

# Constraints and Stress level of Farmers

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**Abstract-** The studies were conducted in Akola district of Maharashtra state to assess the constraints and stress level of the farmers. The survey was based on the 171 farmers from 96 villages. The operational area of the research activity covered the Akola district of Vidharbha region of Maharashtra state. The present study was conducted in 96 villages of Akola district. The villages as well as the farmers were selected randomly. On having completed data sheets through one to one interviews of the respondent farmers, it was subjected to processing to get categorical details on number of farmers under various categorical constraints involving of personal, natural technological and economic constraints.

The results revealed that almost all the farmers were exposed to the varying degrees of the constraints as well as stress levels. Among the various constraints Natural and Economic Constraints were of major concern.

**Index Terms-** Farmers, constrains, stress

## I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has always been celebrated as the primary sector in India. India is an agrarian economy, which means, agriculture is the pre-dominant sector of the Indian economy. True to this, even to this day, in spite of the Indian economy opening out to the world and globalization, close to 70% of the population still depends on agriculture for its livelihood. Despite a steady decline in its share to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) agriculture remains the largest economic sector in the country. The very nature of farming itself is the cause of many strains for farming families. Farming can be an isolating profession, as farmers traditionally work long hours, outside, often in bad weather and alone. An individual whose primary job functions involves livestock and agriculture. A farmer takes all the necessary steps to insure proper nourishment of the attempts that he raises and then sells the items to purchasers. Some farmers have been able to capitalize on the need for high demand products that they produce such as organic vegetable and livestock. An NFU survey in 1999 showed that 62% of farmers were working for more than 61 hours a week. A spokesperson for the Samaritans, which handles many calls from stressed farmers, says: 'There is the fortress farming mentality – work is home and home is work. There is nowhere to get away from it all – nowhere to escape from the same mindset.'

An additional stress for many farmers is the speed of change within the industry over the last 10 years. Now government and EEC regulations have brought with them mountains of paperwork which many farmers find stressful. At the same time, farming families have faced critical public opinion and press coverage in recent years. Caroline Davies, director of the Rural

Stress Information Network (RSIN), says: 'Farmers are at a very vulnerable stage, they are exposed to a lot of criticism, and they do feel that society is against them.'

James Morrish, development officer for the RSIN in the south west, says calls for help have fallen since foot and mouth disappeared. But he still receives between 50 and 60 calls a day from farm workers seeking advice. Isolation is the biggest problem, with economic difficulties and animal health regulations are also causing pressures. A state of stress exists when unusual or excessive demands threaten a person well being or integrity. Extraordinary efforts are needed to master the situation and there is the danger that coping capacities will be overwhelmed with the consequence of disturbed functioning ,pain or anxiety , illness or even death. Stress defined neither by the person (coping resources ego strength etc.)Nor by his reactions (stress responses, but rather by the inter play of the three.)

Stress can originate in physiological, psychological and social condition and threaten the integrity of in its body the personality or the social system. Threat can disturb psychological well being and psychological functioning. Social institutions produce psychological stress.

## II. COPING WITH STRESS IN FARMING

No matter how stressed farmers feel, they can't just call in sick. 'Practically, even if you are in the worst state of stress and shock, you still have to go outside every day, feed the sheep, milk the cows and tend to the animals,' says Brian Warren, a dairy farmer in Devon and a representative of the Farm Crisis Network which helps farming families who are experiencing problems. This culture of just getting on with things can mean that stress goes ignored. And it is not just the farmers themselves who take the brunt of the strain, but also wives and families.

Often, says Caroline Davies of the RSIN, it is the women who make the first move to deal with the situation. 'With the men, the initial problem is getting them to speak. It is women who will pick up the phone and talk when they are under stress,' she says. Many calls to the RSIN come from women worried about their husbands or partners, who just won't talk about things, she adds.

Talking to someone is always the first important move towards coping, The Samaritans advice. 'The burden of uncertainty and distress caused by another setback can be overwhelming. Talking to someone can be the first step forward,' says a spokesperson. There are several organisations dedicated to helping farmers cope with stress and providing stress counselling. Two of those organisations, the Farm Crisis Network and the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, suggest the tips to help farmers cope.

