

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF STATE RESPONSE TO SUICIDE: AGRARIAN DISTRESS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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I. Introduction

It was only a few weeks preceding the completion of this paper that a massive wave of farmers' suicides struck the front pages of all newspapers and magazines. This wave claimed the most number of lives in Andhra Pradesh, a State which had seen something similar only a few years before. By the time this paper was completed, the media coverage had died down in its intensity. It had ceased to be front page news.

Suicides in general, are an indication that *society* has reached a crisis point. Most of the suicides are, in fact, caused by strong and overpowering forces, which are beyond individuals and rob them of their choice '*to be or not to be*'. This is why suicides are social ills and not just the problem of an individual.

Emile Durkheim, one of the pioneers in the study of suicides, argues that suicide rates are social facts. The 'suicidogenic impulse' is socially determined, that is, it depends on the nature of modern societies and the relationship between the individual and the collectivity. The phenomenon of suicides has extraordinary force, since on the face of it, nothing is considered more supremely individual than the fact of taking one's own life. However, Durkheim takes the position that

*"When an individual is alone and desperate enough to kill himself, it is still ... society which is present in the consciousness of that unhappy man; it is society, more than individual history, which governs this solitary act"*¹

Taking off from Durkheim's theory, the author seeks to use the Andhra Pradesh agrarian distress to show that the causes for suicide are rooted much beyond the individuals' control in the first part of this paper. In the second part, it is argued that the farmers

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¹ Raymond Aaron, "Main Currents in Sociological Thought", 35 (1991).

in India have a right to livelihood, which ought to be protected and enforced. The correlative duty of the State to do so and its consequent neglect has been discussed thereafter. Finally, the paper examines the interface between suicide and the law and what choices the law has made in this regard.

II. Agrarian Distress and Suicide

This section seeks to show that suicides of farmers are not merely isolated incidents but are symptomatic of a larger and more pervasive crisis in agriculture.

The Andhra Pradesh Scenario

The Telangana region; Warangal, Medak and Karimnagar districts in particular, have had the dubious distinction of being in the limelight for the epidemic of suicides by cotton farmers. Between 1997 and February 1998, 174 farmers had taken their lives.² The immediate causes were bad weather and severe pest attacks. The pesticides, which were ineffective against the pests, were effectively used for suicides. Probing further, it was found, that the real reason for the loss of those lives, was severe indebtedness.

Between 14th May and 26th June, 2004, 245 suicides were reported in Andhra Pradesh again. Officials claim that only 126 out of these were farm related deaths.³ On the first day of the new session of the Lok Sabha (2nd June, 2004), eight farmers took their lives; by the end of the session (10th June, 2004), this number had risen to 69.⁴

Thus, Andhra Pradesh has witnessed two massive waves of suicide. The second wave of suicides was distinguished by the fact that it cut across almost all the districts of the State. Whereas the first wave was restricted to the drier areas of the State, such as Anantapur, Karimnagar and Warangal, the second wave has reports of suicides even from the Krishna and Godavari delta areas. This shows that within a space of a few years, agrarian distress has intensified and spread throughout the state.

² G. Parthasarathy & Shameem, "Suicides of Cotton Farmers of Andhra Pradesh", Vol XXXIII No.13, Economic and Political Weekly, Mar 26 - Apr 3, 1998, 720.

³ "Ryots Suicide Toll Put at 126", The Hindu (Hyderabad), 28th June 2004, at <<http://www.hindu.com/2004/06/28/stories/2004062805360400.htm>>, last visited 22nd March 2005.

⁴ P Sainath, "When Farmers Die", The Hindu (Hyderabad), 22nd June 2004 at 16.

