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Meditation as a solution for psychological challenges of farmers

Dr. Priti Dhankhar

Associate Professor, Department of Home Science, DAV Girls College, Kosli, Haryana, India

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Corresponding Author: Dr. Priti Dhankhar

Abstract

Farmer, the one who own or manages a farm, is the grassroot producer of our bread and butter. Non-farmers only play the role of earning this bread and butter by their purchasing power. All expect the best quality of bread and butter but nobody is concerned about various challenges faced by farmers and their families. These challenge are so intensive that sometimes they force the farmers to end up their lives. Various climatic changes, various graphical reasons related to soil and terrain, financial reasons of increased cost of inputs and decreased cost of outputs affect mental and physical health of agronomist. Low knowledge of technological advancement and processing of raw material are some of the challenges which are very common with hard impact on life of tillers. Lack of education and awareness with limited financial resources also exert pressure over health and nutritional status of farmer and its family, again resulting in poor physical well-being. Size of land is shrinking and demand is increasing and to make a balance, required factors is mindfulness including good decision making power and stability of mental balance so that either the resources can be raised or managed within limits. Present research article deals with following objectives:

1. Identifying various challenges affecting mental well-being of farmer.
2. To locate the solutions to overcome these challenges.

Keywords: Farmers, agronomists, psychological challenges, physical well-being, mental well-being, spiritual well-being

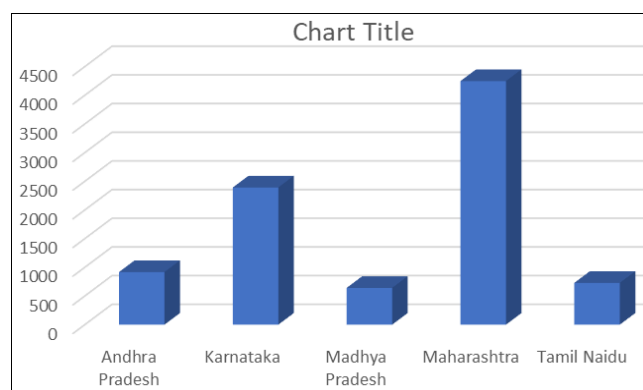
Introduction

No doubt, India's economy is agriculture based, but still the cultivator is facing lots of psychological challenges due to which forced to either leave agriculture as their profession or sell-off their land or hang themselves and end up their lives as an outcome of these miseries. The lands are shrinking from one generation to another as a result, production has been confined. When we identify various psychological challenges, a long list is there. These psychological challenges, impose a psychological pressure over Annadata and his family. One can imagine about standing crop in the field and anxiety of the farmer when sky becomes cloudy. It is totally unwelcomed at that very moment of ripening of seeds. Seeds will catch moisture and discolouration may occur. It will be a financial loss for the family and we know, most of the time, he is the only income generator. Education of family members, marriages of young ones, year wise budget, everything reels in his mind over that moment. One can think about his instant increase of blood circulation which can be fatal for his normal heart functioning or overthinking which can again result in anxiety, depression and ultimate set-back for overall health. High cost of raw material such as fertilisers, seeds, insecticides, pesticides, ploughing, tilling, watering of plants, also increase miseries of farmers. Since, agriculture is not considered as a profitable enterprise nowadays, unemployability of young male family members force them to remain unmarried, again a social issue, darkening day by day. If we talk about Maharashtra, agriculture constitutes

12% of the state's GDP while employing almost 50% of its population, highlighting its significant role in both the economy and employment. It has been the state, worst affected by suicides in farming sector with over 60,000 deaths counted between the period from 1995 to 2013^[1].

According to the NCRB i.e. National Crime Records Bureau, the suicidal cases of farmers are the live proofs of their pathetic situation which is an outcome of various psychological challenges, which are discussed further. Together, the highest five states recorded about 80 per cent of total suicides in the farming sector.

According to NCRB: suicidal cases of farmer in India (2022)



"One farmer/farm labourer dies by suicide every hour in India: NCRB data". 8 April 2024.

Above figure, shows the gravity of suicidal cases of farmers in Maharashtra, followed by Karnataka. According to the NCRB i.e. National Crime Records Bureau, the states with the highest incidence of farmer suicide in 2022 were Maharashtra (4,248), followed by Karnataka (2,392), Andhra Pradesh (917), and Tamil Nadu (728) and Madhya Pradesh (641).^[2] Together, these five states recorded about 85 per cent of farmers' suicides. Almost every farmer now and then faces various down falls in their life. Government should take concern and try to raise such policies which speak out with solutions, so that dignity of Annadata can be maintained. They need a mental boost-up along with solutions. Mindful Ness and meditation can play a crucial role in diluting the situation. The word "meditation" is taken from the Latin word 'Meditari', which means "to engage in contemplation or reflection." It came from the same Greek and Latin origin as a medicine. We can conclude that meditation is a psychological physical and spiritual medicine which guides an individual towards betterment of life. Manocha (2000) described meditation as a discrete and well-defined experience of a state of "thoughtless awareness" or mental silence, in which the activity of the mind is minimized without reducing the level of alertness. The physiological effects of meditation on the human body, including heart rate, blood pressure, metabolism, brain activity, and skin conductance is outspoken. The influence of meditation on mental well-being, encompassing relaxation, gradual exposure therapy, the unearthing of suppressed memories, perception, memory function, stress management, depression, anxiety, sleep issues, and alleviation of stress, is also valued widely. All of these qualities can navigate any victim of circumstances, towards a positive direction of success. A farmer should incorporate these practises which are very generalised, in their day to day life. He has to face a lots of turbulences during his whole life.