“Often, when we talk about sustainable agriculture, it is sustainable in terms of products and economics not in terms of people”. We would like to see attention given to the sustainability of the people in the agricultural community. The large number of the population of the developing countries comprises small farmers and landless labours. For these farmers who are tied to subsistence levels of living considering their small size of the holding, monoculture cannot increase their income through crop development alone. Many small farmers are faced lots of constrains. The stress level depends upon the constraints of farming.

Some constraints are as follows.

- 1) Lack of electricity and irrigation water.
- 2) Lack of knowledge about improved farm techniques.
- 3) Lack of labour for performing farm operations.
- 4) Uncertainty in farm income due to weather hazards.
- 5) Low price returns from farm produce.
- 6) Inadequate and untimely availability of crop loans.
- 7) Insufficient capital availability.

The most important but not least is debts. In which the farmer takes the birth in debts and die in the same condition. The economic condition in the agricultural industry are a major source of stress for Canadian farmer and their families and affects almost every face/ off farm lives. The stress resulting from adverse economic condition has been ongoing for some time and continues to exist with pervasive effects on farm health and safety. This culture of just getting on with things can mean that stress level goes ignored and it is not just the farmers themselves who take brunt of the strain, but also wives and families.

Unstable and adverse economic conditions with the agricultural industry are not new. For a number of years, Canadian and vidarbha region small farmers have experienced high level of stress arising from a number of sources, including high input cost, low market return, uncertain markets and unfavorable weather conditions. These factors have had an impact on income, debt and asset values in the industry. Farmers perceived debt, addiction, environmental problems, poor prices for farm produce, stress and family responsibilities, government apathy, and increased cost of cultivations. Private money lenders, use of chemical fertilizers and crop failure as the reasons for farmers suicides.

The literature reveals the worldwide condition of farmers. In India, the constraints factors of farmer might be different as they

are in more vulnerable situation. Hence, this study deals with following objectives.

**Objectives:-**

- 1) To find out the constraints of farmers.
- 2) To find out the stress level of farmers.
- 3) To compare constraints and stress level of farmers.

**Methodology:-**

- Locale of the study-The study was conducted in the Akola District.
- 96 villages were selected for data collection in Akola District..
- Research design: An Exploratory Research methods and survey method was used.
- Sample and sampling: Representative samples of 171 farmers from many villages in Akola district were selected.
- Sampling Procedure: Questionarries and interview methods were used to collect samples.

**Variables:** (A) Independents variables

- 1) Age.
- 2) Gender.
- 3) Education.
- 4) Family members.
- 5) Family economic condition.
- 6) Type of land and area of land.

(B) Dependent variables:

- 1) Constraints of farmers.
- 2) Stress level of farmers.

**Tool for data collection**

- 1) Preliminary information was taken with the help of Questionnaires.
- 2) Stress level in farmers was measured with “stress scale tests” by Dr. M Singh.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

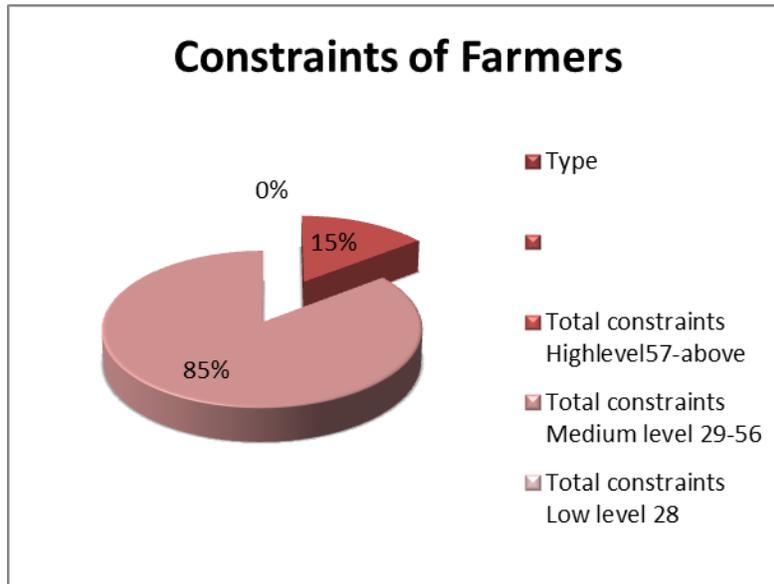
**1) Constraints:** Data on constraints faced by respondent farmers are presented in the following table.

