Farmers and Farm Labourers Suicide – NCRB Report

Why in news?

\n\n

\n
- **More than 72% of farmers who commit suicide have less than two hectares** (~ 5 acres) of land, latest data on farmer suicides compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) show.
\n
- NCRB report also said that, **Agricultural labourers are more likely to commit suicide** because of “Family Problems” and “Illness” than the rest of the population in India.
\n

\n\n

What is the share of land under cultivation?

\n\n

\n
- According to landholding census by the Ministry of Agriculture, **67.1% of all landholdings are marginal — smaller than 1 hectare**.
\n
- While 17.9% are small (1-2 hectares). Medium (2-10 hectares) and large (over 10 hectares) holdings are 14.3% and 0.7% of the total respectively.
\n
- The census shows that the operational holding (i.e., the area under cultivation) with marginal farmers is 22.5%, with small farmers it is 22.1%, with medium farmers it is 44.8%, and with large farmers it is 10.6%.
\n

\n\n

What does the NCRB report say?

\n\n

\n
- Farm labourers are also more likely than farmers to fall into the trap of moneylenders and end their lives.
\n

- **Small farmers were 45.2% of all farmer victims,** while marginal farmers made up 27.4%.
\n
- Medium farmers, who have between 2 hectares and 10 hectares of land, contributed a fourth (~ 25%) of the 8,007 farmer suicides in the country in 2015.
\n
- The report says less than 2% of farmers who committed suicide were large farmers with more than 10 hectares of land.
\n

\n\n

What are the causes of suicide of farm labourers?

\n\n

\n
- According to the data, **family problems and illness** were responsible for nearly 60% of the deaths of the 4,595 farm labourers who ended their lives in 2015. This percentage was well above the national average of 43%.
\n
- Other prominent causes of suicide among agricultural labourers were Alcoholic Addiction, Poverty, Bankruptcy or Indebtedness from Financial Institutions/Moneylenders etc.,
\n

\n\n

Why are small farmers committing suicide?

\n\n

\n
- In a general sense, **farmers who have alternate sources of livelihood may cope** with the crisis better when compared to those who may depend almost entirely on farming.
\n
- This may be one of the factors separating the marginal from the small farmers.
\n
- Also, farmers who are enterprising and have seen success can find it difficult to handle the situation when things fail.
\n

\n\n

What is the state-wise distribution?

\n\n

\n

- **Agricultural labourers in Maharashtra were the most suicide prone,** followed by Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat and Kerala.
\n
- These states together accounted for 82.6% of all such suicides (3,797 out of 4,595) in the country during 2015.
\n
- Goa, Manipur and West Bengal, besides all Union Territories except Puducherry, reported no incident of suicide by agricultural labourers during 2015.
\n
- Among suicides committed by "Small Farmers" — **Maharashtra again topped with a 35.5% share,** followed by Karnataka which accounted for 20% of such suicides.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Category: Mains | GS – II | Vulnerable Sections

\n\n

Source: The Indian Express

\n

