

SUICIDES IN MAHARASHTRA WITH RESPECT TO PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL STATUS***Dr. Simranjeet Singh Bains, Astit. Prof. in Economics, Lyallpur Khalsa College, Jalandhar.****Postal Address: 339, Guru Tegh Bahadur Nagar, Jalandhar (Punjab) PIN: 144003***Abstract*

Suicide implies an act of intentionally causing one's own death. Among the various states in India, highest total number of suicidal deaths is in Maharashtra to the extent of 153104, during the period of ten years (2004-2013). Keeping in view the gravity of the situation an attempt has been made to examine the intensity, nature, growth and S.M.R. (Suicidal Mortality Rate) of suicidal deaths with respect to professional and educational status of Maharashtra state from 2004 to 2013.

Mean value, proportion, Average Annual Compound Growth Rates of suicidal deaths and S.M.R. are reckoned and results are presented using Pie charts. Among the various heads of profession, self-employed and housewives figures about 71 percent of total suicidal deaths. In case of educational status, the heads of uneducated, primary and middle standard constitute 67% of total suicides in Maharashtra during the period of analysis.

Key words: Suicidal deaths, farmers, unemployed, psychiatric disorders, women.

SUICIDES IN MAHARASHTRA WITH RESPECT TO PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Suicide implies an act of intentionally causing one's own death (Williams & Wilkins, 2006). The various vital factors responsible for suicide are psychiatric disorders, drug misuse, psychological states, culture, genetic, family and social situations (Howlon, 2012). In India it used to be illegal but the government decided to repeal the law in 2014 (Section 309 I.P.C.).

The Government of India classifies a death as suicide, if it meets the following criteria:-

- It is an unnatural death.
- The intent to die originated within the person.
- There is a reason for the person to end his or her life. The reason may have been specified in a suicide note or specified.

About eight lakh people commit suicide worldwide every year, of these 1.35 lakh (17%) are residents of India (G.O.I. Report, 2012). Among the various states in India, highest total number of suicidal deaths are in Maharashtra to the extent of 153104, during the period of analysis (2004-2013). In spite of Maharashtra, which is an industrially developed state, with massive business activity, magnitude of suicidal deaths are extremely high. The reason is, the more you develop, the more the expectations and more the disappointments (Vijayakumar, 2013). Another reason could be that this state has a better literacy rate as compare to other states in India, so that cause better reporting system. Moreover the state has experienced migration from the rural areas to the cities and migration has a big role to play in suicides. Ascending agrarian crisis in the state is a major cause behind escalating suicidal deaths. Farmer reeling under debts, frequent droughts, crop failure, and non-realization of prices for agricultural products are some of the reasons which drive farmers to take the extreme step. Keeping in view the gravity of the situation it becomes imperative

1. To examine the intensity, nature, growth and Suicidal Mortality Rate (S.M.R.) of suicidal deaths in Maharashtra with respect to professional status from 2004 to 2013.
2. To analyse the growth and nature of suicides in Maharashtra with respect to educational status from 2004 to 2013

METHODOLOGY

The data on suicidal deaths, with respect to professional status in Maharashtra from 2004 to 2013 is subjected to primary and graphical analysis. To examine nature and intensity of suicides with respect to profession during the period of analysis, the different professions were divided into eight categories (Heads) namely, Housewife, Service, Student, Unemployed, Self-employed, Retired persons and Others are scrutinized. The head of Service is further divided into three

sub-heads, they are, Government, Private and Public Sector Undertaking. Similarly the head of Self-employed is divided into four sub-heads of Business, Professional activity, Farming/Agriculture and Others. While examining suicidal deaths with respect to educational status, again eight categories (Standard Heads) were taken namely, Uneducated, Primary, Middle, Matriculate /Secondary, Intermediate/Higher Secondary, Diploma, Graduate and Post-graduate & above.

Suicide Mortality Rate (SMR) is also computed, which is defined as the number of suicides reported per lakh population of a specific year. This rate is universally taken as a realistic indicator since it balances the effect of growth in population. To ascertain the growth of suicides under various heads of professional status, during the period of analysis, average annual compound growth rates were computed.