The following are the main causes of the agrarian distress:

The increased use of hybrid seeds

The difference between hybrid seeds, and the 'indigenous strain of seeds and variety seeds', is that the former can be used only once, whereas the latter can be used repeatedly. Private manufacturers market the former while farmers themselves develop the latter. The use of hybrid seeds means that the farmers have to buy seeds from private seed companies every year. These hybrid varieties promise greater yields, but the crops are far more prone to pest attacks. Another problem is that the seed- certification process takes about seven to eight years. Therefore, the private seed manufacturers have been allowed to market their *uncertified seeds* under the label of 'truthful seeds' to avoid delays in the launch of such seeds in the market. 'Truthful seeds' are sold on the basis of the farmers having confidence in the company's claims. There is no regulation on the marketing of these truthful seeds. This has caused a tremendous increase in the availability of spurious and sub-standard seeds in the market – a major cause of crop failure.⁵

Increased use of pesticides

The use of hybrid seeds is predicated on an aggressive use of pesticides.⁶ For the pesticide industry, more the pests, more lethal the pesticides used and, therefore, greater the profit margins. As a consequence, pests become resistant to all kinds of pesticides. In Andhra Pradesh, within a week to ten days from sowing of cotton seeds, farmers first spray pesticides, whether pests are present or not.⁷ This only goes to show the persuasive power of the 'miracle spray culture'.

⁵ The Andhra Pradesh State Seed Certification Agency (APSSCA) Officers and Joint Action Committee has appealed to the Government to either abandon the system of self- certification by seed companies (i.e. truthful seeds) or merge the APSSCA with the parent Agricultural Department. "Self Certification by Seed Firms Must Go", The Hindu (Hyderabad), 13th March 2002, at <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2002/03/13/stories/2002031304210400.htm>, last visited 22nd March 2005. It is ironic that the main reason cited for this demand is not that it may result in the flood of sub- standard seeds into the market, but that this system leads to loss of prominence and revenue by the APSSCA.

⁶ In 1987-88, the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh used more pesticides than the entire state of Uttar Pradesh - information from an interview with Dr. Ramanjaneyulu, the Director of Oil Seeds Research, Hyderabad. It is based on his book (in Telugu) on farmers' suicides titled "Who Killed the Cotton Farmers?"

⁷ *supra* n. 2 at 722.

The problem of spurious pesticides has reached titanic proportions in Andhra Pradesh as well as other areas. Bottles are often relabelled to show higher concentration and, therefore, priced more. Inert materials are mixed with pesticides reducing their efficacy. Growth regulators are mixed in the formulations, which give the plants a fresh green look immediately after the spray, creating an illusion of health, in reality, only attracting more pests.⁸

Credit crunch

As co-operative and rural banks close down, rural credit dries up and farmers are driven to non-institutional credit sources, a euphemism for the infamous moneylenders of Indian villages.⁹ The proportion of total bank credit, earmarked for agriculture has steadily fallen from near 18% in the mid-1980s to 10% in March 2003.¹⁰ Scheduled commercial banks are reluctant to operate in rural areas. After the disbanding of branch licensing policy and the grant of freedom to the bank's Board of Directors, as part of the New Economic Policy followed since 1991, the number of rural branches has declined sharply.¹¹ At the same time, there has been no move to strengthen the rural credit system through Regional Rural Banks or co-operative banks. It is interesting to note the change in the nature of rural creditors. They are of two types – the first being the rich landlord who has benefited from the commercialization of agriculture. The second type is the pesticide dealer – the farmers' single source for all agricultural inputs – seeds, fertilizers, pesticides as well as credit. Since the chemicals are easily available on credit, the farmers have no hesitation in availing this source of credit. Once the debt becomes large enough, the farmers are often forced to sell their produce to these agencies, at prices below the market rates to clear their debt. In the establishment of such agencies in villages, there is little or no State regulation or supervision.

⁸ *ibid.* at 723.

⁹ Withdrawal of low interest credit has been a key element of the World Bank led economic reforms. From 1987- 1992, the Reserve Bank of India has reduced credit availability to agricultural sector from 19.1% to 11.7%. A R Vasavi, "Agrarian distress in Bidar- Market, State and Suicides", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XXXIV No. 32, Aug 7-13, 1999, 2265.

¹⁰ "Doubling Rural Credit, But How?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol XXXIX, No. 24, June 12-18, 2004 at 2415. The number of loan accounts with scheduled commercial banks has declined from about 27.74 million at the end of March 1992 to 20.84 million in March 2003.

¹¹ *ibid.* The number of rural branches has declined from 32,981 to 32,137. That is, the closure of roughly 840 branches instead of the opening of 8000 new branches under normal circumstances.

