



TMC MM 5.2: Studies on Social Dynamics of Cotton Production in Distress Areas

Introduction:

The literature explains that most of the farmers suicides reported were from cotton growing areas. Earlier reports also quoted that cotton growers were not able to get remunerative prices and have to sell the produce at very low prices and are not able to repay their debts due to droughts and continued crop failures. This leads those towards frustration and humiliation. Several other reports on farmers suicides prepared by Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, Planning Commission, Tata Institute of Social Research, Mumbai and Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Studies also blame the failure of cotton crop, failure of rains, bad marketing and indebtedness for farmer's suicides. An attempt was made in this study to look at the phenomenon of cotton growers suicides through social psychological perspective which treat suicides as deviant behaviour. Crop failure and indebtedness can explain some of the variance but there are other important antecedents of suicide like perceived financial condition, expenditure pattern, contingencies, Government policies, family problems, social isolation and social support. These may lead to alienation from land which leads to depression and suicides.

Objectives:

1. To quantify the cotton growers alienation from land
2. To study social dynamics of cotton production in high suicide prone areas
3. To Study issues of indebtedness among farmers
4. To explore the antecedents of alienation from land

Salient findings:

The results revealed that alienation from exists irrespective of the size of land holding, either small or medium. Majority of cotton growers from Andhra Pradesh, Punjab had medium level of alienation. The case of Karnataka and Maharashtra needed special consideration wherein majority of cotton growers had high alienation.

The average land holding recorded in the range of 2.07 hectare to 2.38 hectare. Cent per cent of the land possessed by the cotton growers of Punjab had annual irrigation facility while the availability of annual irrigation was meager at other centers. Cotton growers from Punjab had recorded comparatively higher productivity of cotton (22.10 Qts/ha). The productivity level recorded at Vidarbha was very low (10.00 Qts/ha). Bt cotton occupies majority of the land under cultivation (88.14 to 100.00 %).

Majority of cotton growers had adequate availability of good quality seeds, fertilizers, insecticides, weedicides, farm implements, radio, TV, newspapers. They reported inadequacy of farm machinery and sprayers and dusters, watershed development works, electricity for

farm operations, library facility, PHC, extension personnel, computer and internet and post harvest infrastructure like godowns, warehouses, cold storages, rural agro-based industries and good market system. They also reported inadequacy of labour.

Majority of cotton growers involves family members in most of the decisions making processes, had high gender focus, had medium to high level of strategic behavior and were indebted. Very few cotton growers migrated to meet their livelihood.

Cotton farming was found to be economically viable. Agriculture (farming) was the major contributor of the annual income and major area of expenditure. Cotton growers were far away from the subsidiary occupations. In Vidarbha and Andhra Pradesh average annual expenditure was higher than average annual income. Majority of cotton growers had not received any contingencies and benefit by Government policies. Alcoholism was frequent among them. Cotton growers had medium to high social support. Expenditure bears positive and annual income, contingency and alcoholism bears negative significant relationship with the alienation of the farmers from land. The total variation exerted by the variables under consideration on the alienation of the farmers from land was in the range of 32.10 per cent to 48.80 percent.