in income which will ultimately reduce farmers' suicides. Farmers' suicide is a burning issue which needs to be dealt with caution. The paper attempted to know the perception of farmers themselves about its causes and ways to overcome this problem. Farmers considered that increased cost of cultivation, increased inflation rate and tendency to show off in children marriages leads to indebtedness.

Nanda Kishor Kannuri & Sushrut Jadhav, 2021 : Highlights a complex interplay of mental distress shaped by agricultural policies, cultural identities and social emotions. These intertwined factors contribute to cotton farmer suicides together with psychiatric morbidity amongst survivors. This further accentuate existing social inequalities resulting in toxic landscapes that are actively counter therapeutic and lead to the loss of life. This preventive humiliation and lack of hope is 'cultivated' by a cascade of decisions taken by others with little or no responsibility to the farmers and the land they hope to cultivate. Cultivating distress: Cotton, Caste and farmer suicide in India.

Sukhpal Singh, Manjeet Kaur, H S Kingra,2022: It is unfortunate to know that 11% of the families' children had to discontinue their education. The vagaries of fortune did not stop here; it was sad to note that the marriage of children in victim families were also disrupted in 3.4% cases. This situation arises mainly in the case of the daughter's marriage, as the act of suicide is considered a social stigma for the family. Generally, people are least interested in any relationship with the family which is economically worse off or have died by suicide due to debt burdens.

Memdani, Laila Memdani, Azim Memdani, Anisha (2024): The study aims to identify the factors that contribute to farmer suicides in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh (AP) and to propose preventive solutions for the problem. In this research in-depth interviews were done with the close relatives of the person who committed suicide and qualitative methodology is used. We find that the main causes of farmers suicides are economic and not the mental health of the farmers.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

The researcher conducted a qualitative study in the remote villages of unified mahabubnagar district Telangana state to explore the causes of farmers' suicides in these districts. The district selected for the study is unified Mahabubnagar district of Telangana state. The details of the farmers who committed suicide were taken from the District Collector's office. The families were contacted with help of villagers and most of villages were very remote and roads were not connective. A qualitative methodology was utilised to do analysis of the collected data. In this methodology questionnaire was collected in focused group discussions with families of farmers who committed suicide. In the

demographic profile classification of the sample based on gender, age, education, caste, income is done. Later codes, themes and sub themes were generated.

6. DATA ANALYSIS :

The respondents of the study are the member of the family of the farmers who committed suicide. The demographic of the sample are in the tables as follows:

- **Coping and Gender**

Table 1

Sl. No	Gender	Coping Pattern			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
1	Male	42 (55)	74 (49)	41 (49)	157 (50.32)
2	Female	34 (45)	78 (51)	43 (51)	155 (49.67)
	Total	**76 (100) (24.4)**	**152 (100) (48.7)**	**84 (100) (26.9)**	**312 (100)**

Pearson Chi-Square value 0.982, Degree of freedom 2 and Level of significance 0.612

Table 1. reveals that out of 312 of the total respondents, about just a little less than one quarter (24.4 percent) were found to have low coping. Among them, a majority (55 per cent) are men, and less than half (45 per cent) are women. Among the total respondents those with moderate coping were less than half (48.7 per cent). Among them less than half (49.per cent) are men, little more than a half of the respondents (51per cent) are women. The respondents with high coping are about one quarter (26.9 per cent). Among the total sample little more than a half of the respondents (51per cent) are women, and less than half of the respondents (49.per cent) are men.To understand whether these differences were by chance or do they have any statistical significance, Pearson chi-square test used. The results show the Pearson chi-square value is 0.982, degree of freedom 2 and level of significance 0.612, this shows that there is no significant association between gender and coping. These differences are merely due to chance. This result shows that there is no association between gender and the coping pattern of the respondents.

- **Age in years and Coping**

Table 2

Sl. No	Age in years and Coping	Coping Pattern			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
1	Younger (20 - 27)	21 (27.6)	39 (25.7)	18(21.4)	78 (25.0)
2	Middle aged (33 – 47)	28 (36.8)	77 (50.7)	45 (53.6)	150 (48.1)
3	Older Persons (47 - 65)	27 (35.5)	36 (23.6)	21 (25)	84 (26.9)
	Total	**76 (100) (24.4)**	**152 (100) (48.7)**	**84 (100) (26.9)**	**312 (100)**

Pearson Chi-Square value 6.196a Degree of freedom 4 and Level of significance .185