Some of these turbulences are discussed below

1. **Poor mental state:** Increased cost of inputs such as fertilisers, tools, seeds, ploughing, electricity, weedicides, livestock diseases and restrained field yield lead to overthinking with an outcome of anxiety, depression, generation of Bunch of negative thoughts resulting in complete mental illness. If meditation becomes a part of day to day living, these extra bunch of thoughts can be filtered, relieving a stress over brain. Increased flow of life force energy, strengthens heart and other organs, release positive hormones, regulate normal pulse and blood pressure, controlling various heart ailments. The ultimate blissful state of meditation, leads to unlimited pleasure, omitting-out the stress related part of any situation.
2. **Climatic challenges:** Extreme rainfall, drought, unusually prolonged or shortened photoperiods, all lead to reduce the production. When the yield is standing in the fields and stormy weather is knocking at the door, could anybody imagine about the gravity of fluctuations of their energy. It can cost their lives. If they are owner of, strong life force energy, which is an outcome of deep meditation, any fluctuation of ecosystem with any type of modulation cannot affect rhythm of their heart. That's why meditation should be treated as "an art of

living for them."

3. **Health-hazardous factors:** a. Fumigants: These sulphur containing or similar compounds consist of aero-soles which may affect the respiratory system as well as the circulatory one and dysfunctioning of related organs. Least of them are aware, how to spray these poisonous fumigants. Deep meditation Dhyana, results in filtering of thoughts, resulting in increased awakening and mindfulness which incline tendency of going with minute details. Mindful farmers with awakening are least affected by such incidences. They will first observe the direction of air, and hold the sprayer in hand opposite to flow of air so that the fumigant will not affect the individual. A meditator always give time to thoughtful alternatives and selection of best one.
4. **Pesticides:** Chemicals, present in pesticides, join the water cycle and enters in human body through food and water. Increased urea, ammonia, and nitrogenous substances in human blood is a result of these chemicals. They exert a pressure over kidneys since they are the blood filtering biological tools. Moreover farmers and their families directly comes in contact with these hazardous chemicals and sometimes proved to be fatal. A farmer should be mindful and awakened enough to keep a distance from such hazardous chemicals. An awareness campaign can help to locate various alternatives of these chemicals maybe fertilisers, pesticides or insecticides. Organic production and organic consumption can be an alternate for it.
5. **Reptiles and insects bites:** Insects and reptiles such as snakes, Scorpions and other reptiles lead to hazardous health conditions and many times cost the life of victims. There should be, readily available mobile facilities at one call, at nearest points, to assist them instantly, to save their lives. Again, requirement of awareness on part of individual itself, is felt so that farmer himself can be beware of such insects and reptiles.

Suggestions

1. **Awareness about the way to incorporate land sustainability**
 - a. **Porosity of land:** Constant use of fertilisers for long time declines porosity of land. Fertilisers accumulates in between the pores of sand particles, resulting in hardness, affecting its capillary action. If some nitrogen fixing bacteria are released at the site, they eat away fertilisers and in return produce biological degradable content which acts as organic manure. In return, it increases porosity of land. They fix nitrogen from atmosphere and also release carbon dioxide as byproduct, both of these gases make the sand porous. Porosity increases capillary action, resulting in transportation of nutrients and good yield is the outcome.
 - b. **Organic manure:** Farmers should be motivated for organic production with least or no fertilisers and manure. High MRP rates, should be allocated to their production. Graceful subsidies should be there, to promote organic production which in return will save

life of individuals, country and nation in whole. A person practising meditative practises always keep their concern towards sustainability. If a farmer plan to donate one green crop to his beloved land then he can behold the concept of sustainability. Ploughing of green crop to the land will increase the nutritional content of the mother earth.

