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Socio-economic and psychological characteristics of distress farmers in Hingoli district

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Abstract
The present study was conducted with specific objective to study the ''Farming Distress orientation Among Farmers In Hingoli District'' for the study from two talukas *viz.* Vasmat, and Aundha were selected purposely on the basis of highly suicide areas of the distress farmers selected for the study from randomly selected Hingoli district and five villages from each taluka were selected randomly. Majority of the distressed farmers were from medium age (60.00%) category, farming experience (73.75%), low annual income (77.50%),education of farmer had secondary school (35.00%), General castes of the respondent is (80.00%), Majority of marginal farmers had small land holding 47.50per cent, Medium size of family 62.50per cent, Joint Family type 73.75 per cent, No source of irrigation facility 45.00per cent, Majority of the farmers had low level of asset possession 57.50per cent, social participation is low of the farmer 56.25per cent, The majority of the farmers had medium extension contact 38.75per cent, Medium level of cropping intensity 83.75per cent, Medium level of economic motivation 57.50%, deferred gratification were found 70.00 per cent in middle category, management orientation of the farmer is middle level 67.50per cent, farmers found in middle level of the indebtedness 80.00per cent, Majority of the farmer engaged in farming and farm labours 72.50per cent. Indebtedness is negative significant. The relationship was significant at 0.05 level. Major causes of farming distress is failure of crops due to drought/ lack irrigation, failure of crop due to insect disease. Indebtedness related causes increase in indebtedness is major region of distress. Major Social causes of farmer dowry and marriageable age of daughter and sister. Farmer suggests that there should be minimum support price for all crops.

Keywords: distress, farmer

Introduction
The growth of agriculture and allied sectors is still a critical factor in the overall performance of the Indian economy. As per the 2010-11 advance estimates released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) on 07.02.2011, the agriculture and allied sector accounted for 14.2 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), at constant 2004-05 prices. In 2009-10, it accounted for 14.6 per cent of the GDP compared to 15.7 per cent in 2008-09 and 19.0 per cent in 2004-05. Its share in GDP has thus declined rapidly in the recent past. This is explained by the fact that whereas, overall GDP has grown by an average of 8.62 per cent during 2004-05 to 2010-11, agricultural sector GDP has increased by only 3.46 per cent during the same period. The role of the agriculture sector, however, remains critical as it accounts for about 58 per cent of employment in the country as per 2001 census (Anonymous, 2011) [2].

Non-remunerative prices for crops, indebtedness and crop failures due to frequent droughts are by and large identified as the core reasons for farming distress. The problem is compounded by the fact that the farm holdings in the country are shrinking in size, production costs are rising and the resource drain from the farm sector is mounting in recent decades. Earlier, farmers in distress might have become dacoits or rebels, but never did we hear that they committed suicides. Rao *et al*. (2007) [6] stated that for the first time in the known history of India, farmers are taking recourse to suicide as a way out of agrarian distress. If farm ecology and economics go wrong nothing else will go right. This is the principal message of the agrarian crisis.

The issue of farmers' 'distress' is a vexed one. 'Distress' is the result of a complex interplay of a myriad issues and risks. Therefore, it will not be prudent to address the issue in isolation of the causative factors. Farmers' 'distress' is not due to indebtedness alone. There are several other factors such as social, psychological, and family related developments that contribute significantly to this. Among the economic causes for farmers' distress, credit related issues normally play a prominent role. It has also been observed that mostly the small and marginal farmers, as well as, tenant farmers and farm labourers bear the brunt of crop failures.

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"Distressed farmer is one, who has suffered psychological shocks due to failure of investment, weather, crop production or markets and which has crippled his ability to meet his financial and other family obligations; and feels humiliated by the castigations of the lenders and, in the absence of coping mechanisms, contemplates/takes the extreme step of voluntarily ending his life" (Anonymous, 2007) [1].

2. Material and methods
2.2 Method of Sampling
2.2.1 Selection of district
Out of eight districts of Marathwada region, Hingoli district of Maharashtra was selected randomly for the study.