**Table No. 1: Constraints**

| Sr. No. | Total constraints     | Distribution of Respondent Farmers |            |
|---------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
|         |                       | No of Respondents                  | Percentage |
| 1       | High-level (57-above) | 25                                 | 14.61%     |
| 2       | Medium level (29-56)  | 146                                | 85.39%     |
| 3       | Low level (0-28)      | 0                                  | 0%         |
|         |                       | 171                                | 100%       |

The Data presented in Table no.1 indicated the number of the respondent Farmers under different level of constraints. As regards the total constraints, it was further noticed that the highest number of respondent farmers (85.39%) had a medium

level of constraints followed by (14.6%) of the farmers having high level of constraints. No farmer was with a low level of constraints.



1.2)

**1.1) Types of Constraints:** The data on number of respondent farmers on the basis of Types of constraints are presented in the following table.

**Table no. 1.1: Types of Constraints**

| Sr.No.1  | Personal constraints                              |     |        |
|----------|---|-----|--------|
| 1.1      | Less education                                    | 18  | 10.54% |
| 1.2      | Bad habits  | 23  | 13.45% |
| 1.3      | Big family  | 38  | 22.22% |
| 1.4      | Less land   | 77  | 45.02% |
| 1.5      | Sawkar\Private money lenders                      | 15  | 8.77%  |
|          | Total   | 171 | 100%   |
| Sr.No.2  | Natural constraints                               |     |        |
| 2.1      | Adverse weather condition                         | 33  | 19.24% |
| 2.2      | Saline water belt                                 | 78  | 45.61% |
| 2.3      | Non irrigation                                    | 55  | 32.16% |
| 2.4      | Labour problem                                    | 5   | 2.94%  |
|          | Total   | 171 | 100%   |
| Sr. No.3 | Technical constraints                             |     |        |
| 3.1      | Non availability of seeds                         | 45  | 26.35% |
| 3.2      | No. availability of fertilizer and pesticides etc | 40  | 26.35% |
| 3.3      | No transfer facility                              | 10  | 5.84%  |
| 3.4      | No storage & market facility                      | 20  | 11.69% |
| 3.5      | Lack of aware Ness of modern Technology           | 56  | 32.78% |
|          | Total   | 171 | 100%   |

| Sr.No.4 | Economic Constraints         |     |        |
|---------|------------------------------|-----|--------|
| 4.1     | Low annual income            | 35  | 20.49% |
| 4.2     | Low quality of farm          | 20  | 11.69% |
| 4.3     | Low price at harvesting time | 75  | 43.85% |
| 4.4     | Down market                  | 41  | 23.97% |
|         | Total                        | 171 | 100%   |

The farmers are exposed to different types of constraints such as personal, natural, technical and the economical. The data presented in table no. 1 revealed that the low farm holding and the bad habits were major personal constraints. They contributed to the personal constraints to the extent of 45 and 22 percent, respectively. The natural constraints like salinity 45 %, non availability of quality irrigation water 32 % and aberrant weather conditions were of major concern. The technical constraints comprised of the lack of awareness of modern technology and different schemes 32 % followed by the non availability of inputs like quality seeds 26 % and fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides etc by 23 %. The economic constraints constituted the low prices for farm produce 43 % and the market availability 23 %. As regards the total constraints, it was further noticed that the highest number of respondent farmers (85.39%) had a medium level of constraints followed by (14.6%) of the farmers having high level of constraints. No farmer was with a low level of constraints.

