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Research Article

Social Support and Suicidal Tendency among Farmers of Dhanowali Village in Jalandhar, India

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Abstract: Suicide is a self-desired act to end one's own life. It is considered a major problem from the social and psychological point of view and sociological, cultural and psychological factors play a vital role in suicide. The main purpose of this study was to find the level of suicidal tendency and social support among farmers. For the same, we selected a sample of 100 people from Dhanowali village. The multi attitude suicide tendency scale (MAST) developed by Orbach and the enriched social support inventory (ESSI) developed by Mitchell *et al.,* (2003) was used for as psychological instruments for the assessment purpose. The obtained primary data was statistically analyzed by using frequency distribution, t-test, and correlation analysis through SPSS 20.0 version. The findings revealed that social support and suicidal tendency significantly differ with respect to family income and family type. Further, it is also reported that there is a negatively significant relationship between social support and suicidal tendency.

Keywords: Social Support, Suicidal Tendency, Farmers, Family Income & Family Type.

INTRODUCTION

Farming is the activity or business of growing crops and raising livestock. Farming is an important activity in India. Agriculture accounts for 17.32 per cent of the Indian gross domestic product. India exports 13.2 per cent agricultural products. Suicide is one of the important issues in India, where more than 10 million lives are lost every year, solely due to committing suicides. Sporadic suicides are a normal feature of every society but a trend of marked increase rings alarming bells. In the last two decades, the suicide rate in the country has notably increased from 7.9 to 11.5 per 10 million attributed to suicides committed particularly by the farmer's community in the country (WHO, 2011). Farmer suicides in India rose to 8,007 in 2015 from 5,650 in 2014, according to the data released by the National Crime Records Bureau of India. It is highly unfortunate that in a country like India, where approximately 70% of the total population is directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture, the cases of farmer suicides are increasing day by day. 11.2% of the total suicides in the country are farmer suicides. Punjab contributes more than 43 per cent wheat and 29 per cent rice (Kaur, *et al.,* 2016). According to data compiled by three universities, Punjab saw 16,606 farmer suicides during 2000-2015. Several factors contribute towards farmer suicides in India and though the government has taken quite a few measures to control the problem, the initiative taken does not seem effective enough. Out of these 16,606 suicides, 87 per cent were due to debt on farmers and 76 per cent by small farmers with landholdings less than 5 acres. Financial problems are a cause of mental health problems among farmers. Farmers go through a lot of stress, anxiety, depression. Farmer suicide is not a new phenomenon. There is evidence of farmer's suicides in USA, UK and even in Islamic countries. However, the current state of farmer's suicide in some parts of India like Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and in Punjab, is unprecedented. The number of suicides by farmers between 1995-2010 has been recorded as high as 2.57 lakh (National Crime Records Bureau, 2011).

The increasing incidence of farmers' suicides rate from 1995 to 2004 can be contextualized with substantive structural, institutional and policy changes from early 1990s, which was associated with declining public investments in agriculture, reducing farmers' access to formal sources of credit, and waning of agricultural research and extension services, among

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others. Between 1995 and 2012, the NCRB reported 284,673 farmers' suicides, which is 13.9% of all reported suicide deaths. From all reported farmers' suicides, 84.6% are males. The incidence of farmers' suicide is higher in the region which is cultivating export-oriented crops. It was found that indebtedness was the main factor behind farmers' suicide in Punjab. Chandalia and Desai (2017) revealed that boys had less suicidal tendency and higher level of self efficacy than girls. Moreover, it was observed that family income had great impact on suicidal tendency. Thatai (2015) unveiled that government always tries to hide the problems and show incorrect data regarding farmers' suicide. Kaur, *et al.*,(2016) suggested that to bring down suicides among farming community, some preventive measures should be taken viz crop insurance, extension services, agriculture credit, contract farming etc. Savitha and Srimathi (2017) investigated on social support with suicidal tendency. The study revealed that there is difference between levels of suicidal tendency like severe suicidal ideation perceives less satisfaction and social support from their social network whereas low suicidal ideation perceives more satisfaction and support system. Batly, *et al.*, (2018) revealed that low socioeconomic, position, social isolation, low intelligence, chronic psychological distress and lower physical stature are predicator in increasing suicide. The study also revealed that psychological stress, personality disposition and bullying are also responsible factors in suicide. On the basis of above revived literature, research selected the topic to investigate the level of suicidal tendency among farmers and highlight the role of social support in minimizing the suicidal tendency. Therefore the following objectives were selected for the present study

Objectives

- To find the level of social support and suicidal tendency among farmers.
- To examine the relationship between suicidal tendency and social support.

