VIDARBHA FARMERS SUICIDES IN YEAR 2006

Source: VIDARBH JAN ANDOLAN SAMITI
Detail List at Vidarbha@gmail.com, Vjas Blog andolan.blogspot.com

Millions of Farmers are in distress

Distress A  Distress B  Distress C

VIDARBHA JAN ANDOLAN SAMITI
11, Trisaran Society, In front of Somalwar School, Khamla, Nagpur 440 025
e-mail: vjasamiti@gmail.com, kishortiwari@gmail.com, blog-andolan.blogspot.com
Tel No. (0712) 2282457 Mob No. 9422108846 / 9371137653 / 9373121947
(Regd Office: At Post: Pandharkawada-445 302, Tq: Kelapur, Distt: Yavatmal)
VIDARBHA JAN ANDOLAN SAMITI
11, Trisaran Society, In front of Somalwar School, Khamla, Nagpur – 440 025
e-mail-vjasamiti@gmail.com, kishortiwari@gmail.com, -blog-andolan.blogspot.com
Tel No. (0712) 2282457 Mob No. 9422108846 / 937137653 / 9373121947
(Regd Office : At Post : Pandharkawada-445 302, Tq : Kelapur, Distt : Yavatmal)

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VIDARBHA FARMER SUICIDE: RELIEF PACKAGES ARE HOAX

Vidarbha Janandolan Samiti - is following the issue since last almost 9 years on the basis of the ground study & analysis of each and every case of unfortunate suicides of the farmers in different villages of Western Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra State. We are fighting for the cause of the poor farmers and agitating for the restoration of social justice in the rural west Vidarbha where more than 10000 farmers have committed suicide in last decade. Since June 2005 the farmer suicide has been at its peak and we have moved Maharashtra Human Right commission, Mumbai High Court alongwith State and Central Government to get the hardship which is resulting the deep distress in the millions of farmers should be addressed and ongoing suicide should be stopped.

We have been receiving our e-mails, letters, memorandums almost daily to every authorities and concern persons who are fighting to save the lifes of the millions of the farmer families who are dying due to hunger and poverty.

VIDARBHA-INDIA'S MOST PROSPEROUS COTTON BELT

Farmer Suicide in West Vidarbha

![Graph showing farmer suicides from 2001 to 2007]

Suicide
FOOD FARMING IN VIDARBHA

DROP IN FOOD FARMING IN VIDARBHA

COTTON CRISIS AFTER WTO ENTRY

Cotton Procurement by Mah. Govt.
Quintal in lakhs

Cotton Purchase Collection Center
The West Vidarbha which is included with 5 districts namely Yavatmal, Amravati, Akola, Buldhana, Washim and Wardha. Here more than two million mostly cotton farmers are cultivating in an around 3 million acre cultivable land out of which 95% land is without any facility of irrigation and completely dependent on rain fed farming. The farmer suicide triggered in the month of June 2005 when Govt. of India introduced high cost genetically modified B.T. Cotton seed which has increased cultivation cost to the almost double. At the same time Maharashtra Govt. took the decision to withdraw advanced bonus Rs. 500 a quintal and almost stopped purchasing the cotton from the farmers. This has resulted in massive loss of more than Rs. 3000 crore to the Vidarbha's two million cotton growers. As B.T. Cotton failed to give the result as per the promises given by the company and cotton crop almost dropped to the 50% level. In the year 2005 and 2006 has been very disastrous to the Vidarbha farming community as in these years the cost of health care, education and livelihood has been increased to the almost triple whereas income of the farmer has been dropped down to the almost 40%. This has created the economic hostile environment resulting into the mass distress. The Maharashtra Govt. after the Mumbai High Court Nagpur bench has conducted a door to door survey of around two million farmer families and the survey report was submitted to the government India and Govt. of Maharashtra and it is evident from the Survey Document that the farmers 'in extreme distress' as mentioned in the column 9 of the Survey Chart are 4,34,291 and the farmers families suffering from serious illness are 92,456.
The detailed survey was conducted by the said Government Controlled Mission at Amravati under the guidance of Divisional Commissioner at Amravati, in the 8351 Villages of 6 Districts of Vidarbha comprising of Yavatmal, Amravati, Akola, Buldhana, Washim & Wardha in which 17,64,438 families were surveyed by the Mission.