DISCUSSION

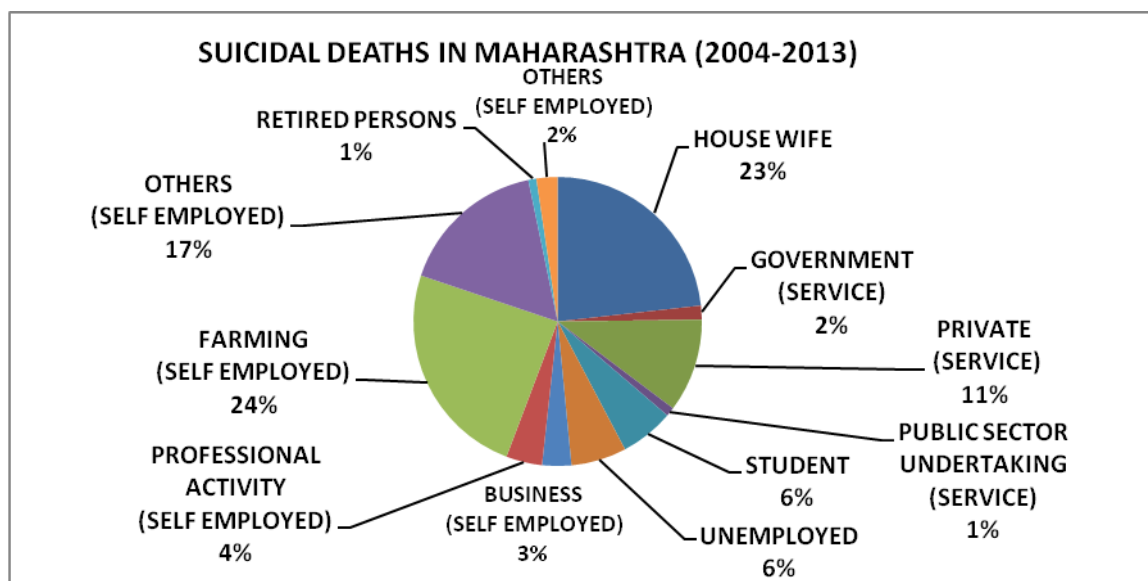
Suicides in India with respect to professional status (2004-2013)

Clearly shown in table 1 given in appendix that suicidal deaths in Maharashtra have ascended from 14729 in 2004 to 16622 in 2013 at an A.A.C.G.R. of 1.30 %, indicating a rising trend. Suicide Mortality Rate (S.M.R.) is sufficiently high, which varies between the range of 13.15 to 14.82, highest being S.M.R. which is defined as the number of suicidal deaths reported per lakh of population, which is universally taken as a realistic indicator since it balances the effect of growth in population.

Among the various professions, highest number of suicides during the period of analysis (2004-2013) in Maharashtra is by self employed persons collectively constituting 72939 and experiencing an A.A.C.G.R. of 0.58%. Among the self employed, Farmers (36848) had the maximum number of suicides followed by Others (25053), Professionals (6106) and Businessmen (4932). The trend of suicides is negative for farmers which has reduced from 4147 deaths in 2004 to 3146 in 2013, where as it is positive for rest of them.

The problem of farmer suicides has been severe across large swathes of the country and specifically in Maharashtra state. It calls for immediate and well planned policy interventions (Mishra, 2006). Farmer reeling under debts, frequent droughts, crop failure, and non-realization of prices for agricultural products are some of the reasons which drive farmers to take the extreme step (Biswas, 2015). Between 1995 and 2014, more than 300,000 farmers – cultivators and agricultural labourers – have committed suicide in India. That is roughly equivalent to a staggering figure of one farmer suicide every 30 minutes. (Basu, Das & Mishra, 2016) The phenomenon of suicide by farmers, on such a large scale, is especially worrisome for India because the majority of the workforce is still dependent on agriculture for its livelihood. According to data from the latest census in 2011, about

55% of Indian workers were employed in agriculture, either as cultivators or as agricultural labourers (Basu, Das & Mishra, 2016) Public institutions must step in to provide appropriate cushion to effected farmers, thereby helping them to step out of the vicious circle of poverty.



Suicidal deaths among housewives constitute the second largest head i.e. 35119 during the period of analysis and experienced almost a stable trend, highest being in the year 2006 to the extent of 3653. Indian society in general and Maharashtra in particular is plagued by the social evil of Dowry since a long time, besides high rate of violence against women comprising rape, kidnapping & abduction, assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty, cruelty by husband or his relatives, importation of girls, immoral traffic, indecent representation of women etc. The advent of 21st century has opened many new vistas for women in the country but irrespective of educational and financial independence of women, magnitude of violence against women persists at a large scale. The gruesome repercussion of the violence is sometimes the occurrence of suicides. The increase in incidence of such cases in a society signifies subjugation of women through violent means in the state.

The role of women police is advocated by various studies as they can empathize with the women victim (House wives) and the latter may feel more comfortable in reporting the violence in comparison to their male counterparts. The studies have suggested that greater use of dispute resolution by women police in dealing with domestic disputes could reduce domestic violence. The need of the hour is to modify police training, sensitize them regarding the emerging social issues and overhaul of police system. (Mangai Natarajan, 2006).

