

Farm sector in distress

Karnataka witnessed 2,585 farmer suicides in 2010

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BANGALORE: The fear of losing their land for setting up industrial establishments, as is the case at present in Gadag, is not the only worry for farmers in Karnataka.

The farmers in the State appeared to be a distressed lot even with farm lands in their possession.

Contrary to what the State Home Department would want us to believe, the State Crime Records Bureau's (SCRB) report portrays a dismal picture of the incidence of farmers' suicide in the State. It is on the rise.

Last year, the number of farmers who killed themselves in 2010 in the State stands at a staggering 2,585, according to the SCRB's records. But the home department figures show it to be just 126.

The data obtained by *Deccan Herald* under the Right to Information (RTI) Act shows that between 2006 and 2010, as many as 10,459 farmers committed suicide.

But the home department, in its reply to an RTI query, has put the suicide deaths of farmers for the same period at 835.

According to the SCRB, the rate at which farmers killed themselves in Belgaum district is the highest in the State.

Last year, as many as 408

Who is right?

YEAR	HOME DEPARTMENT	STATE CRIME RECORDS BUREAU
2006	53	1720
2007	254	2135
2008	238	1737
2009	164	2282
2010	126	2585
2011	27*	Not available

*(Till March 31, 2011)



farmers committed suicide in the district, followed by Chitradurga (319) and Chikmagalur (261). Only 22 suicides were reported from Belgaum in 2009, 16 in 2008 and 17 in 2007.

Crop failure

Experts and farmer leaders attributed the appalling Belgaum suicide deaths to the district's total dependency on the sugarcane industry and failure of dry crops last year.

In Chitradurga district, which lacks proper irrigation facility and prone to drought, the picture is equally grim. On an average, 223 farmers have taken the extreme step of committing suicide each year over the last decade. The highest number was recorded in 2010 (319). Though Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa had promised many sops to the farming community, the measures un-

dertaken by his government have evidently failed to arrest the suicide deaths by farmers even in his home district of Shimoga. The malnad district, has recorded at least 150 cases of suicide each year since he assumed charge as chief minister in mid-2008.

Last year, Shimoga, also the home district of ruling BJP chief K S Eshwarappa, reported 175 cases, according to the SCRB.

"There are various reasons for the death of farmers in the State. Acquisition of fertile land for industrialisation, droughts or floods, failure of crops due to various factors and the burden of servicing loans from banks and private money lenders force the farmers to take the extreme step," says Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha secretary H S Basavarajappa.

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