On the basis of the in-depth study and analysis conducted by our organization, out of such huge numbers of families from those surveyed villages, we would like to draw your immediate attention towards the column No. 8 & 9 pertaining to the farmers in extreme distress and farmers with serious illness as stated above.

THE FACTS & OUR EXPERIENCE:

Hono'ble Sir, in majority of cases of farmers suicides, we came to know that there is no food or medicine available to them and this plight has continued to result the extreme step of suicide by the said farmer and / or its family members.

Now, it is imperative on the part of the Union of India and State of Maharashtra that this known factors / points are to be attended to immediately so that these two class of farmers families i.e. the Farmers in Extreme Distress and Farmers Suffering from Serious Illness need to be attended immediately to remediate the plight of such farmers on the verge of committing suicides. It is regretted that the State Administration has miserably failed to attend these two known categories even though these required immediate relief measures to control the unfortunate incidents of suicides.

1) FARMERS IN EXTREME DISTRESS -

IDENTIFIED FAMILIES: 4,34,291.

CAUSES IDENTIFIED:

After visiting the families of the farmers which committed suicides, we came to know that there was no food even sufficient for 2 days in the houses of such farmers. These unfortunate facts of non-availability of Food or money to buy food grain and / or the medicine, resulted in the ultimate sad and unfortunate incident of suicide by the said farmers who were unable to face the agony and distress of such unfortunate plight of indirect hunger and ultimate starvation of the family members including small children and old parents.

REMEDY SUGGESTED:
The Union of India through State of Maharashtra is providing food grain at the subsidized rate to the BPL families amongst the farm / landless labourers. In order to stop the indirect hunger and starvation of these 4,34,291 Identified ‘Families in Extreme Distress’, most of them are small farmers of which the economic condition is not above the landless labourers (Col No. 9 of the Survey Chart), State of Maharashtra to provide 25 Kg of Food grain per month at the subsidized price @ Rs. 3 – 5 per kg under the PDS and/or any other special scheme to be announced at least for a period of 18 months now onwards. This will immediately result in providing direct food help to the 4,34,291 Identified Families in Extreme Distress and the indirect starvation of such families can be stopped so that the ultimate effect which is leading to the unfortunate suicide of the farmer family can be stopped, once the hunger and the indirect starvation of such families is attended to.

FARMERS FAMILIES SUFFERING FROM SERIOUS ILLNESS –

IDENTIFIED FAMILIES : 92,456.

CAUSES IDENTIFIED:

After visiting the families of the farmers which committed suicides, we also came to know that there was no medicine in the houses of such farmers where the family members are seriously ill or suffering from such diseases. The non-availability of medicine or money to buy food grain and / or the medicine, resulted in the ultimate sad and unfortunate incident of suicide by the said farmers who were unable to face the agony and distress of such unfortunate plight of indirect sufferings due to illness, hunger and ultimate starvation of the family members including small children and old parents.

REMEDY SUGGESTED:

The State is providing medical / health services to BPL families at the subsidized rate amongst the farm / landless labourers. In order to stop the indirect plight due to serious illness coupled with hunger and starvation of these 92,456 Identified Farmers Families with Serious Illness, most of them are small farmers of which the economic condition is not above the landless labourers (Col No. 8 of the Survey Chart), State of Maharashtra to provide Special BPL / Health Cards to such families so that they get the subsidized health care in Government run hospitals at par with the landless labourers or BPL families. This will immediately help in providing direct health care to the 92,456 Identified Families with Serious Illness and in Extreme Distress and which can help to stop the unfortunate suicide of the farmer families with serious illness.
OTHER IMPORTANT CAUSES IDENTIFIED

