

Alarming rise in ryots' suicides in Anantapur

5 Groundnut Farmers Died In Last 10 Days Alone

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Anantapur: Even as the kharif season has started with the timely rainfall in the drought-hit Anantapur district, the recent incidents of suicides of groundnut farmers are ringing alarms among the agriculture department officials.

Five groundnut farmers have committed suicide in the last 10 days alone over mounting debts and crop losses. The suicide of 60-year-old P Narayana Reddy in Pyadindi village in C K Palli mandal indicates the desperation among the farming community, experts pointed out.

A progressive farmer, Reddy owned 14 acres of dry land near Pyadindi. Unable to clear Rs 2 lakh loans he had taken from private moneylenders to drill bore wells in his dry land, he ended his life by consuming pesticide, a couple of days ago.

Narayana Reddy drilled four bore wells, one after the other, due to sharp depletion of ground water in his dry land. "But, none of the bore wells was of use as there was no water. " My husband had planned to raise papaya and guava as an intercrop along with groundnut. But the failure of bore wells and the mounting debts

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forced him to take the extreme step," wife Subbamma said.

Anantapur is at the top of the heap in groundnut sowing not only in the state but also in the country with the cultivation of 8.5 lakh hectare in the kharif season alone. But with repeated crop failures in the last five years, several farmers have gone into depression. Most of them have ended up in debt traps as they are unable to get loans from banks and other financial institutions.

Premanath, 35, of Eechaledi village in Madakasira mandal committed suicide by hanging himself to a tree in his four

acres of farm land. He was married two years ago and his wife is into her fifth month of pregnancy. Though Premnath took a loan of Rs 15,000 from a nationalised bank in Madakasira, it wasn't enough. He ended up with excessive debts after he took huge loans from private moneylenders in his village.

"He was desperate to save the standing crop. But the crop withered. The increasing loans and crop loss forced him to the suicide," his relative said.

In another tragic case, a tenant farmer K Manjunath, 40, of Kambadur village ended up with a massive debt of Rs 4 lakh. He took loans from moneylenders after taking five acres on lease to cultivate groundnut crop. He could not get loans from the banks either. "With moneylenders pressurising him to clear the loans, he ended his life by consuming pesticide in his village," a police official said.

Two other farmers also committed suicide anguished over moneylenders' pressure and crop losses. Telugu Desam Party leader K Srinivasulu flayed the state government for failing to come to the rescue of groundnut farmers in debt trap.