

SOCIAL SUPPORT : A IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR IN FARMER'S SUICIDE.

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ABSTRACT

Life is a precious and fortunately tenacious also. That is why we see people struggling and living in spite of almost insurmountable difficulties for e.g. natural disasters, wars , poverty and unbearable personal loss and grief.

But there are some , who through loss of hope, give up the struggle and end life – commit suicide. Open any news paper and you will see the news of suicides prominently displayed. Suicide by students, suicides of newly married brides, parents killing their children and committing suicide and in recent years ‘ Farmers Suicides’.

“Suicide means deliberately and intentionally killing oneself.”

Emily Durkheim , a French Sociologist (1897) has defined suicide as follows.

“ The term suicide is applied to all cases of death resulting directly from a positive and negative act of the victim itself, which he knows will produce the result.”

In the recent years ‘Suicidology’ has been classified as a independent branch of Psychology.

Edwin S. Shncidman introduced the term ‘Suicidology.’

Suicidolgy studied not only successful suicide and attempted suicide but also partial self destruction, suicidal ideation, parasuicide and self destructive behavior and attitudes . (Maris, Berman and Silverman-2010)

Suicide is a personal act but the reasons behind it are varied Biological, Somatic, Psychological, Familial, Social, Financial, Religious ect.

The recent years have seen continuous rise in number of Farmers Suicides., almost like an epidemic. This is a cause of special concern because the farmer is the life line of the nation.

India is mainly an agricultural country. What frightens and saddens the mind is the definite and alarming rise in the number of farmer’s suicides in the recent years.

Due to the breakup of the the joint family and therefore the land, holdings of the nuclear family are very small, many having only 4 to 5 acres. This and others adverse conditions have

frustrated the small farmers. It is impossible to provide even the basic necessities of his family on these holdings.

The second type of farmer is the one, who has a job to supplement his income. He can be a successful farmer and can provide for his family.

The third type is the rich farmer, who naturally is near the sources of power and authority. For him all the facilities and aid given by the Government are easily available. For him, his farm is a five star, recreation spot.

The first type of farmer is always under pressure. The last ten to twelve years have seen a never ending trail of farmer's suicides.

The main reason for these suicides is of course economic. Yet it is also true that majority of poor farmers are under the same economic pressure. In spite of this only some of these, take resource to such an extreme step ----- suicide.

Crop failure and famines are important reasons. But these have always been there. Good harvests have never been a constant feature. They have always alternated with famines. Farmers have always gone through these cycles. But suicides were hardly heard of.

Then why now ? What are the circumstances that induce the farmer to end his life so easily?

The cause is the weakness of the farmers mind and personality and the changing pattern of village life. The capacity to face stress has decreased.

We have forgotten Gandhiji and his valuable teaching, "Turn to the villages." If we had truly followed his teachings and tried to make our villages modern and well equipped as in the west, the exodus to the cities would not have been there.

In the past, villages are self contained. There was no corruption. People did their jobs honestly and conscientiously. All jobs had the same footing and dignity.

All the villagers were united.. The elders of any village treated the younger generation as their children. They gave guidance and advice as required. People helped each other in religious ceremonies, marriages, deaths and other difficulties.

Now things have changed drastically. No one would believe that the atmosphere was so friendly in the days gone by. Now politics has entered all spheres of life.

Siblings fight each other in courts for a tiny piece of land. The very idea of helping each other seems to be a dream.

This is the change, we now see in village life.

The atmosphere of the village is dirty , dull and lusterless. This lack of hope for a better life pushes farmer towards the cities.

In short traditional “ Social Support” that helped the farmer over periods of stress is lacking now. In the recent years, science and technology have progressed by leaps and bounds. The internet can give us any information from any part of the world in just a click of the computer mouse. The “face book” can help you to have any number of friends from any part of the world. But do we know what is happening in our neighbour’s house and are we concerned about it ? Personal contact and concern have decreased.

As said before, economic stress is an important factor in farmer’s suicides. This is proved by many researches. Along with many factors which causes the farmers suicide for e.g. Indebtedness, Failure of Monsoon, Lack of irrigation facility, Political interference, Market difficulties, Lack of supplementary business, Use of costly hybrid seeds and manure, insecticides, labour difficulties. Addictions like alcoholism also contribute to a great extent in farmer’s suicide.

In spite of all these factors, it is also true that in the same circumstances some people fight and some give up.

Why ?

The psychological aspect has not been given proper attention of study. Important or even more important are the psychological factors which induce the farmer to take his own life.

The loneliness of the psychologically depressed farmers can be helped by social support in addition to economic support. The broken mind needs the support of strong hands. If thousands of hands from our villages can unite, leaving behind their quarrels and differences, the village atmosphere will change. Hope will again dawn in villages. The stressed farmer will feel confident that he is not alone. “Then these suicides will stop.”

How important is this social support? What is the importance of social support in preventing Farmer's suicide? How can this social support be provided?

This study has been chosen to find the answers to the above questions.

Social Support means the support given by family, friends and people working with you and around you, social institutions and religious institutions.

House (1981) put forward the idea of social support. According to him Social Support is given in the following four ways-

Emotional Support, Instrumental Support, Informational Support and Appraisal Support.

