

An Analysis of Socio Economic Condition and the Problems of the Deceased Farm Families

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ABSTRACT

A study on socio economic condition and the problems of deceased farm families of Dharwad districts is conducted during the year 2016-17 with the objective to analyze the socioeconomic status, problems and coping strategies of the deceased farm families. The sample of the study comprises of 50 deceased farm families. The secondary data on the number of farmer's suicide during last five years in Dharwad district was collected from taluka Agricultural Offices and Joint director office. According to secondary data during 2011-2016, 85 farmers have committed suicide in the Dharwad district. The data was collected from the respondents by using pre-tested structured interview schedule. Data on Socio-economic status of the farm families was collected by using the Aggarwal (2005) scale. Appropriate statistical techniques were used to depict the results. The results revealed that majority of the respondents belonged to lower middle socio economic status. Due to sudden death of the family head the family members faced social, emotional and financial problems. To overcome from the problem the members of the family talked with others and engaged in one or other work.

Keywords: Socio economic condition, Statistical techniques, Farm families, Work

INTRODUCTION

The spectre of farmers' suicides across India compounds the plight of the agricultural population already suffering from impoverishment and destitution. The bitter struggle for survival by women in these families is fraught with obstacles of an unprecedented nature. Dependent on the hetero-patriarchal structures of marriage and

family, women are left fending for themselves, their children, the elderly, as well as dealing with the wrath and harassment of bank and commission agents. In addition, they are coping with crop failures, negative rates of return from farming, meeting essential expenses (for instance, school fees of their children), illnesses and other emergencies, as also, various chores, like tending to livestock.

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The end of life can come by many means. But suicide is the most complicated for those left behind. Suicide is violent, but so is homicide. It's swift and doesn't leave time for closure, but so is a fatal car crash. Death by suicide can encompass all these characteristics. Where suicide differs from other deaths is inherent in the act. Suicide is a deliberate end to life that most of us could not consider. It doesn't seem possible that someone could engage in such behavior. Could life be so bad someone could extinguish it forever? Perhaps answers lie in what can bring someone to the brink of suicide. Research has shown that about 60 percent of adolescents and about 90 percent of adults who die by suicide had a mental illness and/or alcohol or substance-abuse disorder. The problem is, these disorders often go unrecognized or untreated. People may grapple with explosive anger, anxiety attacks, debilitating depression or mood swings, but they, and those close to them, may not recognize these behaviors as treatable or changeable.

Death of a loved one by suicide can be jolting and unforgiving. Impact on those closest to the deceased—parent, sibling, spouse, child, friend—can be profound and long lasting. People close to the deceased are known as “survivors” of suicide loss. It may be challenging for survivors to cope and function in the days to come. They may compartmentalize their grief and keep it in a place deep within themselves. Most are changed by such a traumatic death.

The loss of a loved one to death is widely recognized as a challenging stressor event, one that increases risk for the development of many psychiatric conditions. One key risk factor is the mode of death. This article briefly reviews the literature about the impact of suicide as a mode of death on those who are grieving this type of loss, known as suicide survivors. Within suicidology, the term “suicide survivor” has come to refer to a person who is grieving after the suicide of a loved one, not someone who has survived a suicide attempt. This article also describes some of the interventions that may be

appropriate for survivors and offers general guidelines for the provision of compassionate bereavement care after a suicide.

Impact of Suicide

The impact of suicide by the bread earner is experienced by all members of the family and also those who had close acquaintances with him/her. The sudden, unexpected death of a close person often shocks his family, friends and other known people. The act of suicide is over for the person who dies, but survivors are left with many questions. With suicide, the problem, pain, suffering and trauma is merely transferred to those who survive and is experienced by everyone in the society (Guruswamy & Isaac, 2008). Lands are confiscated due to inability to pay back high interest loans. The corrupt money lenders will harass the family members. Children sometimes will lose both parents, leave their education in between and they will work in order to meet their needs. The families will move from farm labor to permanent labor. Sometimes this may also leads to child labor.

Objectives of the study

1. To ascertain the Socio-economic profile of the respondents.
2. To know the problems faced by family after the suicide of the family head

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Dharwad district of Karnataka. Purposive sampling procedure was followed to select the villages and respondents for the study. The data on no of farmer suicides during last five years in the Dharwad district was collected from taluka Agricultural offices. A total of 50 deceased farm families were selected. Self structured interview schedule was used to collect the data on demographic profile of the respondents. Data on socio-economic profile was collected by using the scale developed by Aggarwal et al. (2005), data on problems faced by the deceased families was collected by using self structured questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-economic status of the selected deceased farm families was further studied by using the Aggarwal et al. (2005) scale and is presented in Table 1. The detailed information on the components of socio-economic status is presented in appendix I. It is clear from the

table that majority of the deceased families (70.00 %) belonged to the lower middle class category followed by equal per cent of the deceased families (12.00 %) belonged to upper middle and poor category respectively. Only 6 per cent of the families were under high socio economic status category.

Table 1: Socio economic status of the deceased families N=50

SES level	Frequency	Percentage
Upper high(>76)	-	-
High(61-75)	3	6.0
Upper middle (46-60)	6	12.0
Lower middle (31-45)	35	70.0
Poor (16-30)	6	12.0
Very poor (<16)	-	-

Status of the family after the suicide of the farmer

The results presented in table 2 revealed that, after the suicide of the farmer 74 per cent of the families were engaged in cultivation followed by agricultural labor (60.00 %).

About 28 per cent of the families have leased out their land and 12 per cent were doing petty business. Only 8 per cent are engaged in other occupations like job in private and public sector.