2.2.2 Selection of Talukas
From selected district two talukas was selected purposively in which maximum number of suicidal cases occurred in last 2 years (i.e, 2015-16 & 2016-17).

2.2.3 Selection of villages
From selected talukas ten villages were selected purposively in which maximum number of suicidal cases occurred in last Two years (i.e, 2015-16 & 2016-17).

2.2.4 Selection of respondents (distress farmers)
The list of distress farmers was collected by consultation with village leaders/ key informant. From each selected village, eight distress farmers were selected randomly constituting a sample of 80 distress farmers for the study.

2.3 Research design
The design one-shot case study with the ex-post-facto design was used for the present research study.

2.4 Tools and techniques used in data collection
2.4.1 Designing of interview schedule
The interview schedule based on the objectives of the study was prepared for collecting data from the respondents. The schedule consisted of the background information of the respondent along with the components of the management orientation. The schedule was formulated in consultation with the experts in the field of extension education and by reviewing the relevant literature.

While preparing the interview schedule a care was taken to avoid dual meaning questions and contradictory statements. The language of the questions was kept simple for easy understanding. The questions on the various personal characteristics of the farmers having possible correlation with their management orientation and also the constraints faced by the farmer in maintaining their enterprise and their suggestions were included in the schedule.

2.4.2 Pre-testing of schedule
The schedule was pre-tested by interviewing 10 farmers in a non-sampled area against ambiguity and redundancy. In the light of the pretest experience, the interview schedule was modified and used for the data collection after preparing number of requisite copies. The same schedule is enclosed at the end of this dissertation.

2.4.3 Method of collection of data
The data were collected with the help of pre-designed interview schedule by contacting the sample farmers personally. The help of local Leaders, Gramsevaks, Talathies, Agricultural Assistants from State Department of Agriculture and Revenue were taken while approaching the farmers with a view to develop rapport with them in order to get more reliable information. The interviews were conducted during the month of December 2017 and January 2018. On an average the interview of single farmer lasted for about half an hour. The interview schedules were filled in and checked on the same day.

3. Results and Discussion
3.1 Socio-economic and psychological characteristics of distress farmers.
3.1.1   Age

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their age

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Young	15	18.75
2	Middle	48	60.00
3	Old	17	21.25
Total		80	100.00

It was observed from the Table 1 that, the majority of the respondents (60.00%) belonged to 'middle' age category; while 21.25 per cent were in 'old' category and 18.75 per cent were in 'young' category.
The probable reason for majority of the respondents being under middle age category might be due to the fact that most of the young people are not interested in farming and are looking for better livelihood options in urban area. This finding is supported by Satish kumar and Sudershanrao (2004) [7] and Kale (2008) [5].

3.1.2 Farming experiences

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their farming experiences

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	11	13.75
2	Medium	59	73.75
3	High	10	12.50
Total		80	100.00

It was revealed from Table 2 that, 73.75 per cent of the respondents had 'medium' experience in farm cultivation, while remaining 13.75 per cent of the respondents had 'low' and 12.50 per cent of the respondents had 'high' experience in farm cultivation.
The study showed that majority of the respondents had satisfactory experience in farm cultivation. Through this experience, they might have due to the reason that with increasing age the farming experience also increases.

3.1.3 Annual income

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their Annual income

Sr. No.	Category (rs)	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (Up to 51604/-)	62	77.50
2	Medium (51605 to 65746/-)	10	12.50
3	High (69746/-and above)	08	10.00
Total		80	100.00

It was evident from Table 3 that, majority of respondents belonged to low (77.50%), annual income group, Followed by medium (12.50%) and high (10.00%) annual income, respectively.

It was observed that majority of the distressed farmers had low annual income. The probable reason might be due to their source of income is only dryland farming, Similar findings are reported by Hanchinal (1999) [3] and Parande (2011).