Ecological crisis

There is, on the whole, a mismatch between ecological specificity of the region and commercial agricultural practices. For instance, the model of agriculture followed in Bidar, Karnataka (mostly suited for dry agriculture) draws primarily from the model of agriculture followed in wet regions.¹² The increased use of fertilizers and pesticides results in depletion of soil fertility, which in turn, increases crop susceptibility to pests.

Water shortage

Drought is used as the oft repeated, self-explanatory, inescapable excuse for all problems of the farmers. But it has been increasingly brought to light that water shortage is indeed a man made problem. The farmers depend on bore wells for irrigation. Borewell after borewell is dug but they turn out to be dry because of depletion of ground water. There are villages in the State with more borewells than people.¹³ The deeper the borewell, the more expensive it is. Therefore, the richer the farmer, the more access he has to water. Thus, there is a situation where water tables are now being owned by the rich, because only they can afford to dig deep enough to suck the aquifers dry, to the detriment of small and marginal farmers.

Information Dissemination

There is a gap in knowledge due to the limited contact between agricultural agents and small and marginal cultivators. Cultivators are seen to have integrated new techniques and methods simply by observing others. Advice from Government's staff is a rare sight unlike those of private companies, which are far more regular and accessible.¹⁴ This haphazard knowledge dissemination poses acute problems at the times of crises like pest attacks. Cultivators lose not only a sizeable amount of crop, but also incur large sums of debt.

Crash in World Prices

In the 1990s, global prices of commercial crops, including rubber and cotton were rising. The price-sensitive Indian farmer reacted by switching from food crops to cash crops like cotton. The Government's policy was also to increase exports from the agricultural sector and so unregulated export of cotton was allowed. Three years prior

¹² supra n. 9.

¹³ "What Kills Andhra's Farmers?", *Down to Earth*, Volume 13, No. 4, July 15, 2004 at 16.

¹⁴ *ibid.* at 18.

to 1990-91, 34,000 tonnes of cotton was exported. As soon as the sector was opened up, in a single year, there was more than a ten fold rise, a jump of 3,74,000 tonnes.¹⁵ Towards the close of the decade, world prices started crashing. By 2001, the prices had come down to half the level it was in 1995. In the absence of any Government support, farmers despaired.

The above analysis displays a direct link between suicide and poverty. When suicide is caused by poverty, it ceases to be an individual misfortune; it becomes society's responsibility. In the face of such epidemic proportions of farmers' suicides in India, it is time for the State and the society to introspect. There is an internal conflict between the prevailing economic conditions and the subsistence of the farmer, which needs to be resolved.

III. Right to Livelihood and its Correlative Duty

In innumerable cases, the Supreme Court has reiterated that the right to life does not mean mere animal existence, but the right to live with human dignity. One of such rights that have been read into Article 21 is the right to livelihood. In *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*¹⁶, the Supreme Court held

*“if the right to livelihood is not treated as the constitutional right to life, the easiest way of depriving his right to life would be to deprive him of his means of livelihood to the point of abrogation. Such abrogation would not only denude the life of its effective content and meaningfulness, but it would make life impossible to live.”*¹⁷

There is thus a close nexus between life and livelihood.

The farmers, who took their lives, also had a right to livelihood. *“To the tiller of the soil, livelihood depends on the production and return of the agricultural produce...”*¹⁸ The cause of the farmers' suicides is the systematic removal of their means of subsistence, whereby

¹⁵ “Interview with Prof. Utsa Patnaik”, *The Frontline*, Volume 21, No 13, June 19- July 2, 2004, 22.

¹⁶ (1985) 3 SCC 545.

¹⁷ *ibid* at 572.

¹⁸ *Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd v. Union of India*, (1996) 10 SCC 104 at 120.

they are caught in a trap of complete and wretched indebtedness. This trap was created by the current economic and agricultural policies followed by the State. "...*(I)f persons are forbidden by law from taking what they need to survive and they are unable within existing economic institutions and policies to provide for their own survival (and the survival of the dependants for whose welfare they are responsible)*";¹⁹ it can be said that their right to livelihood and, thereby, their subsistence has been taken away.

