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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FARMERS' SUICIDE IN ODISHA WITH INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of our paper is to give a comparative analysis of farmers' suicides in Odisha with India. The study period is confined to 1995-2010. The data has been collected from National Crime Records Bureau of India. For the analysis we have used growth rate, tabular and graphical representation. Only the large farmers whose land holding above the 10 hector is having more income (9667 Rs./Month) than expenditure (6418 Rs./month) and other farmers expenditure was more than the income. Odisha's Rank in terms of farmer's suicide from 1995-2010 is 12th. The average farmer suicide for Odisha for our study period (1995-2010) is 279, whereas for all over India it is 16058 (this figure included the Union Territories also). Odisha's farmers' suicides are far below India's average. The total number of farmers' suicides from 1995-2010 in India is 256,913. This includes the male and female are 216787 and 40126 respectively. For the same study period Odisha has total number farmers suicides are 4460. The numbers of male farmer suicides are 3856 and female farmer suicides are 604. The average male farmers' suicide in Odisha is 241 and the average female suicide for the study period is 37.75=38. The average male farmers' suicide in all over India is 13594.18=13595 and the female farmers' suicide rate is 2507.87=2508. In aggregate the suicide growth rate was highest i.e. 66.53% in the year 1998 and lowest i.e. -40.77 in the year 2009. The trend line shows that the farmers' suicide trend in Odisha is decreasing over the study period, where as the farmers suicide in India has been increasing over the study period. The maximum number of farmer suicide occurred due to indebtedness in India where as in Odisha it is mostly due to the "Crop Failure".

KEYWORDS

farmer suicides, national crime record bureau, expenditure, indebtedness.

1. INTRODUCTION

A farmer (also called an **agriculture**) is a person engaged in agriculture, raising living organisms for food or raw materials (doing some combination of raising field crops, orchards, vineyards, poultry, or other livestock). A farmer might own the farmed land or might work as a labourer on land owned by others. In advanced economies, a farmer is usually a farm owner, while employees of the farm are known as farm workers, or farmhands.

The word **Suicide** originates from Latin word 'suicidium', which originates from 'sui caedere', which means 'to kill oneself'. **Suicide** is the act of intentionally causing one's own death. Common methods include: hanging, pesticide poisoning, and firearms.

Suicide is often committed out of despair, the cause of which is frequently attributed to a mental disorder such as depression, alcoholism, rape or drug abuse. Stress factors such as financial difficulties or troubles with interpersonal relationships often play a role. Views on suicide have been influenced by broad existential themes such as religion, honor, and the meaning of life.

We are talking about farmers' suicides in this article because of following reasons. They are as followings. Agriculture sector has a pivotal role in Indian economy. The share of agriculture sector in G.D.P. of India was 44.0% during 1973-74 and presently it is 17% in 2013-14. Again agriculture provides the principal means of livelihood for over 60 percent of India's population. In Indian planning agriculture sector ignored except in a few five years plan.

After discussing the rationale of farmer, our objectives are as followings.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To study trends of farmers suicide in India.
2. To study the income and expenditure pattern of the farmers in India
3. To identify the factors responsible for the suicide of the farmers.
4. To compare the farmers suicide of Odisha with India from 1995-2010.

1.2 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

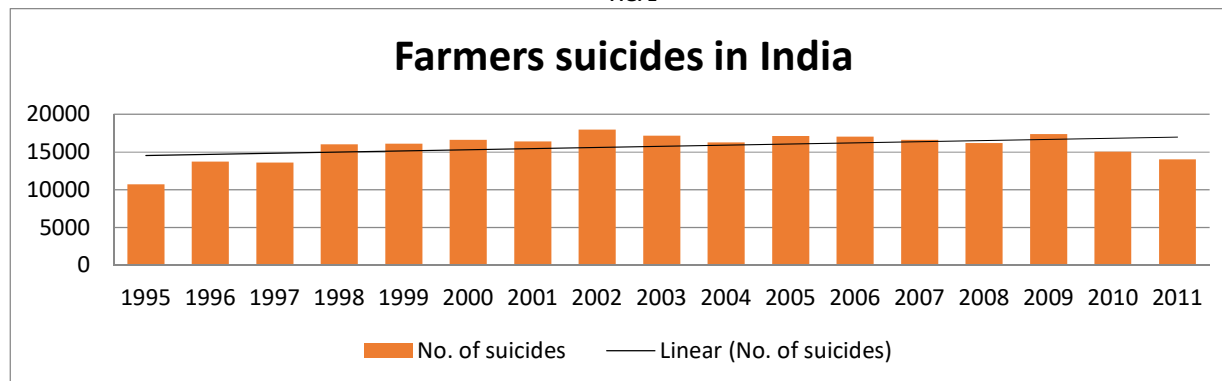
For our analysis we have used tabular and graphical representation. We have also used percentage and compound annual growth rate for the analysis. Different important reports have been referred for explaining the causes of farmer suicide in India. Our study period is confined to 1995-2010. The data has been collected from National Crime Records Bureau of India.