Among the servicemen, highest magnitude of average annual suicides is by employees working in private sector i.e. 1579.9, followed by Government employees (236.1) and employees in P.S.U.s.

(151.8) during the period of ten years (2004-2013). Government employees and employees in P.S.U.s. have generally less stressful working life as they are covered under service security rules, having fixed number of working hours and almost certain annual salary increments and other emoluments. Private sector employees are always at the discretion of their bosses, who fix huge targets, which remain unaccomplished and above all are mostly underpaid. This causes disturbance in their family life. Some of them who could not cope with the pressure might commit suicide.

Average annual suicides by students are 909.3, which constitute about 6% of total suicides. Pressure of studies and race for high percentage to secure seats in reputed professional colleges and then to earn hefty pay packages put undue stress in their lives. Some who fail to fulfil the aspirations of their parents and other family members get frustrated in life and may get into depression and resort to drugs. Easy availability of narcotic substances due to drug trafficking across the international border, frustration due to unfulfilled high aspirations, peer pressure and negative influence of a family member are primary reasons for rising trend in consumption of drugs in the state. It is an alarming situation, which pose a huge threat for the vulnerable youth. Rural youth are particularly susceptible to the influence of this evil.

The police department can play an important role in curbing the worsening scenario. It can launch an awareness drive with N.G.O.s. and civil society members and distribute literature highlighting the evils of drug abuse among the rural youth. The drug mafia which is flourishing in the state can be tethered in by effective and ethical policing only.

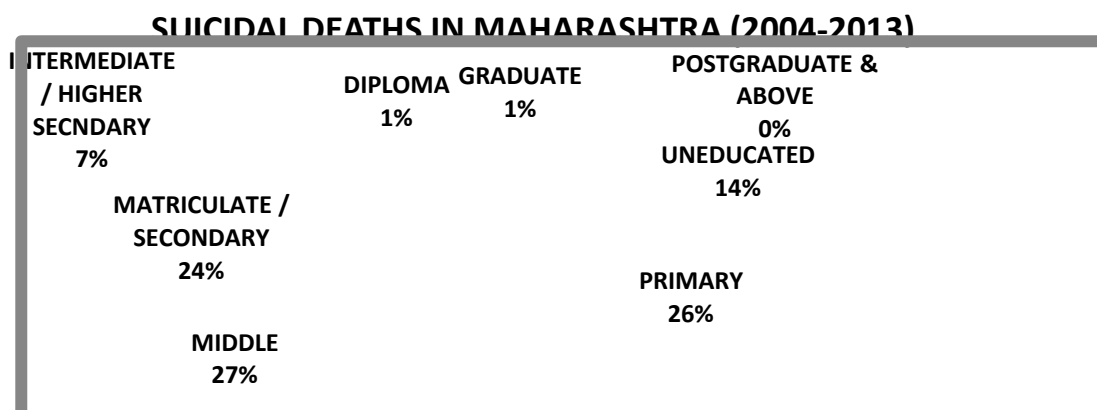
The suicides committed by unemployed people i.e. 9382 constitute roughly 6% to total suicidal deaths in Maharashtra during the period of analysis (2004-2013) having AACGR of -1.92%. Unemployment causes severe economic, social and psychic stresses among its victims. Put together, these create an environment that threatens the peace in life of unemployed person, particularly among educated youth who develop a feeling of being left behind or "excluded" from the mainstream developmental activities of the society.

The category of retired person among suicides in Maharashtra with respect to profession has a magnitude of 1368 during the period of analysis (2004-2013) with A.A.C.G.R. of 1.14%. In such cases even social isolation or loneliness leads to mental health conditions and negative feelings or even suicide. Humans are social animals and when they are isolated due to circumstances they feel lonely.

Suicides in India with respect to educational status (2004-2013)

Clearly shown in table 2 given in the appendix that suicidal deaths with respect to educational status for the period of analysis (2004-2013) is highest by people having middle standard education to the

extent of 40830, followed by primary standard (40589), matriculate/secondary (36492) and uneducated people (20804). Collectively these four heads constitute 91% of total suicides in Maharashtra. Education less than intermediate/higher secondary restrains their prospects for finding jobs in private, as well as public sector. Whatever menial jobs even if they manage to get will not be much rewarding. Unemployment leads to lower living standards, high degree of income inequality and poverty.