As farmers have a right to livelihood, an examination of who had the correlative duty to protect that right and prevent their deaths needs to be undertaken. Fundamental rights are enforceable against the State and the State has the constitutional duty to protect them. According to Henry Shue, "*The complete fulfillment of each kind of rights involves the performance of multiple kinds of duties.*"²⁰ He enunciates three basic kinds of duties:²¹

- Duties to *avoid* deprivation,
- Duties to *protect* from deprivation, and
- Duties to *aid* the deprived.

In the case of right to livelihood, we can analogically extend the above tripartite division:

- Duties not to eliminate a person's only available means of livelihood,
- Duties to protect from elimination of the only means of livelihood, and
- Duties to provide for relief to those whose livelihood have been taken away.

The author proposes to examine whether the Central and State Governments have fulfilled their duties to the farmers or not in the light of the above formulation.

The duty to avoid is a duty not to take actions that deprive others of means of subsistence. This obligation merely requires that, one refrains from actions destructive to others. When the State failed to give adequate credit to the rural and agricultural sector, it was in dereliction of its duty. By doing this, the State has virtually driven the farmers into the clutches of moneylenders and other non-institutionalized credit systems. Another example of its dereliction is the breakdown of public seed distribution

¹⁹ Henry Shue, "Basic Rights and Subsistence: Affluence and the US Foreign Policy", 50 (1980).

²⁰ *ibid.* at 52.

²¹ *ibid.*

systems. With an increasing demand for high yielding variety of seeds, along with the pressures of Structural Adjustment, the restrictions on private sector in seed manufacturing are being lifted. This has led to a decline in public seed manufacture. There is a great mismatch in the demand and supply of seeds. Of the total requirement of seeds in Andhra Pradesh, the public sector agricultural departments, State Seed Development Departments and Oil-fed supply only 20% of the demand.²² Taking advantage of this, the private sector supplies spurious seeds, the consumers of which face a direct crop loss.

The duty to protect entails external enforcement of the duty to avoid. Within this, comes the duty of the State Seed Certification Agency to inspect the quality (germination percentage and purity) of the seeds and certify it accordingly. The presence of the 'truthful seeds' and its quality, is sufficient proof that the governmental enforcement agency has failed in this regard. There exists no regulation on the sale of spurious pesticides as well. The fact that the pesticide dealer doubles as moneylender and charges exorbitant rates of interest is also in dereliction of the duty to protect. The lack of agricultural extension, leading to cases of unsatisfactory information dissemination is another case in point. For example, when the heliothis epidemic took place in Karnataka, the cultivators did not spray their fields with pesticides at the appropriate time (when the pests were in the larva stage) and then resorted to rampant and excessive spraying when the pests were no longer susceptible to pesticides. This, the farmers claim, is due to the absence of agriculture extension personnel in the field and the lack of instructions on how to handle such situations²³ – a clear cut instance of the failure of the duty to protect.

The duty to aid the deprived refers to the assistance that is necessitated as a result of cases of agrarian distress previously described, which could be a consequence of a failure to perform the previously mentioned duties. In the instant case, it is evident that the first two duties have been breached. The Government could have averted the suicides by providing a support mechanism, particularly where crop prices crash.

²² *supra* n. 2 at 730.

²³ *supra* n. 13 at 18.

IV. Suicide And The Law

Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC), provides that an attempt to commit suicide is punishable with one year of simple imprisonment or fine or both. Votaries of individual liberty who think that such a stance by law is absurd, quote J S Mill as saying, “*the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.*”²⁴ Suicide being an act of self-destruction occurring in the private domain does not harm others. Mill is of the opinion that an individual “*cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinion of others to do so would be wise or even right. These are good reasons for remonstrating with him, or entreating him, but not for compelling him, or visiting him with evil in case he does otherwise*”²⁵ (emphasis added). In other words, merely because suicide may not be the morally right way out of things, it does not give society the right to use criminal force against a person attempting suicide.

Section 309 of the IPC is the society’s way of ensuring that an individual does not shirk his/her responsibilities towards it. That is, the society has a claim over an individual’s life. Therefore, it has an interest in preventing suicide.