Our paper is divided in to five sections viz. Introduction, data and methodology, data analysis, causes of farmer suicide, measures to tackle it and conclusion and recommendation.

2. TRENDS OF FARMER SUICIDE IN INDIA

The National Crime Records Bureau of India reported in its 2012 annual report that 135,445 people committed suicide in India, of which 13,754 were farmers (11.2%). Farmer suicides rates in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh - two large states of India by size and population - have been about 10 times lower than Maharashtra and Kerala.

FIG. 1



Source: Compiled from NCRB Reports 1995-2010

The above graph represents the trends of farmer suicide in India from 1995-2011. The average farmer suicide from 1995-2011 is 15767. The highest number of farmer suicide i.e. 17971 was in the year. 2002. The lowest number of farmers' suicide i.e. 10720 was in the year 1995. The trend shows that the farmer suicide has been mostly increasing from 1995 to 2002. Then it has been declining from the year 2002 to 2011 except in 2009 i.e. 17368.

2.2 STATES WHOSE ANNUAL AVERAGES HAVE RISEN BY OVER 100 FARMER SUICIDES

TABLE 1: STATES WHOSE ANNUAL AVERAGES HAVE RISEN BY OVER 100 FARMER SUICIDES

State	Farmer Suicides		Difference (2 nd Avg-1 st Avg)
	1995-2002	2003-2010	
Andhra Pradesh	1590	2301	+711
Assam	155	291	+135
MP+Chhattisgarh	2304	2829	+525
Maharashtra	2508	3802	+1294

Source: NCRB Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India Reports 1995-2010

The table only includes States whose annual averages have risen by over 100 farmer suicides between the two periods i.e. **1995-2002 and 2003-2010**. It also treats Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh as one unit for data purposes. The difference between the two periods average suicide was highest in Maharashtra i.e. 1294. Andhra Pradesh was in the second position in terms of the average difference of the two periods mentioned above. Madhya Pradesh + Chattishgarh and Assam was in third and fourth position.

3. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF FARMERS

This section will be addressing the income and expenditure of the different categories of the farmers in India. The category includes landless, sub marginal, marginal, small, semi medium, medium and large farmers. The land holding for different category of farmers has been mentioned in the table no. 2.

TABLE 2: INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF FARMERS

Land holding	Category	Total Income (Rs/month)	Expenditure (Rs/month)	Percent of farmers
<0.01	Landless	1380	2297	36 %
0.01-0.4	Sub marginal	1633	2390	
0.4-1.0	Marginal	1809	2672	31 %
1.0-2.0	Small	2493	3148	17 %
2.0-4.0	Semi-medium	3589	3685	10 %
4.0-10.0	Medium	5681	4626	6 %
>10.0	Large	9667	6418	
	Total	2115	2770	All farmers

Source: Report "On Conditions of Work And Promotion Of Livelihoods In The Unorganised Sector" Arjun Sen Gupta Committee, 2007

FARM INCOMES: CONTINUING PROBLEM

Incomes of farmers have stagnated or declined; while living costs have increased enormously. Disparity between agricultural incomes and other sectors has widened. Recent studies also show farm incomes have fallen e.g. from the decade of 1981-82 to the decade of 2001-02. It is clear from the above table that on the large farmers whose land holding above the 10 hector is having more income (9667 Rs/Month) than expenditure (6418 Rs./month). The other categories viz. landless, sub marginal, marginal, small, semi medium and medium are having less expenditure than income. Here the important question arises where do the farmers go for their income?

