

LAND QUESTIONS IN NAMIBIA
(1990-2005)

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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INDIA
2006



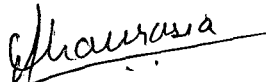
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CERTIFICATE


I declare that the dissertation entitled “**LAND QUESTIONS IN NAMIBIA (1990-2005)**” submitted by me in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.


(Abhishek Kumar Chaurasia)

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



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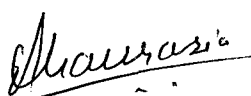
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Acknowledgement

I wish to convey my heart felt gratitude and honest acknowledgement to my Supervisor, Dr. S.N. Malakar, for his constant encouragement, guidance, affection and coordination through out my work.

I am grateful to all our Center faculty members for their support and useful suggestions during my work. I would like to thanks all the members of the central library, IDSA, Exim Bank Library, for their cordial support to collect the data.

I am indebted to Anil Patel and Sapna Agarwal, for helping me to finish my work in stipulated period. I am also thankful to Swadesh Singh, Jaideep Rajak and Jyoti for their constructive criticism and valuable suggestions. I am particularly thankful to Ankit Singhal, Sunil, Sneha, Alvia, Navyata J., Pravin, Sanjay, Aparna and Manoj. I sincerely thank all of them for the help and encouragement


Abhishek Kumar Chaurasia

Preface

This work provides a comprehensive study of different aspects of the land reforms in Namibia between the period of 1990-2005. In the beginning of colonialism, the most resourceful and fertile land was forcibly captured by the German whites and later transferred the controlling authority to the Union of South African regime composed of conglomerates of the whites. The agriculturally productive land was forcibly targeted to bring under the control mostly in central and southern part of the country. This land which was mainly used by whites to settle down and for agriculture were called police areas. Black aboriginals were confined to less productive or arid 24 areas called reserves. Commodity production was introduced to create more and more surplus by exploiting labor and natural resources. In such a situation, new land relationship was bound to emerge which was ultimate reason for the emergence of a conflict situation.

In this conflict land is supposed to be the central problematic factor. It became more problematic when the social group (Ethnic or tribes or classes) were attached with land in various terms who lost their possession of land. South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which came into existence in 1967, fought against the South African occupation of Namibia. The people rallied behind SWAPO on the promise of returning their land to the original owners. But after achieving independence radical land reforms could not be smoothly implemented by the SWAPO government, due to many pragmatic considerations mainly to overtake the fear from among the white masses and to convince them to stay back. SWAPO adapted a more cautious approach of going for land reform through constitutional means by adapting 'willing seller-

willing buyer' policy. By, following this approach, the pace of land reform is painfully slow, as whites are unwilling to part from their fertile farms.

The events which unfolded in Zimbabwe in 2000 once again brought the issue in limelight and social groups in Namibia started demanding for land reforms in a more forceful way. The SWAPO government under new president Pohama is also showing the signs of forcefully and cohesively moving on the issue of Land reforms.

The study is organized around the central themes- chapter-1 provides for a theoretical background of the evolution of the land relations in Namibia in the historical context. It has also analyzed in detail area wise dispossession of blacks (general back ground of Namibia history geography and economy). The chapter-2 provides for the necessity of land reform and typological discourse of land reform which Namibia is following. A detailed analysis of the government legislation for land reforms is also done. In Chapter-3 political and social implications because of the slow pace of land reform and Governments response to it has been discussed. Different forms of conflicts and role of NGO's is also dealt with. In the end based on the arguments of study suggestions for the swift completion of land reform is given.

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

LAND RELATIONS IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES UNDER COLONIAL RULE

Agriculture is the main sphere of material production in all African countries. It is generally recognized that all African countries, excepting the South African Republic, belong to the group of under-developed agrarian countries.¹ Peasants constitute the bulk of direct producers in African agriculture. The share of large capitalist production in the agricultural output is small and what there is belongs principally to foreign companies and European settlers. In the great majority of African countries, the class difference of the peasantry is still insignificant. Agricultural laborers proletarians who have broken all their ties with land are few in numbers. Therefore land relations are linked directly with the vital interests of the vast majority of the population.

All African countries face the urgent task of reconstructing and developing their agriculture. The rapidity with which this task can be implemented depends largely on the prevailing land relations, which may either hamper or contribute to the development of agriculture. Their organization and upsurge of agriculture are organically linked with the general task of liquidating economic backwardness and dependence.