- c. **Promotion of natural nitrogen fixation:** Farmers can be made aware of nitrogen and other nutritional requirements. Fertilisers are not the only source of nutrients for plants. There are number of bacteria, which trap and fix nitrogen, sulphur and other gaseous components from atmosphere. Two kinds of nitrogen-fixing bacteria are identified. The first one, free-living bacteria which are known for their non-symbiotic association, such as cyanobacteria or blue-green algae, Azotobacter, and Clostridium. The second kind, comprised of symbiotically associated bacteria, such as rhizobium, associated with leguminous plants^[3]. Their culture is available in market. They can be spread among the fields. These bacteria will not only increase nitrogen content of the crop as an alternative fertiliser but also increase porosity of the land which is degraded by constant use of chemicals. The yield will definitely increase by these simple techniques.
- d. **Policies for welfare of farmers:** Each and every word, each and every line, each and every paragraph of any policy, drafted for farmers, should resonate only and only with welfare of farmers and their families, not for welfare of, mediators or politicians or high profile businessman so called, industrialists. Any policy should impart independency to the farmers and play its role as a facilitator, not profit snatchers. Locate vivid ways to satisfy their needs not to dig them. They are the real energy producers. No policy should negatively affect their lifeline. Their legacy of ownership should be celebrated not discouraged no matter how much small piece they possess.
- e. **Facilities to enhance their conditions:** 1. Market oriented production: Processed food gives more selling cost when compared with raw material. Latest, tools, technologies and machines are needed to transform raw material into market-oriented production. There must be strong extension work so that the lab technologies can go directly to their fields and their home.

2. **Central facilities:** Small farmers cannot afford highly-priced, machines and technologies. Central cold-storage can conserve and preserve their production, especially perishable ones to elongate life of their perishable food. Such central facilities provided under supervision Villochan increase a feeling of cooperation among users.
3. **Free counselling centres:** They should be established in each and every village, within reach of farmers, to guide them humbly about production to marketing. These counselling centres also helps them to control their stress level in every adversity.
4. **Country made or localise seeds:** Desi seeds as of Neem, Jamun, babool, should be initiated to raise a step towards sustainability. Farmers can be awakened of, importance of their processed products especially values associated with them. For example: oil of *desi neem*, *gond of babool*. Deep concentration always discovers such type of ideas with embedded success.
5. **Organic based small scale Industry:** Industries based on organic production can be initiated into rural belts. For example, car and room fragrance from organic source of lemon grass, lemon, orange, organic drinks of basil, mint, lemon, organic pickles, dried powder of *desi-kachari* or bitter cucumber, protein-rich mushroom powder, nutrient rich *Sahjan* or Moringas, drumstick powder, leaf powder like establishments will increase income of small-scale farmers.
6. **Motivation for valuable cash crops:** Invent such varieties and intermittent cash crops, which are highly paid as of mushroom. Mindful Ness always helps here.
7. **Fixation of elegant MSP's:** Fixation of elegant and handsome MSP's will aid to locate contentment in their profession. MSP of wheat in 1970 was Rs 76/quintal and in 2015, it was Rs. 1,450/quintal and in 2025, it was 2587/quintal. Rate of hike observed is 19 times. In 2025, it was Rs. 2425/quintal. Rate of hike observed from 1970 to 2025 was about 34 times. If we have a look over 24 Karat Gold price hike, from 1970-2025, it was about 538 times. Earlier the farmer can purchase one *Tola* from two quintal but now he has to purchase one *Tola* or 10 gram from almost 38 quintal. One can imagine about his miseries. How to get the girl child married off with such little amount, if he is an owner of a few acres.

Comparison of Rate of hike of wheat and Gold

Item	1970	2015	2025	Hikes
Wheat	76/quintal	1450/quintal	2587/quintal	34 Times
Gold rate of 24 Karat Gold per 10 gram	184/10 gram	26,345/10 gram	99,000/10 gram	538 Times

Ample margin of benefit should be included in minimum support price of the yields, so that the farmer can meet out his basic fundamental needs effortlessly. Government can provide subsidies to meet out the deficient figure, if it exist^[3].

8. **Extension lecturers of successful farmers:** To sustain motivation of this profession, success stories of successful farmers opting for organic production, with respective hindrances and ways to overcome them, should be shared through extension lectures. Their

distinct identification and financial benefits will drag the common farmers towards organic approaches. Awakening of self of farmers will embark their journey towards sustainability and organic production.

Conclusion

Farmers suicidal cases and mental stress is increasing at a faster pace. They are highly influenced by over monsoon, drought, untimely rain and so many other types of uncertainties. More attention is paid to the problems of debt, hyper-commercialization, skyrocketing input costs, water

use patterns, and extreme price shocks and volatility. State policies play a vital role in all of these elements. Policies should be constructed keeping in mind welfare of farmers. A step towards sustainability is one of the another factor to raise their financial resources and to secure their health. Provision of financial help to the farmers, as explorer in field of organic production, will be a turning point for whole society if health and wealth of Annadata is considered. Awakening about crop cycling, role of bacterias in nitrogen fixation, use of organic manure, least dependency over fertilisers, are some of mindful steps, for welfare of farmers. Deep meditation empowers the meditator to filter thoughts, mental and physical relaxation and wellness, soothing impact of internal acupressure, energy balance of various plexus or chakras and blissful state with positive secretion of hormones. Overthinking, low energy level, anxiety, stress related challenges can be sorted out with meditation.

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