**2) Stress:**

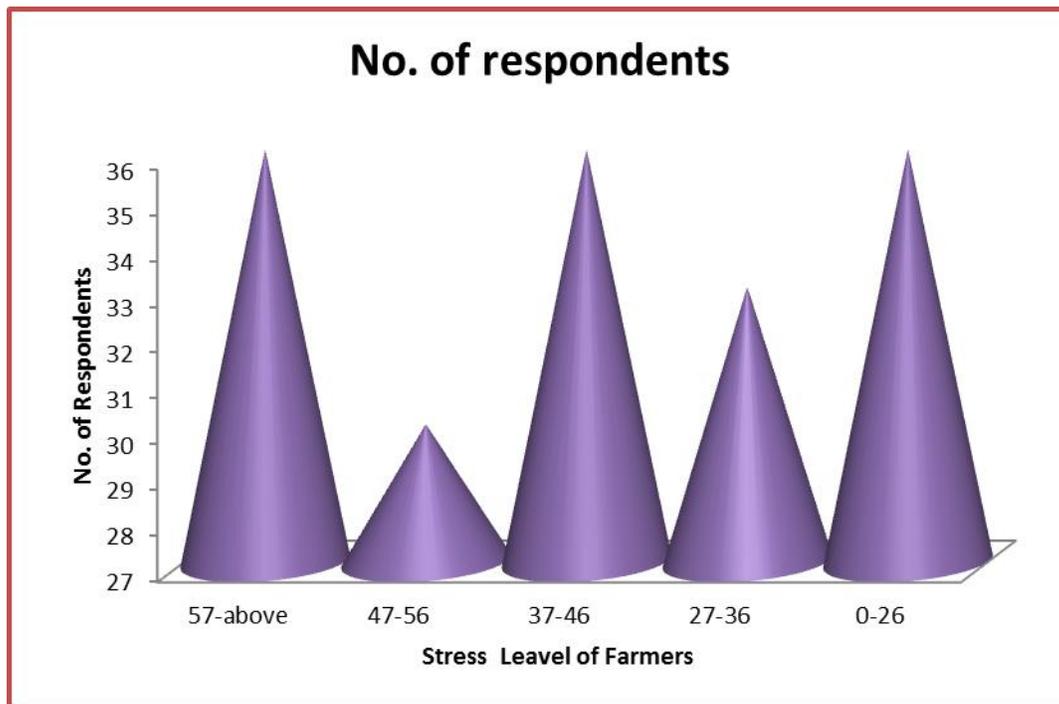
The respondent farmers were grouped in to different levels of stress conditions. The relevant data are presented in the following table.

**Table No. 2: Stress**

The perusal of the data presented in table 2 indicated that 21.06 % of the respondent farmers were under severe stress while 17.53 % faced the high level of stress. The moderate and low stress levels were observed in 21.06 and 20% farmers,

| Sr. No. | Level of stress        | Distribution of Respondent Farmers |            |
|---------|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
|         |                        | No. of Respondents                 | Percentage |
| 1       | 57above (Severe state) | 36                                 | 21.06%     |
| 2       | 47-56 ( High state )   | 30                                 | 17.53%     |
| 3       | 37-46 (Moderate state) | 36                                 | 21.06%     |
| 4       | 27-36 (Low state)      | 33                                 | 19.29%     |
| 5       | 0-26 (Very low state)  | 36                                 | 21.06%     |
|         | Total                  | 171                                | 100%       |

respectively. A few number of farmers >20% exhibited a very low level stress. It is observed from the finding that the level is found in most of the farmers may be in varied severity.



The studies made by Dongare and Deshmukh 2008 also revealed that the farmers suicides in Vidharbha are caused by the

complex interplay of personal political natural economic and technical constraints leading to indebtedness of farmers.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- Almost all the farmers are put under constraints. However, the majority of them (85 .39 %) were found to have a moderate level of constraints while > 14 % exhibited a high level of constraints.
- The personal constraints like low land holdings and the big family size were found to be the major. The lack of irrigation and aberrant weather conditions were the most important natural constraints.
- The low market prices for the farm produce during harvest period appeared to be the most important constraint for the farmers.
- The technical constraints comprised of the non availability of the major inputs like seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides on time. The lack of awareness of modern technology also appeared to be equally important technical constraint.
- The high level and a very severe stress levels were noted in case of 13.45 and 2.92 per cent farm families, respectively

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