Therefore, the question of providing the direct producer - the peasant with land, and the question of forms of land ownership and land tenure is one of the most important issues.

The problem of providing the direct producer with land has two different

1. Potekhin, Ivan I.(1963), "Land redistribution in African Countries", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*,1,1,PP.39-59

aspects. V.I.Lenin distinguished two kinds of land monopolies, 'the monopolies of land ownership based on property rights' and 'the monopoly of land economy'.² Monopoly of the second kind means that all land is taken up by individual farms, so that the establishment of new farms or expansion of the area of the existing ones is impossible, because of the lack of vacant land.

The African peasantry do not suffer so much from shortage of suitable land, as from colonial enslavement, and from its far- from-liquidated survivals in countries, one of the manifestations of colonialism is inequality in the right to possess land. And here we come to the other aspect of monopoly of land. The monopoly of land ownership based on property right, which is the essence of land relations

The colonization of Africa by European imperialist powers was accompanied by the land expropriation for the benefit of European settlers, mining and plantation companies. The extent of land expropriation in various countries was determined by geographical and socio-economic factors, the character of colonization, and the degree of resistance of the aboriginal population. The peasantry of those countries which were converted into settler's colonies fared the worst. This means in the first place South Africa, and to a lesser degree British colonies in central and East Africa Portuguese colonies, and French colonies in North Africa. It is characteristic to find a tremendous concentration of land ownership in the hands of a small group of big European landlords. In 1947 six percent of the land lords, each having more than 3000 margins (one margent equals to 0.85 of a hectare) possessed 43 percent of the land belonging to European. In addition, there were many small landowners and land less farmers.

In some cases by force of arms, in others by deceit, the European colonists seized almost all the land. By the time South African Union Came into existence in 1910 the African aboriginal population had at it disposal only 7.83 percent of the area

2. Lenin, V.I.(1935), *Collected Works*, V, Moscow, PP.104-105.

of the country, the so-called reserves.³ Enormous masses of peasants are left totally without land; and those who have been driven into reserves suffer from land hunger.

During Apartheid the African peasantry in the South African Republic may be divided into four groups. The first group (about half of the entire population) consists of peasants in the reserves, in most of which communal land ownership was preserved. The second group (approximately six percent of the whole rural African population) comprised peasants, living outside the reserves on land, which constituted their collective or private property. The third group (nearly five percent of the African population) was made up of peasants living on land belonging to missions, Crown lands, and European private land, which was not cultivated by their owners. These peasants lease the land, for which they paid a money rent. The fourth group (about 40% of the entire African rural population) consists of peasants living on farms and plantations owned by Europeans. As a rule big capitalists concerns, where the capitalist hiring system is interwined with statutory labor requirements. The African farm land with an allotment was a typical figure here.⁴

Zimbabwe, like the South African Republic, became a colony of settlers, but there was a smaller flow of settlers to Zimbabwe. In 1956 the population of European descent comprised only 7.8% of country's total population. Nearly 13% of the gainfully employed European population was engaged in farming. About 7.7% of European landowners possessed 52% of all the land belonging to Europeans. On the average, the size of an estate of this group was over 16,000 hectares.⁵

Land of all sorts secured from the aboriginal population of Zimbabwe comprised a little over one half of the country's entire land area. In the first place one must take into consideration the land's economic value. In the opinion of the Zimbabwe research worker B.Y. Mnyanda the reservations 'are absolutely use-less

3. David, A.B.(1960), "Apartheid- A System of Racial Enslavement", in the Symposium, *Race Discrimination in African Countries*, P.36

4. Potekhin, I.I.(1955), *Formation of the National Commune of the South African Bantu*, Moscow, PP.122-138

5. Yablochkov, L.D.(1958), "The Aboriginal Population of British Central Africa", in *Africa's Ethnographic Symposium*, II, Moscow, P.116.

for the purpose of settling there and securing food for local inhabitants, as are deprived of water and fertile lands. The soil there is stony and sandy'.⁶ The best land had been grabbed by Europeans. African peasants were unable to maintain themselves and their families on the land, which was at their disposal. The proof of that was the mass migration to cities and mining centers.

A United Nations report found that 78% of the money income of African peasants in Zimbabwe was earned income not derived from their own farms.⁷ In Zimbabwe two-thirds of the best land was seized by Europeans. The bulk of this land was concentrated in the hands of small group the richest landlords; only three percent of European privately held land was being cultivated. The land robbed from Africans remained vacant, while the Africans suffered from want of land.

Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia are another part of Africa where mass expropriations of land took place. The sufferings of the peasantry in Algeria, where European companies and colonialists owned 2.7 million hectares of the best land⁸, were particularly great. The aboriginal population feels the acute shortage of land, and a considerable proportion of Algerians had no land at all. In 1946 the colonial administration admitted that nearly 500,000 families had no land, by 1956 the number of land less peasant families had grown to 625,000, which comprised approximately one-third of the country's whole aboriginal population. When the independence of Morocco was proclaimed, one million hectares, or one fifteenth of all the arable land, belonged to foreigners. If we take only cultivated land, then the foreigners owned one eighth of it. This included the best maritime land, held primarily by big land-owners (900 of them, who had more than 300 hectares each, owned 60% of all the land seized by Europeans)⁹ In 1949, the foreigners residing in Tunisia had 20% of country's cultivated land (760,000 out of 3.8 million hectares).¹⁰ In 1949 the Italian colonialists

6. Mnyanda, B.Y.(1954), *In search of Truth*, Bombay, P.65

7. United Nations(1954), *Enlargement of the Exchange Economy in Tropical Africa*, New York, P.26

8. Bukhali, L.(1958), "Algeria Belongs to Algerians", *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, Moscow, 32(1), P.64.

9. Ayach, A.(1958), *Results of one Colonisation*, Moscow, P. 182

10. Ivanov, N.A. (1959), *Modern Tunisia*, Moscow, P.41

is Libya had 224,000 hectares of cultivated land. There is very little land in Libya that is fit for agriculture; deserts occupy approximately 98% of its territory.

The Geographical conditions in tropical Africa was less favorable for European settlers. There was little or no permanent European population engaged in agriculture. Kenya with its high mountain area, which seemed to attract the European population, was an exception, there were 46,000 European is Kenya in 1954.¹¹ The European colonialist and companies owned only 7% of all the land, but it should be kept in mind that considerable part of Kenya's territory was totally unfit for human habitation. Land belonging to Europeans was concentrated is a mountainous district, where the majority of the peasant were land less. As a rule, the European landowners in Kenya had been big farmers and planters, exploiting the labor of African peasant dispossessed of land. There were also several vast estates (100,000 hectares each and more)¹² which belong to plantation companies and private persons.

In the former Belgian Congo the European colonialists and companies had 20 million hectares of land, or nine percent of the entire territory. However, their 20 million hectares included some huge agricultural concessions where African peasant, continued to live and work. In 1955, there were 2,865,000 hectares, in Congo under crops, of which the European companies and colonialists owned 399,000 hectares, or 14 percent.¹³

Not enough is known concerning the extent of European land ownership in the Portuguese in their colonies, European farmers and planters. Many African farmers have been deprived of land, but it in not possible to determine the exact number. There is no colony, which escaped land expropriation for the benefit of the colonialists and where the African peasants were not driven off the land, which was theirs since time immemorial. In some colonies all land were declared to be owned by

11. United Nations(1952), *A General Economic Appraisal of Libya*, New York, P.10

12. Ismagilova, R.N.(1956), "The Peoples of Kenya under the Colonial Regime", in *The African Ethnographi Symposium*, I, Moscow, PP. 118-219

13. Martynov, V.A.(1959), *Congo Under the Yoke of Imperialism*, Moscow, P.10

the corresponding Imperialist Powers. This gave the colonial authorities the legal basis for expropriating any land at any time. But in many colonies, particularly in West Africa the scale of land expropriation was comparatively small and has not resulted in any considerable dispossession of peasant land.

Namibia: An Overview

a) Geography

The Republic of Namibia, lying across the tropic of Capricorn, covers an area of 824,292-sq.km. It is bordered by South Africa on the south and southeast by Botswana, on the east and Angola on the north, which the narrow Caprivi Strip, between the two latter countries, extends Namibia's boundaries to the Zambezi River and a short border with Zambia.

The Namibia desert, a narrow plain 65-160 km wide and extending 1,600 km along the entire Atlantic sea board, has a mean annual rainfall of less than 100 mm behind the coastal plain the Great Escarpment rises to the plateau, which forms the rest of the country. Much of Namibia's drainage is interior to the Kalahari. There are no perennial rivers apart from Okavango and Cuando and the Condo, which cross the Caprivi Strip, and the Orange, Kunene and Zambezi, which form parts of the southern and northern borders.