Hypotheses

- There will be no significant difference found in social support with respect to family type.
- There will be no significant difference found in social support with respect to income.
- There will be no significant difference found in suicidal tendency with respect to family type.
- There will be no significant difference found in suicidal tendency with respect to income.
- There will be no significant difference found between suicidal tendency and social support.

Variables

- **Independent Variable =** Social support
- **Dependent Variable=** Suicidal tendency
- **Demographic Variables** = Family type and family income

Sample: The present study was conducted on 100 samples selected through simple random sampling technique from Dhanowali village.

Psychological Tools

Multi Attitude Suicide Tendency Scale (MAST)

The multi attitude suicide tendency scale MAST was developed by Orbach was used for the assessment of suicidal tendency among participants. The scale consists of 30 items that are rated on a 5-point scale with responses: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree.

Enriched Social Support Inventory (ESSI)

The Enriched Social Support Inventory (ESSI) developed by Mitchell *et al.*, (2003) was used for the assessment of social support among farmers. This scale consists seven items; first six items have five responses viz. None of the time, A little of the time, Some of the time, Most of the time, and All the time. However the last item has only two responses 'Yes' and 'No' respectively. The scoring for first six statements sore 1 to 5, whereas for seventh statement it is 4 for 'Yes' and 2 for 'No' response respectively. The scale was found reliable through intra class correlation coefficient and Cronbach's Alpha methods and is found 0.94 and 0.88 respectively.

Data Collection

The purpose of the study was to find the suicidal tendencies among farmers. For this, a village in Jalandhar, called Dhanowali was visited and observations were made. Data was gathered by audio recording and note making. Researcher visited houses of 100 farmers and studied their lifestyle and living conditions. The farmers were questioned regarding the issues they suffer and the support provided to them by the government.

Procedure

The researcher had screened these 100 farmers with the help of MAST and ESSI. This was a random sampling for which researchers went house to house for the research. Then the researcher had explained the importance of research work and collected the data after ensuring the confidentiality of them. Each subject was given a questionnaire on suicidal tendency and social support. All were requested to read all statements one after the other and give their responses in the response column by choosing the appropriate responses for each statement, which they felt were, correct and appropriate as per their knowledge. For those who couldn't read and/or write, the questionnaire was explained, translated and filled on their behalf

Statistical Analysis

The obtained data was statistically analyzed by using descriptive (frequency distribution), inferential (t-

test and one way analysis of variance) and correlational (Pearson's product moment method) studies.

FINDINGS

From the table 1, it is found that out of total 100 respondents, 54% are those who live in nuclear families and 46% in joint families respectively.

Table-1:Distribution of respondents with respect to family type

Variable	Sub Variable	Frequency	Percent
Family Type	Nuclear	54	54.0
	Joint	46	46.0
	Total	100	100.0

Table-2:Distribution of respondents with respect to family income

Variable	Sub Variable	Frequency	Percent
Family Income (Monthly)	Below 10,000 Rs	39	39.0
	10,001- 20,000	31	31.0
	Above 20,001	30	30.0
	Total	100	100.0

It is evident from the above table that 39% of respondents are having monthly income below than 10,000 Rs, 31 % are having 10,000-20,000 and 30 % respondents

Table-3 : Mean, standard deviation & t-value of social support with respect to family type

Variable	Family Type	N	Mean	S. D	S.E.M	df	t-value	p-value
Social Support	Nuclear	46	17.04	7.96	1.17			
	Joint	54	23.91	5.29	.719	98	5.14	.000

The average social support with respect to family type was found to be 17.04 and 23.91 for nuclear and joint family respondents respectively. Independent t-test was computed to compare the mean values. The significant p-value (p>.001) infers that social support differs by family type. Further the research indicates that respondents from joint families have higher level of social support than respondents of nuclear families.

Table-4: Mean, standard deviation & f-value of social support with respect to family income

Variable	Family Income	N	Mean	S. D	S.E.M	F-value	p-value
Social Support	Below 10,000 Rs	30	18.80	7.11	1.29		
	10,001- 20,000	31	18.06	8.52	1.53	8.89	.000
	Above 20,001	39	24.38	5.15	.824		
	Total	100	20.75	7.45	.745		

The average social support with respect to family income was found to be 18.80, 18.06 and 24.38 for family income below 10,000 Rs, between 10,001 to 20,000 and above 20,001 Rs respectively. Independent t-test was computed to compare the mean values. The significant p-value (p>.001) infers that social support differs by family income. Further the research indicates that respondents with income above 20,001 have higher level of social support than those having income less than 20,000 Rs.