1. INADEQUATE AND POOR AVAILABILITY OF CREDIT FACILITIES TO
THE FARMERS :-

   It has been observed that the financial institutions mainly Nationalized Banks are not
providing credit facilities to farmers as per their actual needs. The scale of finance is
extremely discriminatory. In Western Maharashtra, farmers are getting upto Rs.2,00,000/-
per Hectare Crop Credit, but in Vidarbha it is extremely poor, not even Rs.10,000/- per
Hectare. It is mockery of Credit Policy and Govt. Control thereon. The banks are not
carrying out the periodic review exercise for increasing the scale of finance. In some
cases it is observed that though the farmers are eligible for increment in scale of finance,
but it is not made available merely for the reason of the extra staff / manpower for the
purpose of documentation and credit papers at bank is not provided by the Regional
Offices of the Banks. For want of such bank documentation and paper works, the
farmers are denied the fresh incremental loans / credit facilities even though they are
eligible for enhanced credit facilities. This is indirectly causing great hardships to the
farmers and they have been denied the enhanced scale of finance / credit facilities for the
failure of banks to revise the documentation or papers. Thus, inadequate and poor
availability of credit facilities to the farmers is the main reason of exploitation of the
farmers community at the hands of private money lenders / sahukars, who all are
charging exorbitant rate of interest for such short term crop loan / credit made available
to farmers by such sahukars. This is ultimately resulting in the unfortunate incidents of
farmers’ suicide across the Vidarbha Region.

IMMEDIATE REMEDY

All the Nationalized banks be strictly advised / ordered to have extra manpower / staff for
documentation and / or the paper work for reviewing and revising the scale of finance /
credit facilities to the farmers as per their eligibility. The Banks be advised / instructed /
ordered to make suitable computer software for the purpose of assessment and
documentation for providing the new scale of finance / credit facilities to the farmers,
which is being denied due to manual / lengthy / time killing and labourious
documentation system presently being implemented in the Banks and could not be
effectively made operational for want of staff / manpower and infrastructure in the Rural
Sector Branches of the Banks. The farmers who have been denied the new scale of
finance be given additional finances / credit facilities by extending the last date for such
short term of loan. The forms / formats for credit facilities to the farmers be revised in
such way that the time consumed in lengthy documentation can be avoided at the time
of the review / revision of the credit limits on account of enhancement in the scale of finance, to the advantage of farmers as well as banks. It is unfortunate that the banks have not done computerization along with other infrastructures / net working for the agricultural sector and as such the benefits arising out of the advantages of new generation techniques / networking is being denied to the farmers especially in the Rural Vidarbha.

2. SUPPORT PRICE OF COTTON TO BE ENHANCED TO RS.2,700/- PER QUINTAL AND MONOPOLY COTTON PURCHASE SCHEME TO BE IMPLEMENTED :-

It has been observed that the rate of cotton has not been increased as compared to the cost of input. It is not viable to sell cotton below Rs.2,700/- per quintal but since the support price is much below, the cotton purchasing agencies are not giving any rise and the rates are maintained just to the level of Rs.2,100/- per quintal maximum even though the national / International market rates are much much above. The increment in the minimum support price to the level of Rs.2,700/- per quintal along with monopoly guaranteed cotton purchase scheme is the effective need of the hour. The farmers need support of the price as well as guaranteed purchase scheme other wise market players will exploit them and the unfortunate incidents of farmers suicides will continue unending and our civilized country will face an awkward position in the world.

IMMEDIATE REMEDY

The minimum support price of the cotton be increased immediately to Rs.2,700/- per quintal. State Controlled Cotton Procurement Centers be started immediately from the first day & date of arrival of cotton crop to avoid exploitation of the farmers at the hands of Private Players in the Cotton Trade.

3. UNCONTROLLED & UNRESTRICTED SALE OF BOGUS & DUPLICATE SEEDS :- It has been observed that Bogus & duplicate seeds being sold to poor and illiterate farmers due to Non implementation by the Govt. of Maharashtra of the Seed Control Order, 1983 issued under Sec. 3 of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to arrest and control the big wig seed trades and manufacturers. This massive corruption in sale of duplicate & bogus seeds has resulted in cheating of the farmer and increasing of debt due to improper farm yield because of poor and bogus quality of seeds being sold freely due to apathy of State Government. This has indirectly resulted the unfortunate suicide of the farmers who lost their crops due to poor quality of seeds being provided to them.
in lack of proper administrative control by the agriculture department quality & input of the seeds which otherwise could have been possible due to the stringent provisions contended in the seed control order, 1983 of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 if implemented in its true spirit & meaning. This failure on a part of State of Maharashtra to control the quality & input of seeds is one of the prime cause for the overall cheating and exploitation of the poor and illiterate farmers residing in the villages.