Temperatures in the coastal areas are modified by the cold Benguela current, which altitude modifies plateau temperature. Average annual rainfall varies from some 50mm on the coast to 550 mm in the north. Most rain falls during the summer, but is unreliable and there are years of drought. Grasslands cover most of the plateau; they are richer in the wetter north but merge into poor scrub in the south and east.¹⁴

b) Economy: General Characteristics

Namibia is relatively prosperous in African terms: in 2001 its Gross National Income (GNI), measured at average 1999-2001 prices, was estimated by the

14. Kiljunen, L. (1981), "The land and its people", in Reginald, Green H. et al (eds.), *Namibia: The Last Colony*, Addis Ababa, PP. 23-29

world bank at US \$ 3,520m, equivalent to US \$ 1,960 per head. This compared favorably to the sub-Saharan African regional average, which was US \$ 460 in 2001.

Nonetheless, Namibia's comparative wealth reflects a large and fairly diversified mining sector, producing diamonds, uranium and base metals. Despite frequent drought, large ranches generally provide significant exports of beef and karakul sheepskins. Yet the economy is highly extractive and poorly integrated. About 80% of the goods that Namibia produces are and about 70% of the goods that are used in the country, including about one half of the food, are imported. Furthermore, the relatively high GNI per head disguises on extreme inequality in income distribution. The average income for the white minority is significantly higher than that for the mass of black population. The reason for this imbalance lies in the economic structure that was imposed in colonial times.

Namibia's economy has become more diversified in recent years. In 2001 government services made the largest contribution to Namibia's economy, accounting for 22.9% of GDP, followed by mining and quarrying, which contributed 14.1% trade, restaurants and hotels (also 14.1%), financial services and real estate (13.8%) manufacturing (10.7%), and agriculture, forestry and fishing (9.8%).¹⁵

c) Mineral and Mining

By almost any standards Namibia is mineral-rich. It is the world's leading producer of gem-quality diamonds traditionally accounting for some 30% of total world out put. In addition, Namibia has the world's largest uranium mine, and significant reserves of tin, lithium and cadmium. Namibia is Africa's second largest

15. United Nations (2004), *Economic Survey of Southern Africa 2004*, II, New York P.23-24



Source- Rotberg, Robert I.(1983), *Namibia: Political and Economic Prospects*, Massachusetts: Lexington Books

producer of zinc, its third largest producer of lead and fourth largest source of copper. Other important minerals include hydrocarbons, tungsten, vanadium, silver, gold, columbine /tantalite, germanium and beryl. Under the Minerals (Prospecting and mining) Act, which came into operation in early 1994, the government has taken action to diversify the mining sector.