4. GENDER WISE FARMERS SUICIDES IN ODISHA AND INDIA

TABLE 3

Year	No. of Farmer's Suicides in Odisha			No. of Farmer's Suicides in India		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2010	145	17	162	13592	2372	15964
2009	143	11	154	14951	2417	17368
2008	245	15	260	14145	2051	16196
2007	170	70	240	14509	2123	16632
2006	241	42	283	14664	2396	17060
2005	204	50	254	14973	2158	17131
2004	299	80	379	15929	2312	18241
2003	324	41	365	14701	2463	17164
2002	309	36	345	15308	2663	17971
2001	207	49	256	13829	2586	16415
2000	180	19	199	13501	3102	16603
1999	259	6	265	13278	2804	16082
1998	353	65	418	12986	3029	16015
1997	222	29	251	11229	2393	13622
1996	246	18	264	10897	2832	13729
1995	309	56	365	8295	2425	10720
Total	3856	604	4460	216787	40126	256913

The total number of farmers' suicides from 1995-2010 in India is 256,913. This includes the male and female are 216787 and 40126 respectively. For the same study period Odisha has total number farmers suicides are 4460. The numbers of male farmer suicides are 3856 and female farmer suicides are 604. The average male farmers' suicide in Odisha is 241 and the average female suicide for the study period is 37.75=38. The average male farmers' suicide in all over India is 13594.18=13595 and the female farmers' suicide rate is 2507.87=2508.

The highest number of suicide occurred in 1998 i.e. 418(male are 353 and female are 65), where as in case of India it was the year 2004 i.e. 18241(male are 15929 and females are 2312). The average farmer suicide for Odisha for our study period (1995-2010) is 279, whereas for all over India it is 16058(this figure included the Union Territories also). Odisha's farmers' suicides are far below India's average.

4.1 GROWTH RATE OF FARMERS SUICIDES IN ODISHA AND IN INDIA**TABLE 4**

Growth Rate of Farmers Suicides in Odisha and in India						
Year	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1995	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1996	-20.39	-67.86	-27.67	31.37	16.78	28.07
1997	-9.76	61.11	-4.92	3.05	-15.50	-0.78
1998	59.01	124.14	66.53	15.65	26.58	17.57
1999	-26.63	-90.77	-36.60	2.25	-7.43	0.42
2000	-30.50	216.67	-24.91	1.68	10.63	3.24
2001	15.00	157.89	28.64	2.43	-16.63	-1.13
2002	49.28	-26.53	34.77	10.69	2.98	9.48
2003	4.85	13.89	5.80	-3.97	-7.51	-4.49
2004	-7.72	95.12	3.84	8.35	-6.13	6.27
2005	-31.77	-37.50	-32.98	-6.00	-6.66	-6.09
2006	18.14	-16.00	11.42	-2.06	11.03	-0.41
2007	-29.46	66.67	-15.19	-1.06	-11.39	-2.51
2008	44.12	-78.57	8.33	-2.51	-3.39	-2.62
2009	-41.63	-26.67	-40.77	5.70	17.84	7.24
2010	1.40	54.55	5.19	-9.09	-1.86	-8.08

Source: Author's Own Calculation

The above table shows the growth rate of farmer's suicides in Odisha and in India. The growth rate of male farmers suicides was highest i.e. 59.01 % in 1998 and lowest -41.63 % in the year 2009 in Odisha. Likewise the female farmers' suicides were highest 216% in the year 2000 and lowest -90.77% in 1999 in Odisha. In aggregate the suicide growth rate was highest i.e. 66.53% in the year 1998 and lowest i.e. -40.77 in the year 2009.

