

## Land Reform

By the term Land Reform, we mean reform of institutional factors related to land. In order to raise agricultural production and also increase the level of income & standard of living of cultivators, institutional factors along with technical factors are playing an important role. These institutional factors include land tenure system, land holding, farming structure, land distribution, intermediaries etc.

In order to attain interinstitutional change in agrarian structure, land reform are considered effective. According to Gunnar Myrdal, "Land reform is planned & institutional reorganisation of the relation between men & land."

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The term land reform has 2 diff senses. In a narrow sense, land reform are considered concerned with those reform related to land ownership & land holding. But in a broad sense the term land reform is used to mean the measures of reform necessary to raise agri production which include reform related to fixation of rent on land, abolition of intermediaries, credit & marketing arrangement etc.

### Need of Land reform -

There is a great need for land reform in a country like India where majority of pop is still depending on agri. Land reform aims to make more rational use of the scarce land resources by effecting the condition of holding, imposing ceilings & floors on holdings so that cultivation can be done in the most economical manner.

Land reform is also a mean of redistributing agri land in favour of the less privileged classes & of improving the terms & condition on which land is held for cultivation by actual tillers with a view to ending exploitation.

### Scope of Land reform -

Land reform aim at redistributing land ownership holding from the view point of social justice & reorganisation

operation holding from the view point of optimum utilization of land.

Besides this there is a host of condition of tenancy; i.e. the right & condition of holding land. Land reform aims at providing security of tenures, fixation of rents, conferment of ownership etc. The entire concept of land reform aims at the abolition of intermediaries & bringing the actual cultivator in direct contact with state. Provision of security of tenancy & rent regulation provides a suitable atmosphere in which the agriculturist feels sure of reaping the fruits of his labour.

Therefore the scope of land reforms can be summed up as follows.

- 1) Abolition of intermediaries.
- 2) Tenancy reform; i.e. regulation of rents, security of tenure for tenants & conferment of ownership on them.
- 3) Ceilings & floors of land holdings.
- 4) Agrarian reorganisation including consolidation of holdings & prevention of subdivision & fragmentation.
- 5) Organisation of cooperative farms.

Basically land reform measures are aimed at alleviating rural poverty in following manner —

- 1) By distributing land among the landless
- 2) By taking possession of surplus land from large land holders.
- 3) By providing security of tenure & ownership right of tenants & sharecropper & by regulating & rent payable by them to the landlords.
- 4) By protecting the interest of tribals in land & preventing non-tribal to encroach upon the tribal land.
- 5) By promoting consolidation of holding. To increase the size of operation holding thereby having the way to raise productivity.
- 6) By development of public land thereby providing better access to the rural poor to obtain fuel wood.
- 7) By providing access to women to land & other productive assets.

## Types of land system - prevailing in India - (before independence)

At the time of independence there were 3 types of land tenure system prevailing in the country. They were -

- 1) Zamindari system
- 2) Mahalwari system
- 3) Ryotwari system

Zamindari System → This system was created by the East India Company when in 1793 Lord Cornwallis entered into permanent settlement with land

lords with a view to increase revenue of the company. In this system the ownership of the land rest to the zamindars or land lords. They own the land & are responsible for the payment of taxes to the govt. The land lord do not cultivate their land by themselves. Rather they lend out land to the tenants & collect the share of the produce of land as rent. The tenant <sup>who</sup> cultivated have no direct relation with govt.

2) Mahalwari System — This system was introduced by William Bentick in agria & aindh and it was later extended to M.P & punjab. In this system the whole village was treated as a unit as far as payment of land revenue is concerned. The responsibility for collecting the land revenue & depositing it in the <sup>the treasury</sup> ~~treasury~~ <sup>of the</sup> village head men are co-shares appointed for the purpose.

3) Roy Ryotwari System — In this system the responsibility of paying land revenue was of the cultivator as individual Ryot himself & there was no intermediate betw him & the state. The Ryot has full right regarding sale, transfer & leasing of land & couldn't be ejected from the land as long as he paid the land revenue. These rights were not available to cultivators under the Zamindari system.

Though the Ryotwari system appears satisfactory on the face of it, it also develops various snags or loopholes. In this case a money lender & mahajans granted loans to cultivators by ~~mon.~~ mortgaging their

land. Soon substantial fraction of land slip out of cultivators and became the property of money lenders & mahajans.

### Objectives of Land Reform

The objective of land reform was to create necessary conditions for evolving an agrarian economy with high degree of efficiency & productivity. The govt define the objectives of land reforms as follows:-

- 1) To remove such impediments to increase in agricultural production as arise from the agrarian structure inherited from the past.
- 2) To eliminate all forms of exploitation & social injustice which in the agrarian system to provide security for tiller of soil & ensure equality of status & opportunity to all section of rural population.