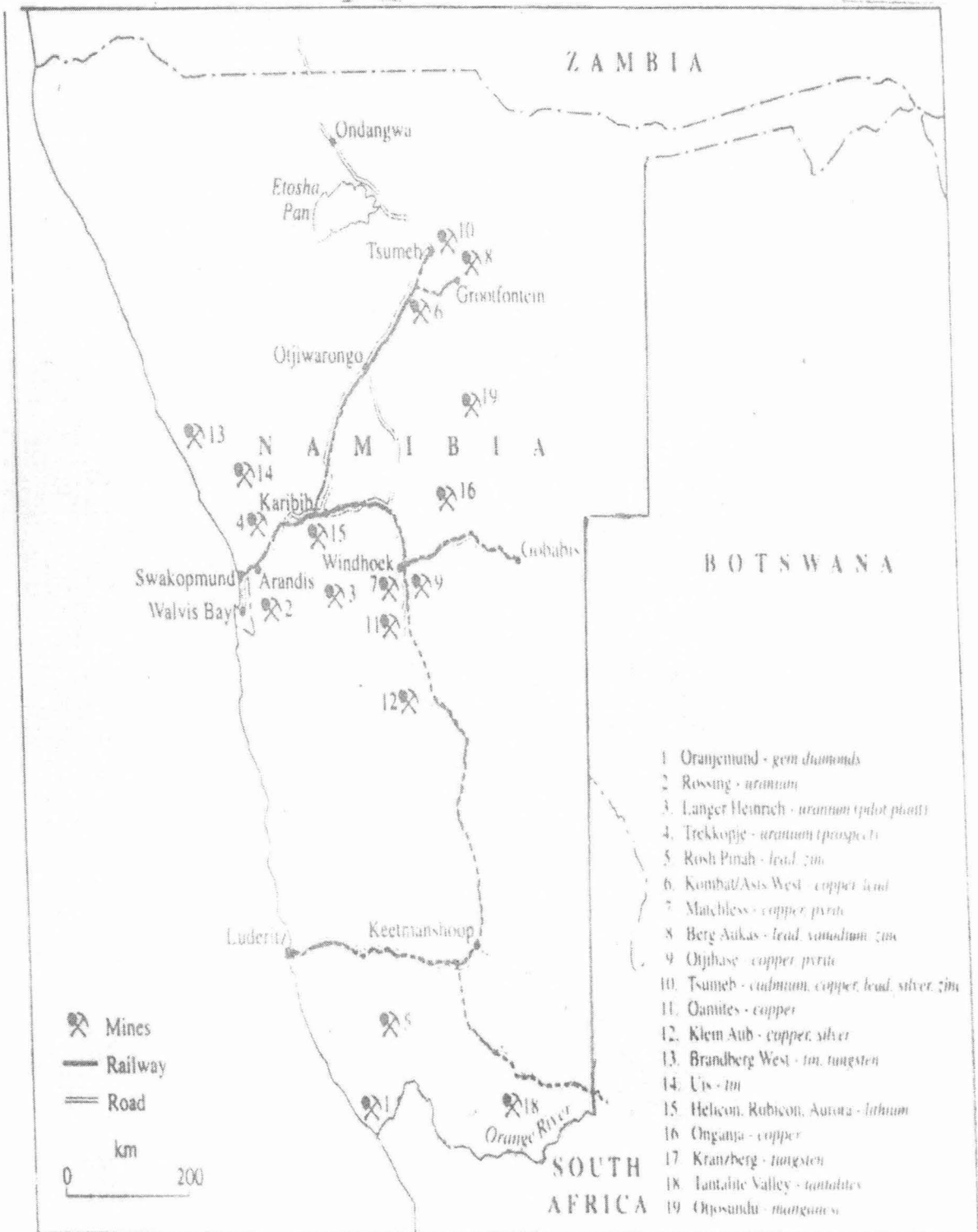
In 1980 mining accounted for about one half of Namibia's GDP, but had declined to 14.4% in 2000. The total value of mineral exports reached R 1,645m in 1986 and totaled R 1,543m in 1988, accounting for 73% of total export earnings. Minerals accounted for an estimated 59.9% of total exports in 1997. In 2001 the total value of exported minerals stood at N \$ 6,179m., accounting for 69.4% of total export earnings, according to provisional figures. In the year 2002-2003 with the relaxation of quotas out-put is diamonds increased up to approximately 1.8m. from 1.5m in 2000.¹⁶

d)Agriculture and Fishing

Drought, over-grazing and unscientific farming methods have an adverse effect on the agricultural sector. The contribution of agriculture and fisheries to GDP, however, increased from 7.3% in 1986 to 9.8% in 2001. Agricultural GDP increased by an average of 2.9% in 1993-2001, with growth in the fishing sector generally offsetting poorer performances in other areas of agriculture. An estimated 38% of Namibia's male labor force were employed in the agricultural sectors in 2000 (a fall from 52% in 1980). Agricultural output increased in 2002 owing to good rains and continued demand from Europe.

Namibia has a fragile, desert ecology; most of the land can support only livestock. The major agricultural activities are the processing of meat for other live stock products, and more than 90% of commercial agricultural out put comprise live stock production. The most important agricultural product is beef (beef production

16. *ibid*, P.44-50



Mineral Resources

Source- Malakar, S.N. (1995), *Land Reforms In Post Independent Namibia : Problems and Perspective*, New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia. Occasional Paper. 12

represents some 87% of Namibia's gross non-fishing agricultural income). Ostrich farming was an expanding sector in the early 1990's, mainly in the south of the country. In early 2000 flooding caused extensive damage to ostrich farms. The only large-scale commercial arable farming is in the Karstveld around Tsumeb, and on the Hardap irrigation scheme in the south. In the southern half of Namibia farming is based on karakul sheep, but international fashion markets for karakul pelts slumped in the 1980's in 1990 the value of exports of karakul pelts was equivalent to only one-half of their value in 1980. The country usually imports about one half of its cereal requirement, but in the drought free years it is able to provide some 70% of local demand. In an effort to diversify agricultural production seedless grape plantations are being developed on the banks of the Orange River bordering South Africa.