3.1.4. Education

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to their Education

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	15	18.75
2	Can read and write	02	02.50
3	Primary school	25	31.25
4	Secondary school	28	35.00
5	Higher Secondary school	07	08.75
6	Graduation	02	02.50
7	Post-Graduation	01	01.25
	Total	80	100.00

It could be noticed from Table 4 that, maximum number of the respondents had 'Secondary school' education (35.00%), followed by 'Primary school' (31.25%), 'Illiterate' (18.50%), 'Higher school' (8.25%) 'Graduation' (2.50%) 'Read and Write' (2.50%) 'Post-Graduation' (1.25%) respectively.

3.1.5 Caste

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to their caste

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	General	64	80.00
2	OBC	04	05.00
3	SC/ST/NT	12	15.00
	Total	80	100.00

It could be seen from the Table 5 that 80.00 per cent of the respondents belonged to General castes, followed by 15.00 Per cent of Scheduled Castes (SCs)/ Scheduled Tribes (STs)/ Nomadic Tribes (NTs) and 5.00 Per cent of them other Backward Castes (OBCs).

3.1.6 Land holding

Table 6: Distribution of respondents according to their Land holding

Sr. No.	Category (ha)	Frequency	Percentage
1	Marginal farmers (Up to 1 ha)	36	45.00
2	Small farmers (1.1 to 2.0)	38	47.50
3	Semi medium farmer (2.1 to 4.0)	05	06.25
4	Mediumfarmer (4.1 to 10.00)	01	01.25
5	Big farmer (10.1 and above)	00	00.00
	Total	80	100

It was seen from Table 6 that 47.50 per cent of the respondents found in small land holding, followed by those with marginal (45.00%), semi-medium (6.25%), medium (01.50%) and no one was found in larger category of land holding.

3.1.7 Family size

Table 7: Distribution of respondents according to their family size

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Small	23	28.75
2	Medium	50	62.50
3	Big	07	08.75
	Total	80	100.00

Table 7 revealed that, 62.50 per cent of the respondents had medium family size followed by small and large family size, with 28.75 per cent and 8.75 per cent, respectively.

The probable reasons behind these findings could be that young and middle age people would prefer to live in nuclear families and old age people prefer joint family. The findings are similar with the findings of Kale (2008) [5] and Parande (2011).

3.1.8 Family Type

Table 8: Distribution of respondents according to their family type

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Nuclear	21	26.25
2	Joint	59	73.75
	Total	80	100.00

It was evident from Table 8 that majority of the respondents (73.75%) had joint family while 26.25 per cent of them had Nuclear family.

3.1.9 Irrigation facility

Table 9: Distribution of respondents according to their Irrigation Facility

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	No source	52	45.00
2	River	01	01.25
3	Well Tube well	25	31.25
4	Canal	01	01.25
5	Other	01	01.25
	Total	80	100

It was observed from Table 9 that majority of the respondents (45.00%) had no access to any source of irrigation. About 31.25 per cent of the respondents were having only open well or tube well as irrigation source. The results revealed that 1.25 per cent of respondents had river as irrigation source and 1.25 per cent respondents had canal source of irrigation in Hingoli district.

3.1.10 Asset possession

Table 10: Distribution of respondents according to their asset possession

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (up to 12946)	46	57.50
2	Medium (12946 to 20950)	23	28.75
3	High (20951 and above)	11	13.75
	Total	80	100

It was Table 10, indicate that majority of the respondents (57.50%) were possessing low level of assets, followed by medium and high level of assets with 28.75 per cent and 13.50 per cent, respectively.

3.1.11 Social participation

Table 11: Distribution of respondents according to their social participation

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	45	56.25
2	Medium	28	35.00
3	High	07	08.75
	Total	80	100

Table 11 indicated that majority of the distress farmers (56.25%) from low level social participation, followed by

medium level (35.00%) and high level (8.75%) of social participation.

3.1.12 Extension contact

Table 12: Distribution of respondents according to their extension contact

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	19	23.75
2	Medium	31	38.75
3	High	30	37.50
	Total	80	100

It was noticed form Table 12 that, majority of the respondents (38.75%) had medium level extension contact followed by high level (37.50%) and low level (23.75%) extension contact.