Highest A.A.C.G.R. during these ten years is experienced in case of people with graduate degree (6.69%) followed by diploma holders and above (6.02). Though these people with highest education degrees constitute only about 2 percent of total suicidal deaths but surprisingly there is rising trend since 2004, possible out of frustration and depression for not getting jobs which match to their education and aspirations.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded from the study that intensity of suicides is quite high in Maharashtra. Among various professions, suicidal deaths by self-employed constitute about forty percent of total suicidal deaths in India, followed by the head of house wife (19%). Effective healthcare setup, war against drugs, overhaul police training & sensitize them regarding the emerging social issues, role of N.G.Os. and civil society can contribute profoundly in reducing magnitude of suicidal deaths. The problem of farmer suicides has become severe across large swatches of the country, and calls for immediate and well planned multi-dimensional policy interventions in order to provide appropriate cushion to effected farmers, thereby helping them to step out of the vicious circle of poverty. Creation of employment opportunities, easy finance facilities for self employed, business persons and professionals, timely & appropriate counseling of students and elderly persons can save many valuable lives.

The four educational heads of middle, primary and matriculate and uneducated people constitute 91% of total suicides in India. Illiteracy is the foremost hurdle in the path of economic development.

Large sized working population can turn into demographic dividend only if it is sufficiently educated and skilled. Vocational training and education is of paramount importance in the present scenario in India. Moreover it is a pre-requisite for peaceful existence and public order.

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APPENDICES**TABLE 1: SUICIDES IN MAHARASHTRA WITH RESPECT TO PROFESSION (2004-2013)**

PROFESSION \ YEAR	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL	AVERAGE	A.A.C.G.R.
HOUSE WIFE	3501	3582	3653	3563	3384	3383	3639	3716	3350	3348	35119	3511.9	-0.43
SERVICE	2021	2024	878	1951	2006	1047	2187	2215	2675	2674	19678	1967.8	5.20
• GOVERNMENT	244	300	482	226	157	154	183	195	189	231	2361	236.1	-5.25
• PRIVATE	1614	1606	267	1590	1653	730	1857	1934	2264	2284	15799	1579.9	4.78
• PUBLIC SECTOR • UNDERTAKING	163	118	129	135	196	163	147	86	222	159	1518	151.8	1.37
STUDENT	959	784	882	793	757	812	1056	988	921	1141	9093	909.3	2.57
UNEMPLOYED	1078	1029	944	1039	873	873	908	658	964	1016	9382	938.2	-1.92
SELF EMPLOYED	7126	6743	7624	7639	7030	6684	7660	7709	7154	7570	72939	7293.9	0.58
• BUSINESS	532	390	491	444	469	419	445	610	577	555	4932	493.2	2.58
• PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY	319	393	709	747	540	630	1123	786	429	430	6106	610.6	3.19
• FARMING / AGRICULTURE	4147	3926	4453	4238	3802	2872	3141	3337	3786	3146	36848	3684.8	-3.19
• OTHERS	2128	2034	1971	2210	2219	2763	2951	2976	2362	3439	25053	2505.3	5.29
RETIRED PERSONS	123	121	140	163	133	136	117	147	146	142	1368	136.8	1.14
OTHERS	89	143	252	36	191	365	349	514	902	731	3572	357.2	29.67
TOTAL	14729	14426	15494	15184	14374	14300	15916	15947	16112	16622	153104	15310.4	1.30
SUICIDE MORTALITY RATE	14.47	13.98	14.82	14.33	13.39	13.15	14.46	14.19	14.05	14.30	14.11	---	---

Source: Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home, G.O.I.

TABLE 2: SUICIDES IN MAHARASHTRA WITH RESPECT TO EDUCATIONAL STATUS (2004-2013)

EDUCATION \ YEAR	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL	AVERAGE	A.A.C.G.R.
UNEDUCATED	2565	2382	2263	2136	2000	1960	1901	1853	1842	1902	20804	2080.4	-3.49
PRIMARY	4063	3984	4080	4187	4100	3605	4165	4278	4206	3921	40589	4058.9	0.09
MIDDLE	3583	3824	4426	4278	3861	4077	4079	4054	4164	4484	40830	4083	1.27
MATRICULATE / SECONDARY	3329	3058	3384	3266	3186	3279	4247	4140	4245	4358	36492	3649.2	4.04
INTERMEDIATE / HIGHER SECONDARY	926	868	1000	978	965	1043	1131	1256	1209	1433	10809	1080.9	4.90
DIPLOMA	91	118	111	135	91	95	132	128	186	173	1260	126	6.02
GRADUATE	148	156	204	178	149	217	221	212	235	308	2028	202.8	6.69
POSTGRADUATE & ABOVE	24	36	26	26	22	24	40	26	25	43	292	29.2	2.50
TOTAL	14729	14426	15494	15184	14374	14300	15947	15947	16112	16622	153135	15313.5	1.31

Source: Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India, National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home, G.O.I.