Table 5: Mean, standard deviation, t-value of Suicidal tendency with respect to family type

Variable	Family Type	N	Mean	S. D	S.E.M	df	t-value	p-value
Suicidal Tendency	Nuclear	54	69.85	15.15	2.06			
	Joint	46	95.43	27.33	4.03	98	5.89	.000

The average suicidal tendency with respect to family type was found to be 69.85 and 95.43 for nuclear and joint family respondents respectively. Independent t-test was computed to compare the mean values. The significant p-value (p>.001) infers that suicidal tendency differs by family type. Further the research indicates that respondents from joint families have higher level of suicidal tendencies female respondents of joint family.

Table-6: Mean, standard deviation & f-value of suicidal tendency with respect to family income

Variable	Family Income	N	Mean	S. D	S.E.M	F-value	p-value
Suicidal Tendency	Below 10,000	39	69.05	13.30	2.13		
	10,001- 20,000	30	87.37	29.37	5.36	9.78	.000
	Above 20,001	31	91.87	25.75	4.63		
	Total	100	81.62	25.03	2.50		

The findings from the table shows that average suicidal tendencies was found to be 69.05, 87.37 and 91.87, for the family income of below 10,000 Rs, 10,001-20,000 Rs and above 20,001 Rs respectively. One way analysis of variance was computed to compare the mean values. The significant p-value (p<.001) reveals that suicidal tendencies differs by the family income of respondents.

Table-7: Correlations between social support and suicidal tendency

	Social Support	Suicidal Tendency
Social Support	1	-.828**
Suicidal Tendency		1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson's correlation method was applied to find the relationship between social support and suicidal tendency. It is evident from the table 7 that social support is negatively correlated with suicidal tendency (r=- .828, p<0.01).

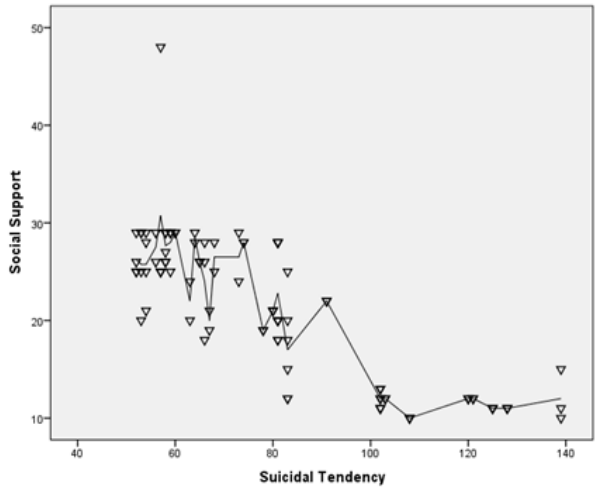

Figure-1: Scatterplot showing the relation between Quality of Life & Suicidal Ideation

DISCUSSION

To achieve the objectives of the present study, the primary data was collected from 100 farmers in Jalandhar by using two psychological instruments namely MAST and ESSI. The present research demonstrated that respondent's social support significantly differs with respect to their family type and family income. Results revealed that those respondents who live in nuclear families are having better social support than those of joint families. Further it is also unveiled that those farmers whose income is above Rs. 20,001 are having better social support than those of having family income less than Rs. 20,000. Further, farmers having family income less than Rs. 10,000 are having better social support than those of having family income above Rs. 10,001. Therefore, on the basis of the above findings, both first and second hypotheses are rejected.

The present research also unveiled that farmers belong to joint families are having high level of suicidal tendencies than those of living in nuclear families. The significant P-value (P>0.001) infers that respondents suicidal tendency significantly differs with respect to their family type. Further, the present research reported that farmers' suicidal tendency differs with respect to their family income. It is found that those farmers having family income above Rs. 20,001 are having high suicidal tendencies than those having family income less than Rs. 20,000. Also, it is shown that those who have income above Rs. 10,001 are having high suicidal tendencies than those having family income below Rs. 10,000 respectively. Therefore, on the basis of the above findings, the third and the fourth hypotheses are also rejected. Similar findings are reported by

The present research also revealed that social support is negatively significantly correlated with suicidal tendencies. Therefore, on the basis of the present findings, it's confirmed that the fifth hypothesis is also rejected.

CONCLUSION

To sum up taking into account the findings of the present research, it is concluded that social support and suicidal tendency significantly differ with respect to family income and family type. Further, it is also reported that there is a negatively significant relationship between social support and suicidal tendency.

Limitations

The present research work on social support and suicidal tendency among farmers in Jalandhar district was conducted under proper supervision and research protocols of Lovely Professional University. The research ethics like originality, confidentiality, debriefing, etc. were made during the whole process of the research. Every possible effort was made to complete the present study in an appropriate manner but still the study has certain limitations.

- There are only two variables taken into account.
- The data collection was a hard process due to the large sample size.
- Data was collected from one village only.

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