The question that then needs to be answered is whether such a prohibition that denies a person the right to die violates the right to life guaranteed in Article 21. Justices Hansaria and Sahai from the Supreme Court of India were of the firm opinion in *P Rathinam v. Union of India*²⁶ that Section 309 should be “effaced from the statute book to humanize our penal laws”. The main reason was that, since Article 21 means the right to live with human dignity, it also brings in its trail the right not to live a forced

²⁴ V S Deshpande, “To Be or Not to Be”; (1984) 3 SCC (J) 10 at 10.

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ AIR 1994 SC 1844. Three High courts have also discussed the issue. A division bench of the Delhi High Court in *State v. Sanjay Kumar*, 1985 Cri LJ 931, speaking through Sachar, J. observed that “*The continuance of Section 309 IPC is an anachronism unworthy of a human society like ours*”. The Division bench of the Bombay High Court in *Maruti Shripathi Dubal v. State of Maharashtra*, 1987 Cri LJ 743 speaking through Sawant, J. took the view that this section is violative of Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution. The Andhra Pradesh High Court dissented from this view in *C Jagadesswar v. State of Andhra Pradesh*, 1983 CriLJ 549. The Bench held that this Section is valid because it did not violate any of these Articles.

life.²⁷ A person cannot be forced to enjoy the right to life to his detriment, disadvantage or dislike. Just as the freedom of speech includes the freedom not to speak and the freedom of association includes the freedom not to associate, they say, the right to live includes the right to die.

The Supreme Court later in *Gian Kaur v. State of Punjab*²⁸ considered the same issue and found the 'right to die' construct very problematic. "*Article 21 is a provision guaranteeing protection of life and personal liberty and by no stretch of imagination can 'extinction of life' be read to be included in the 'protection of life'. Whatever may be the philosophy of permitting a person to extinguish his life by committing suicide, we find it difficult to construe Article 21 to include within it the 'right to die' as a part of the fundamental right guaranteed therein. 'Right to life' is a natural right embodied in Article 21 but suicide is an unnatural termination or extinction of life, and, therefore, incompatible and inconsistent with the concept of 'right to life'... The 'right to die', if any, is inherently inconsistent with the 'right to life' as 'death' is with 'life'.*"²⁹ Further, they asserted that the analogy of the suspension of fundamental rights like speech and association cannot be extended to the right to life. The former just requires abstinence, but to exercise a right not to live, requires a positive or overt act. Thus, the analogy does not hold.³⁰

Society, thus, has reacted to the phenomenon of suicide by criminalising it. There has been an increasing tendency to look at suicides as psychiatric disorders.³¹ While this may be true in some cases, it is not always so. However, one must appreciate that the ramifications of both criminalising and *psychiatrizing* suicides are great. Through these two methods, we only highlight the individual agency of suicides. It is true that most suicides are caused due to socio-economic reasons. Emile Durkheim demonstrated with a careful use of statistics that suicidal tendencies had nothing to do with race or climate, which were the popular explanations at that time. He further argued that describing suicides as psychological maladies is to simply supply a new name for a

²⁷ *ibid.* at 1854, para 35.

²⁸ (1996) 2 SCC 648.

²⁹ *ibid.* at 660, para 22.

³⁰ *ibid.* at 659, para 21.

³¹ Emile Durkheim, a famous sociologist who studied suicides in the 19th century dismisses psychological explanations for suicide. He says that the force which determines the suicide is not psychological but social. Raymond Aaron, "Main Currents in Sociological Thought", Vol. 2, 35-36 (1967).

puzzling phenomenon, but not an explanation. His reasoning was that instead of examining the psyche of the person attempting suicide, a nearly impossible task, one should examine his or her group relation with the rest of society.³²

Viewing suicides purely as a criminal offence or a mental disorder indicates a refusal to see the larger picture. Criminalising and *psychiatrising* suicide are convenient ways of placing the onus on the individual rather than the society.

IV. The Varied Responses of the State

The usual reaction of the Government to a spate of suicides is that they are isolated incidents that arise out of an individual's personal problems. This is followed by the payment of ex-gratia compensation to the family of the deceased. The amount actually received by the families is, however, questionable. Ironically, in the State of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, even this practice of granting ex-gratia compensation was stopped³³ because it was believed to have encouraged more suicides. Thus the state has also failed in its duty to 'aid the living'.