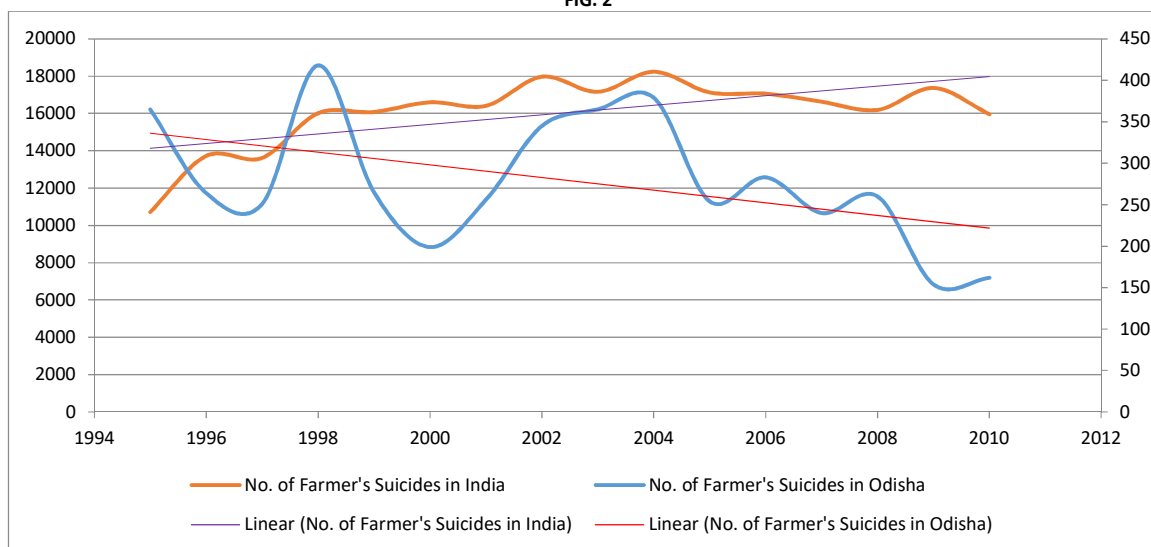
4.2 RANKING OF THE STATES ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF FARMERS SUICIDES IN INDIA**TABLE 5**

Sl No.	State	No. of Farmers Suicides
1	MAHARASHTRA	50481
2	KARNATAKA	35053
3	ANDHRA PRADESH	31120
4	MADHYA PRADESH	26722
5	WEST BENGAL	19331
6	KERALA	18907
7	CHHATTISGARH	14340
8	TAMIL NADU	13875
9	UTTAR PRADESH	9370
10	RAJASTHAN	9265
11	GUJARAT	8783
12	ODISHA	4460
13	ASSAM	3566
14	HARYANA	2820
15	PUNJAB	1263
16	BIHAR	1235
17	TRIPURA	1135
18	JHARKHAND	838
19	HIMACHAL PRADESH	631
20	SIKKIM	377
21	UTTARAKHAND	318
22	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	188
23	JAMMU & KASHMIR	187
24	GOA	170
25	MEGHALAYA	134
26	MIZORAM	57
27	NAGALAND	23
28	MANIPUR	20
	All over India(Excluding Union Territories)	254669

Odisha's Rank in terms of farmers suicide from 1995-2010 is 12th. First, second, third and position is occupied by Maharashtra, Karnatak, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in the same period.

4.3 COMPARATIVE TREND OF FARMERS' SUICIDE IN ODISHA AND INDIA

FIG. 2



The above graph shows the trend lines of farmers' suicide in Odisha and in India from 1995 to 2010. The trend line shows that the farmers' suicide trend in Odisha is decreasing over the study period, whereas the farmers suicide in India has been increasing over the study period.

5. MAIN CAUSES OF FARMERS SUICIDE IN INDIA

This section deals with the main causes of farmers' suicide in India. The main causes we have explained with the referring the different committees on farmers suicide in India. The causes are as followings.

The macro as well as the micro level analysis indicates that market imperfection in process of causing loss of agricultural income for the farmers have created economic hardship for them. Such hardship pushes the farmers to distressful conditions when crop fails owing to bad weather or adverse agro-climatic conditions and indebtedness to informal agencies.¹ Further the causes for farmer suicides are Heavy indebtedness, Mismatch of Cost of Cultivation and Minimum Support Prices, Overuse of Fertilizers and pesticides and use of Genetically Modified seeds(GM), Increase in number of small farmers (land holdings problem), Private money lending, Rainfed Agriculture, Lack to access the information 8. 80 % victims didn't receive any compensation from government.²