Review Of Literature :-

Many Studies in India have also shown that men have increasing rates for completing suicide than women while more women attempt suicide than men.

(Latha K. S., Bhat S.M., D'Souza P. 1996)

The W.H.O. also in its report has identified Poverty as a major factor in Suicide, followed by Stress, Mental Illness and Substance abuse.(Stone G. D.,2002)

A family history of psychopathology not only endows genetic vulnerability, but also decreasing Social Support, Increasing the discord at home and thereby increasing the risk of Suicide.(Vijaykumar L, 2003)

In India, Hanging, Self Poisoning, Drowning and Self Immolation are the most common methods of Suicide. (De,Leo.D, 2003)

The breakdown of the joint family system that had previously provided emotional support and stability is also seen as an important factor. (De,Leo.D, 2003)

Following reasons for Farmers suicide

- 1.Chronic indebtedness and inability to pay debts accumulated over the years.
2. Economic decline that leads to complications,Family disputes,Depression Alcoholism etc.
3. Rising costs of agricultural inputs and falling prices of agricultural produce.

(Behare P.B.,Behare A.P.2008)

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The main issues of Farmer's Suicide-

- 1.Lack of Irrigation Facility. 2.Debtness. 3. Planner's ignorance towards farming.(DR. R.D. Sikchi 2010)

The study also showed that different types of support, such as emotional ,practical and Informational supports from different sources such as the family, Co-workers, Spouse,church mosque and neighbourhood are more potential to health.(David,A.,Oluwoie,Ayot.Hamme, John,T.Awaebe.,2011)

Functional Definitions-

Emotional Support :-

Providing empathy, caring, love, trust, esteem, concern and listening.

Instrumental Support :-

Providing aid in kind, money, labour, time and any direct help.

Informational Support :-

Provide advice, suggestions, directions and information for use in coping with personal and environmental problems.

Appraisal Support :-

Providing affirmation, feedback, social comparison and self evaluation.

Aims and Objectives of Study

1. To study various causes behind the increasing number of Farmers' suicide.

2. To study, how Social Support is an important psychological factor in strengthening personality.

3. To measure the relation between Suicides and Socioeconomic Status.

In this study following hypotheses were framed and tested.

Hypotheses :-

The hypotheses of this study are as follows-

1. Lack of Emotional Support from family and near relatives is one of the factors which induce the farmer to commit suicide.
2. Lack of Instrumental Support (Money, Time and Labour) is a cause of increasing number of farmer suicides.
3. Lack of Informational Support regarding various help schemes (Government or otherwise) is related to farmer's suicide.
4. A negative Appraisal of self is related to suicides.
5. There is positive correlation in Low level of Socio-Economic Status and Suicide.

Selection Of Sample:-

The total number of farmer's suicide is very large, but the samples chosen are the farmers who have received post suicide Government aid of Rs 1 lac. This aid has been given on the criteria of Crop Failure, Indebtedness and Drought.

102 such farmers from 14 taluquas of Amravati District have been chosen for this study. The choice of samples chosen was on simple random basis by using the lottery method. The information regarding the samples was collected from near relatives (Wife, husband and Children) of the deceased farmers.

Tools Used For Data Collection :-

For this a pilot study was conducted on the four main factors of Social Support. Emotional Support, Instrumental Support, Informational support and Appraisal Support. On this study, a social support scale was prepared. The reliability of this scale is .60.

In addition, a test for Socio-Economic Status specially developed and standardized by Dr. U. G. Thakare for farmers. The reliability of this test is .82(Test-Retest method) and Validity is .83 (Concurrent validity)

Procedure of Data Collection :-

The Social Support Scale and Socio-Economic Scale were given personally by contacting the near relatives of the deceased farmers.

Variables :-

In this study Social Support and socio-Economic Scales are Independent variables and Suicide is Dependent Variable.

Research Design :-

For this study Correlation Design was used.

Statistical Treatment of Data :-

The result were calculated on the basis of Mean, Standard Deviation , t Test and Correlation. On the basis of the study following results are obtained.

Results:-

1. Majority of the farmers received very low Emotional Support.
2. Very low Instrumental Support is received by the majority of farmers.
3. Farmers have not received Informational Support.
4. Majority of the farmers deeply underestimated themselves.(97 %)
5. There is positive correlation between Instrumental Support and Informational Support.
6. There is Positive correlation between Instrumental Support and Appraisal Support.
7. There is Positive correlation between Informational Support and Appraisal Support.
8. There is negative correlation in Socio-Economic Status and Informational Support.
9. There is positive correlation between Emotional Support and Appraisal Support.

10. The Socio-Economic Status is very low in majority of the farmers. (27.45%)
11. The level of the Socio-Economic Status is medium in less number of farmers.(10.78%)
12. The difference between means of Socio-Economic Status, Emotional Support, instrumental Support and Appraisal Support are significant at .05 and .01 level. (t ratio)

The hypotheses framed for this study have been proved.

Conclusion :-

Lack of Social Support (Emotional Support, Instrumental Support, Informational Support and Appraisal Support) is an important risk factor for Farmers Suicide.

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