



Farmer Suicides in India

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Why in news: 28-year analysis (1995–2023) of **NCRB data** shows that suicides among farmers and agricultural labourers remain **structurally entrenched**, with a sharp resurgence in 2023, highlighting persistent **agrarian distress** in India.

What Are Farmer Suicides?

1 Deaths by suicide among **cultivators and agricultural labourers**, recorded annually by the **National Crime Records Bureau(NCRB)**.

2 Considered a key indicator of **rural and agrarian distress**, reflecting:

- o Inadequate **income security**
- o Limited **access to credit**
- o Crop failure or price volatility
- o Weak **social safety nets**

Trends (1995–2023)

1 **Scale of Crisis:** ~3.94 lakh deaths over 28 years (~13,600 per year).

2 **Regional Concentration:** Southern and western India account for ~72.5% of cases; **Maharashtra** and **Karnataka** are persistent hotspots.

3 **Peak Years:** Intensified post-1995 (after WTO entry), with **2000–2009** as the deadliest period; **2002** recorded the highest suicides.

4 **Crop-linked Distress:**

o Bt cotton expansion in **rain-fed areas** increased input costs and indebtedness.

o Weak **minimum support prices (MSP)** and poor market access exacerbated vulnerability.

5 **Temporary Relief Phase:** 2010–2019 saw a decline due to:

o **MGNREGA employment guarantee**

oCrop and life insurance expansions

oDebt relief programmes

6Recent Reversal: 2023 recorded a ~75% rise over 2022, due to:

oDelayed reporting from **Covid-era backlog**

oFresh shocks from **droughts, crop price crashes**, and inflationary pressures