3.1.13 Cropping Intensity

Table 13: Distribution of respondents according to their Cropping Intensity

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (Upto 102)	00	00.00
2	Medium (103 to 170)	67	83.75
3	High (171 and above)	13	16.25
	Total	80	100

It was observed form Table 13 that, majority of the respondents (83.75%) had medium cropping intensity in between 103 to 170 per cent followed by only (16.25%) of them had more than 170 per cent cropping intensity and up to 102 per cent (00.00%) cropping intensity.

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents had cropping intensity between 103 to170 per cent. This may be because of medium land holding among lower farmers compared to large farmers. Another reason might be that large farmers face the severity of labour problem. The findings are in agreement with the findings of Jambhale (2007) [4] and Parande (2011).

3.1.14 Economic Motivation

Table 14: Distribution of respondents according to their economic motivation

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	21	26.25
2	Medium	46	57.50
3	High	13	16.25
	Total	80	100

The findings of the Table 14 indicated that majority respondents belonged to medium level of economic motivation followed by low level and high level of economic motivation. Overall, majority of the respondents belonged to medium level of economic motivation. It could be due to aspiration for high returns from farming to have a high standard of living. The other reason might be that farmers are becoming more and more market oriented to have a more profit. The findings are similar with the findings of Hanchinal (1999) [3] and Parande (2011).

3.1.15 Deferred Gratification

Table 15: Distribution of respondents according to their deferred gratification

0	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	13	16.25
2	Medium	56	70.00
3	High	11	13.75
	Total	80	100

The data in Table 15 indicated that, majority of respondents had medium deferred gratification. This may be because deferred gratification helps to overcome unforeseen circumstances, as farming people have to manage drought situations, market gluts, price fluctuations and other situations.

3.1.16 Management Orientation

Table 16: Distribution of respondents according to their management orientation

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	15	18.75
2	Medium	54	67.50
3	High	11	13.75
	Total	80	100

It could be noticed from the Table 16 that more than 67.50 percent of the respondents belonged to medium level of management orientation, followed by low (18.75%) and high (13.75%) level of management orientation.
The results revealed that the respondents belonged to medium level of management orientation.

3.1.17 Indebtedness

Table 17: Distribution of respondents according to their indebtedness

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	06	07.50
2	Medium	64	80.00
3	High	10	12.50
	Total	80	100

A perusal of Table 17 brought to the focus that, 80.00 per cent of the respondents found under medium level of indebtedness, followed by high and low level of indebtedness with 12.50 per cent and 07.50 per cent, respectively.

3.1.18. Subsidiary occupation

Table 18: Distribution of respondents according to their subsidiary occupation

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Farming+ Farm labour	58	72.50
2	Only Farming	10	12.50
3	Farming +Allied occupation	10	12.50
4	Farming +Business	01	01.25
5	Farming +service/pension	01	01.25
	Total	80	100

It is observed from Table 18 that, majority of respondents (72.50%) were engaged in farm labour for wages earning as a

subsidiary occupation to farming, followed by 12.50 per cent of the respondents were have only farming, whereas 12.50 percent of respondents had only farming as an main occupation along with allied occupation. While equal percentage of the respondents (*i.e.* 1.25%) of them had agriculture as a main occupation along with business and service, respectively.

4. Conclusion
Socio-Economic and Psychological Characteristics of Distress Farmers

In present study it was seen that major causes for farmer distress was failure of crop, increased indebtedness, lack of non-farm employment opportunities and lack of subsidiary occupations.

The issue of farming distress is a vexed one. It is the result of a complex interplay of a myriad issues and risks. Therefore, it will not be prudent to address the issue in isolation of the causative factors. Farming distress is not due to indebtedness alone. There are several other factors such as social, psychological, genetic and family related developments that contribute significantly to this. The study has brought out very important picture of the socio-economic situation of the farmers. The situation reflects typical trend of livelihood, it is characterized by heavy dependence on uncertain price and labour, rainfed farming, lack of non-farm employment opportunities and lack of subsidiary occupations. Farming distress orientation among farmers can be increased by diversifying the agriculture and with fulfillment of basic requirements such as remunerative price, irrigation facilities and a comprehensive policy for the farmers.

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