Table 2. shows that among the total respondents just a little less than one quarter (24.4 percent) were found to have low coping. Among the respondents with low coping, over one third (36.8 per cent), are middle-aged. Almost an equal number of respondents (35.5 per cent) are of the older age group. More than one quarter (27.6 per cent) are younger adults. Among the total respondents, those with moderate coping were a little less than half (48.7 per cent). Among them, a little more than a half (50.7 per cent) were middle age group, a just little more than one quarter (25.7 per cent), were of younger age group, and nearly one-fourth (23.6 per cent).were of older age group. Among the total respondents, those with high coping were about one quarter (26.9 per cent). Among them, over half (53.6 per cent), are

middle-aged group, one-fourth (25 per cent) older persons group, and about one fifth (21.4 per cent) are of younger age group. To understand whether these differences were by chance or do they have any statistical significance, the Pearson chi-square test was carried out. The results showed the value is 6.196 a degree of freedom 4 and level of significance.185, this shows that there is no significant association between age and coping pattern of families of farmer's suicide. These differences are not significant among the respondents age between younger, middle-aged and older person of respondents.

- **Caste and Coping**

Table 3

Sl. No	Caste and Coping	Coping Pattern			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
1	Backward Caste	45 (59.2)	104 (68.4)	50 (59.5)	199 (63.8)
2	Scheduled Caste	24 (31.6)	25 (16.5)	12 (14.3)	61 (19.6)
3	Scheduled Tribes	3 (3.9)	14 (9.2)	9 (10.7)	26 (8.3)
4	Other Caste	4 (5.3)	9 (5.9)	13 (15.5)	26 (8.3)
	Total	**76 (100) (24.4)**	**152 (100) (48.7)**	**84 (100) (26.9)**	**312 (100)**

Pearson Chi-Square value 18.094a Degree of freedom 6 and Level of significance.006

Table 3. shows that among the total respondents just a little less than one quarter (24.4 percent) were found to have low coping. Among them, a vast majority (59.2 percent) belong to backward caste, about one third (31.6 per cent) belong to scheduled caste, just few (5.3) belong to other caste, while even less number (3.9 per cent) belongs to scheduled tribes. Among the total respondents those with moderate coping were less than half (48.7 per cent). Among them, a vast majority (68.4 per cent) are backward caste. Scheduled caste makes less than one fifth (16.5 per cent). Scheduled tribes are about one-tenth (9.2 per cent), while other castes represent just very little (5.9 per cent).

The respondents who showed high coping rate were one quarter (26.9 per cent) of the total respondents. Among them, a vast majority (59.5 per cent) belong to the backward caste. Just over one-tenth (14.3 per cent) are Scheduled caste. One-tenth (10.7 per cent) are Scheduled tribes, while more than one-tenth (15.5 per cent) other castes.To find out whether these differences were by chance or do they have any statistical significance, the Pearson chi-square test was applied. The results show the Pearson Chi-Square value 18.094, at degree of freedom 6 and level of significance.006. This shows that there is a significant association between caste and coping pattern of families of farmers' suicide. This shows that the caste is a major factor influencing many things in Indian society.This result proves that the hypothesis higher the caste better will be the coping is accepted.

- **Education and Coping**

Table 4

Sl. No	Education and Coping	Coping Pattern			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
1	Literate	29 (38.2)	49 (32.2)	37 (44.0)	115 (36.9)
2	Illiterate	47 (61.8)	103 (67.8)	47 (56.0)	197 (63.1)
	Total	**76 (100) (24.4)**	**152 (100) (48.7)**	**84 (100) (26.9)**	**312 (100)**

Pearson Chi-Square value 3.316a Degree of freedom 2 and Level of significance.191

The table 4 exhibits the total number of respondents by their coping and education. Among them a little less than one fourth (24.4 per cent) they were of low coping. Among them,   a vast majority (61.8 per cent) of them are illiterate. More than one third (38.2 per cent) of the literates. Those with moderate coping among the total number of respondents were about   a less than half of them (48.7 per cent). Among them a vast majority (67.8 per cent) are illiterate, just over one-third (32.2 per cent) were literate. Those   respondents with high coping were about one quarter (26.9 per cent) of the total sample of the respondents.   Out of them, a vast majority (56 per cent) are illiterate, while less than half (44 percent) are illiterate.In the study examining the relationship between education levels and coping patterns, the Pearson Chi-Square test was used to analyze the data. The test yielded a Pearson Chi-Square value 3.316 degree of freedom 2 and level of significance 191. This result indicates that there is no statistically significant association between education level and coping patterns in the sample studied. Consequently, education does not appear to be a determining factor in how individuals cope with challenges. This finding suggests that other variables beyond educational attainment may play a more crucial role in influencing coping mechanisms. This result proves that the hypothesis better the education better would be the coping adopted by the respondent is rejected. This could be because the family of the farmer is in distress and require other resources in addition to education.