IMMEDIATE REMEDY

For immediate control of quality & input of seeds, it is high time that the State of Maharashtra be ordered by Union of India to implement the provisions of Seed Control Order 1983 and to instruct to issue delegation of power to its inspecting officer for control of quality & input seeds as required under sec. 12 of the Seed Control Order of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 which is the prime tool for the control of quality & input of seeds.

4. HIGH COST OF BT COTTON SEEDS :-

It has also been observed that the farmers are not being given proper advice and training by the Government of Maharashtra in Department of Agriculture since last several years. The costly and improper BT cotton seeds which are not suitable for dry land farming is being freely propagated and sold at a very high cost of Rs. 2000/- to Rs. 3600/- Per Kg of BT cotton seeds, cost of which is virtually killing the farmers due to high input cost and low yield.

REMEDIES SUGGESTED :

There must be the blanket ban on BT cotton seeds in the dry land farming areas. This has to be done immediately in order to save the farmers from undue exploitation and cheating. There must be ban on sale and mis leading advertisement of BT cotton seeds in the dry land areas of Maharashtra where such seeds are not useful for cultivation of cotton due to the high cost of input as compared to the yield. The so called upgrade technology is killing the farmers. So immediate steps may please be initiated by the Union of India in this regard to stop free trials and sales of GM and BT seeds to protect the farmer community at large.

5. OTHER RELIEFS REQUIRED :-

A) Farmers in the extreme distress categories may please be provided with free education facility to their wards.
B) Special Schemes for promotion of Food Crop Farming and natural farming may please be introduced with the attractive schemes of subsidies for food crop farming and natural/low budget farming.

C) The farm sector insurance companies be advised/directed to settle the claims of farmers in stipulated time period of 30 days.

D) The Contract Farming is being implemented with a help to corporate and multinationals. The farmers' interest is not protected at all. Proper legislation be enacted to regulate & control the contract farming to protect the interest of small farmers.

E) Food Processing Policy of Union Ministry of Food Processing be simplified in such a way that the illiterate farmers will get direct advantage out of it.

F) The Subsidy actually meant for farmers for developing Cold Chain and Cold Storage/Warehousing should be made available only to the farmers and the Farmers Group and not to the Corporates – Companies – Multinationals like Walmart, Trumart, Reliance, ITC, Subhiksha, Birla, Godrej, TATA, Hindustan Lever, DLF, etc. etc., otherwise the basic purpose of providing Food Processing subsidies/Infrastructure benefits to farmers for Value Addition will be defeated and if given to the Corporates, the basic advantage to the farmers will be taken away for want of proper statute to control such lapses.

G) The subsidy on fertilizers be passed on to actual farmers/users instead of the fertilizer manufacturing corporates.

H) To promote use of bio-fertilizers, Union Ministry of Agriculture had set up Directorate of Bio-fertilizers having Regional Centers across the country to educate the farmers about use of Bio-Fertilizers. However, now this Directorate is changed to Directorate of Organic Farming and the whole thrust of the Regional Centres have now shifted to Organic Farming being propagated without proper infrastructure & Market Support to the Organic Farming Sector. Union of India should separate out Organic & Bio-Fertiliser Wings to function independently. So that the basic purpose of Bio-Fertiliser and Organic Farming be protected in its true sense & meaning. So Vidarbha janandolan Samiti demands complete loan waiver, cotton price Rs. 2700 per quintal and Restoration of Health care, Education and employment rural Vidarbha alongwith, Food security to the distress families in order to stop farmer suicide in Vidarbha.

Thanking you,

Yours truly,

Kishor Tiwari
Vidarbha Jan Andolan Samiti
Contact: 094221 08846
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<td>२१३,२५५</td>
<td>४६१३६</td>
<td>६८,२३१</td>
<td>२०७,५२२</td>
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</tbody>
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