Shrijit Mishra has highlighted the following causes for farmer suicide they are as followings. Indebtedness, Higher Cost of Cultivation, Deterioration of economic status, Conflict with other family members, Crop failure, Burden of marriages, Addictions, Disputes with neighbours, Health problems³

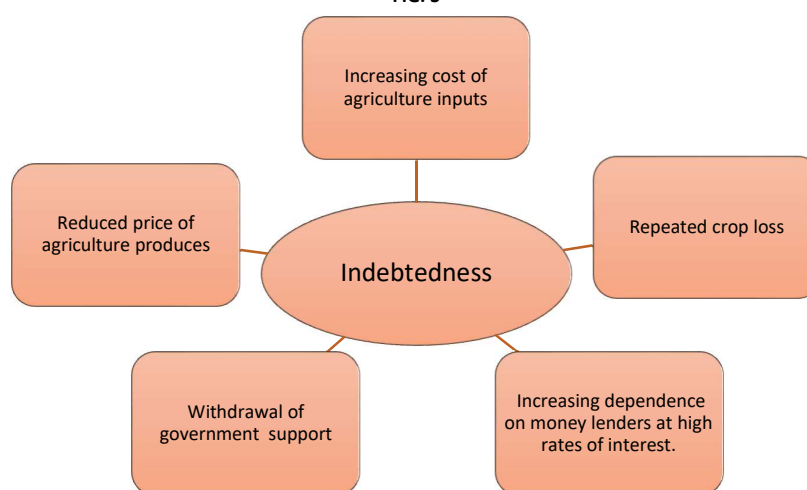
Further Circumstances are interlinked and not a particular cause is responsible.⁴ While the prices of crops have been pushed down even below the cost of production but the prices of inputs such as seed, fertilizers and pesticides have gone up. With limited resources, farmers depend on borrowed money to purchase seeds and other inputs and to farm their land. A drop in their farm income could quickly lead to farmers to suicide.

Then we will be addressing why are are Farmers Suicide Rate So High? While the prices of crops have been pushed down even below the cost of production but the prices of inputs such as seed, fertilizers and pesticides have gone up. With limited resources, farmers depend on borrowed money to purchase seeds and other inputs and to farm their land. A drop in their farm income could quickly lead to farmers to suicide.

5.1 REASONS FOR INDEBTEDNESS

The reasons for indebtedness have illustrated in the following graph. The main cause of the indebtedness of the farmers are Increasing cost of agriculture inputs, repeated crop loss, increasing dependence on money lenders at high rates of interest, Withdrawal of government support, Reduced price of agriculture produces, Increasing cost of agriculture inputs etc.

FIG. 3



Source: Report on Farmer's suicide in India by Navdanya, 2010

¹ Market Imperfections and Farmers' Distress in Maharashtra, Mohanty and Shroff, 2003

² Causes of Farmers Suicides in Maharashtra: An Enquiry

³ Suicide of Farmers in Maharashtra, Shrijit Mishra, 2006

⁴ Circumstances in which Farmers Committed suicide in Buldhana district of Vidarbha Region Causes

5.2 DIFFICULTIES FACED BY MARGINALIZED AND SMALL FARMERS

Again the difficulties faced by the marginalized and small farmers whose expenditure is more than the income as followings. They are, Lack of knowledge about low input sustainable farming systems, Push towards commodity crops such as cotton even in rainfed areas, Lack of access to good quality seeds, High input costs of seeds and fertilizers, Lack of access to formal credit systems, Exposed to volatile global market and no support system in place, Rising costs of cultivation; high dependence on external inputs, Unremunerative prices – do not cover costs of cultivation, let alone rising living costs, Unsustainable cropping patterns and production practices, Trade liberalization and export-import policies, Lack of support systems like credit, insurance, markets, storage, farmer collectives, Neglect of rainfed agriculture.

6. MEASURES TO CURB THE FARMERS SUICIDES IN INDIA

Here we will explain the measures to reduce or minimize the farmers' suicides in India. The measure includes the immediate measures, Addressing the root causes and Parliamentarian initiatives.

6.1 The Immediate Measures includes, Immediate compensation for crop failure, Remunerative prices, direct procurement from farmers, Modify export/import policies and tariffs in favour of Indian farmers, Provide ex-gratia and loan repayment support for all families of farmer suicides in time-bound manner.