- **Occupation and Coping**

Table 5

Sl. No	Occupation and Coping	Coping Pattern			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
1	Agriculture	64 (84.2)	123(80.9)	66 (78.6)	253 (81.1)
2	Services	1 (1.3)	3 (2.0)	2 (2.4)	6 (1.9)
3	Wage Labour	0 (0)	9 (5.9)	6 (7.1)	15 (4.8)
4	Other	11 (14.5)	17 (11.2)	10(11.9)	38 (12.2)
Total		**76 (100) (24.4)**	**152 (100) (48.7)**	**84 (100) (26.9)**	**312 (100)**

Pearson Chi-Square value 5.853a Degree of freedom 6 and Level of significance.440

As per Table 5, among the total respondents just a little less than one quarter (24.4 per cent) were found to have low coping.   Out of this group, a vast majority (84.2 per cent)   are in agriculture, just over one-tenth (14.5 percent) are in to other occupations, while very few (1.3 percent) are in services.   There are no respondents in wage labor category. Among less than half of the total respondents (48.7 percent) were found to be of moderate coping. A vast majority (80.9 percent) among them are engaged in agriculture. One-tenth (11.2 per cent) are involved in other occupations, less than one tenth (5.9 per cent) are Wage laborers, and very few (2 per cent) are in Services. Those respondents who showed high coping were about one quarter (26.9 per cent) of the total sample.   A vast majority (78.9 per cent) among them is engaged in agriculture, while little more than one-tenth (11.9 per cent) were in other occupations, about one   tenth (7.1 per cent) are wage labour, very few (2.4 per cent) were in services. In the analysis of the relationship between occupation and coping patterns, the Pearson Chi-Square test was applied. The resulting Pearson Chi-Square value 5.853a degree of freedom 6 and level of significance.440, indicating   that the association between occupation and coping patterns is not statistically significant.   Therefore, the data suggests that occupation does not have a notable impact on how individuals cope with challenges. Other factors aside from occupational roles may be more influential in determining coping strategies. This results shows that hypothesis that better the occupation better will be the coping pattern is rejected it can be said that several factors influence coping with becomes of the complex psychosocial and economic process.

7. RESULTS AND FINDINGS :
The association between each of these independent variables with coping pattern of the respondents has been observed carefully and it has found that many variables are in association with the coping patterns of the respondents are presented. The gender of the respondents contains of men and women respondents and they have been tested for their respective coping patterns of farmers and it is found that there is no significant association between gender and coping

patterns of farmers. And these differences are merely due to coincidence. The age of the respondent which related younger, middle age and older persons have been tested for their respective coping patterns and it was found that there is a significant association between age and coping pattern. But these differences are not significant among the respondents' age and their coping pattern. The caste of the respondents includes Backward Castes (BCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs) Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Castes (OCs). These different groups have been tested for their respective coping pattern of families of farmers and it was found that there is significant association between caste and coping pattern. And these differences are significant among the respondents' caste and coping pattern. The education of the respondent consists of illiterate, primary, secondary and intermediate college level of respondents'. These groups have been tested for their respective coping pattern and it was found that there is a significant association between education and coping pattern. And these differences are really significant among the respondents' level of education and coping pattern. This means that in order to raise the coping pattern one must be carefully educated. This is the responsibility of the every individual The occupation of the respondent included Agriculture, Services, Wage Labourer and Others. These different categories of workers have been tested for their respective coping pattern it is found that there is a significant association between occupation and coping pattern of the respondents, and these differences are significant among the respondents' occupation and coping pattern. As shown in this analysis it is very obvious that the occupation and copping pattern are associated.

8. CONCLUSIONS :

It's the need of the hour for the government to take strategic action regarding the farmers' suicides as the situation is very turmoil. Every citizen of India is thinking of alterative livelihoods other than agriculture. As India lives in villages with agriculture as primary livelihoods was existing. Agriculture day by day declining its charisma because low productivity and crop failures. Seasonal Migration is the paradigm shift in case of farmers to urban areas in order to get non-farm wage labour opportunities. Unemployment has been high in rural because failure in agriculture profits.

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