Table: 2 Occupation of the family after the suicide of the farmer N=50

Sl. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
I	Agricultural labor	30	60.00
II	Cultivation	37	74.00
III	Leased out land	14	28.00
IV	Business	6	12.00
V	Others	4	8.00

Note: Multiple responses

The problems faced by the family members after suicide of the farmer were depicted in table 3 and table 4.

Among the social problems faced by the mother/wife, 82 per cent of them have faced problem of participation of social functions followed by change in life style viz., added responsibilities of the family (68.00 %) and less entertainment (58.00 %). Among family disturbance in 28 per cent of the families children discontinued their education and went for wage earning and equal per cent (12.00 %) of the families were migrated to other place and children were sent to the relatives' home.

Among the emotional problems equal per cent (78.00 %) have faced the problem of helplessness, hopelessness and loneliness (78.00%) followed by depression (74.00 %), lack of confidence (72.00 %), lack of identity (60.00 %) and became irritable and short tempered (18.00 %).

Among the immediate financial problems faced by women 76 per cent of them have faced problem in fulfilling basic needs of the family followed by problem of paying school fees (38.00 %), maintaining previous standards of the family (8.00 %). Only 6 per cent of the women did not face any financial

problems immediately after the suicide of the farmers.

Among the present financial problems faced by women, 48 per cent of the women are facing the problem in meeting the livelihood expenditure followed by paying fees for the

education of their children (14.00 %), meeting up medical expenditure (12.00 %). The results also depicts that 12 per cent of them have sold animals followed by selling of land (10.00 %) and vehicles (8.00 %) as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Problems faced by the members of the family after the suicide of the farmer N=50

Sl. No.	Problems faced by wife	Frequency	Percentage
a	Social		
I	Hesitation in Participation of social functions	41	82.0
II	Family disturbance		
	❖ Children left school	14	28.0
	❖ Migrated to other place	6	12.0
	❖ Children were sent to relative homes	6	12.0
III	Change in life style		
	❖ Less entertainment	29	58.0
	❖ Added responsibilities	34	68.0
b	Emotional		
I	Helpless and hopeless	39	78.0
II	Lack of identity	30	60.0
III	Loneliness	39	78.0
IV	Irritable and short tempered	9	18.0
V	Lack of confidence	36	72.0
VI	Depression	37	74.0
c	Financial		
I	Immediate financial problems		
	❖ Fulfilling basic needs of the family and personal expenses	38	76.0
	❖ School fee	19	38.0
	❖ Maintaining previous standard	4	8.0
	❖ No problem	3	6.0
II	Present financial problems		
	❖ Education of the Children	7	14.0
	❖ Livelihood expenditure	24	48.0
	❖ Medical Facility	6	12.0
	❖ Assets sold		
	○ Land	5	10.0
	○ animals (buffalo, ox, cow)	6	12.0
	○ vehicles (tractor, bike)	4	8.0

Note: Multiple Responses

Among the social problems faced by children in 70 per cent of the families children got hesitated to participate in social functions followed by equal per cent (66.00 %) of them have faced problem in their lifestyle viz., less entertainment and added responsibilities as presented in table 4.

Among the emotional problems in 64 per cent of the families children have felt hopelessness and helplessness followed by lack of confidence (52.00 %), loneliness (48.00 %), lack of identity (46.00 %) and irritability and short temperedness (8.00 %). In 66 per cent of the families children lack money for day to day needs.

Table 4: Problems faced by children after the suicide of the farmer N=50

Sl. No.	Problems faced by children	Frequency	Percentage
a	Social		
I	Participation in social functions	35	70.0
II	Change in life style		
	1. Less entertainment	33	66.0
	2. Added responsibilities	33	66.0
b	Emotional		
I	Helpless and hopeless	32	64.0
II	Lack of identity	23	46.0
III	Loneliness	24	48.0
IV	Irritable and short tempered	4	8.0
V	Lack of confidence	26	52.0
c	Financial		
I	Lack of money for day to day needs	33	66.0

Note: Multiple Responses

Coping strategies followed by the respondents to overcome from problem were represented in the table 22. It shows that equal per cent of the respondents talk to others and get engaged in some work (92.00 %) to overcome from problems followed by spending time with

children (82.00 %). Nearly one third of the respondents said that they control finances, 14 per cent of the respondents said that they control their anger. Only 6 per cent of the respondents will do meditation to come out from problem.

Table: 5 Coping strategies followed by respondents to overcome the problem by selected respondents N=50

Sl. No.	Strategies followed	Frequency	Percentage
I.	Talk out/conversation	46	92.0
II.	Meditation	3	6.0
III.	Overcome anger	7	14.0
IV.	Be in control of finances	16	32.0
V.	Engaged in some work	46	92.0
VI.	Spend time with children	41	82.0

Note: Multiple Responses

CONCLUSION

- Majority of the deceased families were in lower middle socio economic status as per the Aggarwal (2005) scale.
- After the death of the family head majority of the families were engaged in the cultivation.
- Majority of the respondents faced social, emotional and financial problems after the death of the family head.
- To overcome the problem majority talked with others and engaged in one or other work to divert their mind from stress.

Implications and recommendations

- Farmers Counseling Centers should be established at 'Panchayat' level with the appointment of trained personnel comprising of a Social Worker, Psychologist, Agricultural scientist, Doctor and elected representative of the Panchayat to help the farmers in distress.
- It is also necessary to build up the psychology of family members of the deceased families who are in problem by motivating them through yoga and meditation.

- There is a need to strengthen the National Mental Health Programme at primary health centre level to offer support and counseling to the vulnerable members of farm families in rural areas.

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