Following the latest and most embarrassing spate of suicides in Andhra Pradesh, the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has promised a 'new deal' for agriculture. The Finance Minister and the Union Minister for Agriculture have undertaken to double the availability of institutional credit in the next three years. When the Prime Minister visited the affected areas in Andhra Pradesh, he announced the release of Rs. 60 crores from the Calamity Relief Fund and 1.82 lakh tonnes of food grain for the Food for Work Programme. He declared that the Centre would bring about a new Seed Act to regulate and standardize the quality of seeds and provide a mechanism for penalties for violation of norms. He also declared that steps would be taken to strengthen the crop and livestock insurance and to simplify the drought assistance procedure.³⁴ What remains to be seen is how these promises translate into action in the coming years.

³² James A Glynn & Elbert W. Stewart, "Introduction to Sociology", 36 (1985).

³³ "Plight of Farmers moves Manmohan", The Hindu (Hyderabad), 22nd February, 2002 at <<http://www.hindu.com/2004/07/02/stories/200407020758040.htm>>, last visited 22nd March 2005.

³⁴ Dasu Kesava Rao, "Shocked by Realities, Manmohan Announces Aid", The Hindu (Hyderabad), July 2nd, 2004 at 1.

The new Government of Andhra Pradesh has not been too far behind in promising reforms. As an immediate reaction, the Government waived the dues of agricultural power bills to the tune of Rs. 1,280 crores and announced free power supply to the farming sector. In addition, it provided a relief package in the form of economic support to the families of the deceased. A certain sum of money would be deposited in a joint bank account of the family members and the Mandal Revenue Officer of that area, to be used for farm related expenditure. Moreover, another sum of Rs. 50,000 would be given as a one time settlement to lenders. This package has been made applicable to all those who had committed suicides between 1st July 1998 and 1st June 2004. The Government also proposes to enact a legislation which will fix a ceiling on interest rate at 12% as well as finalise a crop insurance scheme worth Rs. 208 crores. With respect to the regulation of the truant seed and fertilizer merchants, a warning has been issued to them to prevent further mischief.³⁵

V. Conclusion

This paper depicts that poverty is merely one of the many causes of suicides, when, in reality, there are often many other compelling reasons, such as marginalisation, powerlessness, violence and social prejudice which drive a person to take his/her life.

Suicides are usually termed as an individual problem and hence, criminalised to indicate that no person should be able to shirk his/her role to society and get away with it. Reactionaries to this, such as the Hon'ble bench in *Rathinam*, say that a person attempting suicide has psychiatric problems and therefore, needs counseling rather than imprisonment. However, it has been shown that farmers are more in need of state support to preserve their livelihood rather than psychiatric help. Other social groups seek integration into society, removal of prejudice and the freedom to live with dignity. It is not denied that timely psychiatric help would prove extremely helpful in some cases. At the same time, it must be recognised that suicides are more a symptom of the disease in *society* rather than the disease in the 'suicide seeker's' mind.

³⁵ Interview with Mr. N Raghuvveera Reddy, Minister for Agriculture, Andhra Pradesh, in *The Frontline*, Volume 21, Number 13, June 19-July 2, 2004 at 17.

It is interesting to note that there is a historical parallel to the agrarian distress in Andhra Pradesh. During the American Civil War in 1861, the supplies of cotton from the traditional sources like Britain and Europe were cut off. India emerged as a new supplier of cotton and suddenly the global prices for cotton went up, just like in the 1990s. The Indian farmer lost no opportunity in switching to cotton cultivation from food crops, much like today. In order to do so, the money lenders were sought for the required amount of credit. The Civil War ended, and with it, the global prices of cotton crashed. The farmers found that they could not repay their debts to the money lenders, who hastened to foreclose the debts. This led to the Deccan Riots, where the farmers in unison, took on the money lenders, fought against them, attacked their homes and burnt the records. Instead of giving up hope, the farmers chose to attack their most visible enemy – the village moneylender.

It is, perhaps slightly inappropriate to compare the circumstances of the Deccan Riots to those of today. Without doubt, they are vastly different, as are the factors that, in the past, forced the farmers to revolt. However, it can be observed (without in any way justifying the Deccan Riots), that the psyche of today's farmer is indeed very different. What then caused farmers to stand up and fight is now causing them to cower down and die. Surely, there is some lesson in this for our society today!

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