6.2 Long-term Solutions are: - Rehabilitation of the system, policies focusing farmers, policies to support the marginal and small farmers, policies supporting crop cultivation and price support policies. Minimum Support Prices should match up with cost of cultivation, creation of safety net for cultivators and their families. Setting up commission for taking decisions on issues of Genetically Modified Technology and its impact on agriculture. Commission for issue of irrigation schemes in terms of surface and groundwater irrigation. ⁵ Revitalize rural financial market, Regulation of private moneylenders, finance through Self Help Groups. Crop Insurance, Water management, Land management, diversification, revive of extension, improvement in input quality, organic farming, Integrated Pest Management should be encouraged, Increase in Import Tariff, Price Stabilization, Reduction in use of pesticides, Creation of Helplines, reduction in social expenditures ⁶

6.3 Addressing Root Causes follows Price Compensation system for all food crops: when MSPs or market prices are less than Target Price (Cost of Cultivation + 50%), the difference should be paid directly to farmers, Guarantee minimum living incomes to all farmers, Promote sustainable agriculture which reduces cost of cultivation and crop risk, Comprehensive rainfed agriculture mission based on diverse cropping systems, protective irrigation and livestock systems, Bank credit to all farmers with adequate scale of finance, Effective crop insurance to cover all crops and all farmers, Inclusion of tenant farmers in all support systems.

6.4 Parliamentarians should demonstrate their serious intent of addressing agrarian crisis. Day-long joint session of Parliament to discuss farmer suicides and agrarian crisis. Constitute a Parliamentarians' Forum on Agrarian Distress to address the causes of the crisis.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section we will highlight some of the important recommendations to reduce farmers' suicides. The recommendations are

Creation of Farmers Welfare Fund and Security System for aged farmers and awareness of the harmful effects of alcohol consumption etc.⁷ Creation of Awareness among the farmers about their duties, obligations and responsibilities toward their family, community and society at large. Public and Private agencies must ensure the purity and distribution of seed to interior villages. National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) must be encouraged. Private Sector must be allowed to develop agricultural markets as it will improve market infrastructure and reduce market imperfections. ⁸

Besides, Farmer should adopt recommended cropping pattern, Conservation of water and rainwater harvesting need to be done, Diversification is must, Reduction in use of Chemicals (insecticides and fertilizer), Cooperative Farming is recommended. ⁹

8. CONCLUSION

It has found that the number of farmer suicide is staggering for the study period 1995-2010. The average farmer suicide from 1995-2011 is 15767. The difference between the two periods average suicide was highest in Maharashtra i.e. 1294. Only the large farmers whose land holding above the 10 hector is having more income (9667 Rs/Month) than expenditure (6418 Rs./month) and other farmers expenditure was more than the income. The total number of farmers' suicides from 1995-2010 in India is 256,913. This includes the male and female are 216787 and 40126 respectively. For the same study period Odisha has total number farmers suicides are 4460. The numbers of male farmer suicides are 3856 and female farmer suicides are 604. The average male farmers' suicide in Odisha is 241 and the average female suicide for the study period is 37.75=38. The average male farmers' suicide in all over India is 13594.18=13595 and the female farmers' suicide rate is 2507.87=2508. In aggregate the suicide growth rate was highest i.e. 66.53% in the year 1998 and lowest i.e. -40.77 in the year 2009. Odisha's Rank in terms of farmers suicide from 1995-2010 is 12th. The maximum number of farmer suicide occurred due to indebtedness in India where as in Odisha it is mostly due to the "Crop Failure". Further the farmer suicide in India can be curbed by immediate measures, long term solutions, address the root causes for it and parliamentary amendments. The major recommendations are create awareness, ensuring the purity and distribution of seeds to the farmers in villages, to develop agricultural marketing and cooperative farming etc.

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⁶ Suicide of Farmers in Maharashtra, Shrijit Mishra, 2006

⁷ Deshpande, 2002

⁸ Market Imperfections and Farmers' Distress in Maharashtra, Mohanty and Shroff, 2003

⁹ Circumstances in which Farmers Committed suicide in Buldhana district of Vidarbha Region Causes

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