Thus land reforms in India aim at ~~conferring~~ conferring security of tenure, fixation of rent, conferment of ownership etc. Through the abolition of intermediaries & bringing the actual tiller in direct contact with the state. Following are some of the imp objectives of Land reforms in India —

- 1) To make provision for more rational use of scarce land resources. Raise the production level of
  - 2) Raise the prod<sup>n</sup> of agric sector
  - 3) To remove exploitation of ~~poor~~ <sup>poor</sup> farmers by redistributing agric land in favour of less privileged class of farmers and also by improving terms & conditions for possessing land.
  - 4) To promote social welfare for under-represented masses & social justice through equitable distribution of income.
  - 5) To attain rapid development of agric sector on long term basis to raise the standard of living of the rural poor through redistributive ~~packages~~ <sup>packages</sup> & programs.
- Land Reform measures introduced in  
India-

The following land reform measures are introduced in India-

- 1) Abolition of intermediary tenure - By 1954 legislation has been drawn up for the abolition of zamindari system. In reality the goal has been to provide land to the tiller so that no intermediary

interest exist bet<sup>n</sup> a sat cultivator & govt.

1) Tenancy reform → It has been introduced along with following measures:-

a) Fixation of Rent - Diff states have fixed diff rents for this purpose. For eg in Punjab it is  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total produced, In Kerala it varies from  $(\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{4})$  etc

b) Security of Tenure - Govt have promoted such legislation so as to provide security of tenure. This legislation are:-  
i) Prevention of large scale ejectment of tenants.  
ii) Assigning a prescribed minimum area of land to the tenant.

c) Conferring ownership rights:- Provision have been made in several state for enabling tenants to acquire ownership rights on land.

3) Ceiling of the Land Holding:- By ceiling on land holdings we mean the fixation of maximum size of holding that an individual cultivator or cultivator's family may possess. Beyond this maximum size, all land belonging to land lord is taken over by the govt and to be redistributed among the land less.

2) Consolidation of holdings - By consolidation we mean the bringing together one compact block of ~~all~~ plots of land owned by farmers, which is scattered all over the village. Consolidation of holding can be achieved by -

a) Pooling all land in the village into a compact block and

b) Then dividing it into compact blocks among all the farmer in the village.

Some of the important difficulties in the process of consolidation are:-

- i) The farmers are extremely attached to their ancestral land & therefore are unwilling to give up for the sake of consolidation of holdings.
- ii) Those having better quality lands do not like to combine for the fear that they may get inferior holding after consolidation.
- iii) Consolidation is a cumbersome process. The govt officials who implement the scheme are generally slow & often even corrupt.

### Co-operative Farming

According to some authorities as well as the Indian govt, a permanent solution to the problem of small & scattered holdings is cooperative farming. By the term 'cooperative farming' we mean a kind of farming operation where agricultural practices are conducted by individuals on their own holdings with common agencies on their behalf for the collection & purchase of agricultural inputs & also for the sale of agricultural products.

## Features of cooperative farming

- 1) Farmers join the system ~~voluntarily~~ <sup>voluntarily</sup> & not through compulsion.
- 2) Farmers retain their right to land.
- 3) Farmers pool their land, livestock & other implements.
- 4) The entire farm is managed as a single unit & the management is elected by all the members.
- 5) Each & every members ~~are~~ <sup>as</sup> earn a share of the total produce in accordance to their land contribution & labour performed.

## Factors responsible for poor performance of Land Reform - / Evaluation of Land Reform in India -

- 1) Lack of Political will - In the context of the socio economic condition prevailing in the several areas of a country no tangible progress can be accepted in the field of land reform in the absence of requisite political will. The sad truth is that this crucial factor have been wanting. As long as the deep political will is not forthcoming the implementation of land reform will be very difficult.

2) Absence of Pressure from below: Small

& marginal farmer along with land less agricultural farm-workers, who form the majority of cultivating population are unorganised & have not been at a position to press the demand for effective implementation of land reform measures.

3) Administrative inadequacies & the legal difficulties have delayed & even frustrated the implementation of land reform measures.

4) Some weak points/spot in the land reform problem such as - i) complexity & variety in land reform laws in various states.

ii) Lack of integrated approach in the implementation of various majors measures.

iii) Lack of financial support

Thus the very instruments of implementing land reform have turned into instrument of subverting land reforms. The nexus between politicians, administrators & large land owners have

brought the 'rich peasants' power  
into the lime light. Into the These rich  
peasant power dominates the state gov,  
regional & local administration &  
serves as the principle instrument of  
land grabbing & as a strong impediment  
in the implementation of land reform