Owing to the cold, nutrient rich Benguela current Namibia has one of the richest fisheries in the world. Prior to independence, however, Namibia received no tax or license fees from fishing because the illegal occupation of the territory deprived it an internationally recognized zone within the usual limit of 200 nautical miles (370km). During the mid 1980s, however, persistent over fishing left stocks severely depleted. Following independence the Namibian authorities enforced a 370km Exclusion Economic Zone (EEZ), thereby achieving considerable success in restocking its waters. Under licensing arrangements implemented in 1992, 25 deep-sea trawlers were authorized to fish within Namibia coastal water. Revenue from export of fish and fish products provided an estimated 17.5% of total export earnings in 1997, rising steeply to 28.5% in 1998. Fish stocks have recovered substantially since independence. Namibia's freezer trawler hake fleet has increased to some 70 vessels, three times the number in 1991, while the number of foreign owned ships licensed to fish in Namibian waters has fallen to about a dozen.

The fishing industry is an important source of employment, and there is considerable scope for job creation in the sector, particularly in fish processing. Indeed since independence the number of workers in this industry has increased from 6,000 to 9,000, and the fishing industry could soon replace mining as the largest source of private-sector employment.¹⁷

17. *ibid*, P. 62-64

e)Manufacturing

Namibia's manufacturing sector is extremely small. It provided an estimated 10.7% of G.D.P. in 2001, and consists mainly of processing fish, minerals and meat for export, and production of basic consumer products, such as beer and bread. Food products account for about 70% of all goods produced in Namibia. During 199-2001 manufacturing G.D.P increased, in real terms, by an estimated annual average of 2.2%. The development of manufacturing sector has been limited by fluctuations in the supply of cattle and fish, by the small domestic market, by the high cost of energy and transport, and by the lack of an educated entrepreneurial class. Furthermore, Namibia's traditional dependence on South Africa for most manufactured goods has resulted in the under development of the sector. There are 278 manufacturing firms were mostly located in or near the main urban centers¹⁸.

f)Foreign Trade

Namibia's principal trading partners traditionally include South Africa, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany, Japan and the USA. Exports amounted to an estimated US \$ 1,179m in 2001, while imports amounted to an estimated US \$ 1,472m. In 2001 Namibia sold 48% of its exports (mostly diamonds) to united kingdom, 23% to South Africa, 15% to Spain and 4% to France. By far its largest supplier in 2000 was South Africa (which accounted for 80% of all imports) principal exports in 2001 were diamonds (US \$ 485m), processed fish (US\$ 287m), other minerals (US\$ 156m), live animals and animal products (US\$ 69m), and beverages and other food product (US\$ 80m). Namibia's principal imports in 2001 were vehicles and transport equipment (US\$ 230m), refined petroleum products, (US\$204m), chemicals and related products (US\$ 211m), food (US\$ 122m) and machinery and electrical goods (US\$ 166m). Namibia's visible trade deficit was US\$ 272m in 1997 and US\$ 173m in 1998. There was a trade surplus of US\$ 12m in 2000, but a deficit of US\$ 110m. was recorded in 2001. The current vacant surplus was

18. *ibid* , P.75-78

US\$ 90m in 1997, US\$ 162m in 1998, US\$ 196m in 2000 and US\$ 64m in 2001. Namibia's foreign – exchange reserves reached a record level of US\$ 25m. By end of 1997, an increase of almost one-third on the previous year's level, mainly as a result of rising uranium sales in 1997; reserves strengthened still further in 1998 and 1999 reaching US\$ 260m and US\$ 305m, respectively. At independence Namibia became a member of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). Which in 1992 was reorganized as SADC.

Recent History

The origin of the modern territory of Namibia lies in the protectorate established by the German government in 1884. The present boundaries were demarcated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with Walvis bay initially under order the rule of United Kingdom, then of cape colony and subsequently of the union of South Africa. Following the outbreak of First World War South Africa captured the German colony of South-West Africa (SWA). After the war The League of Nations awarded the South Africa mandate to administer the territory. No trusteeship was concluded with, the UN after the Second World War, and refusal of that organization in 1946 to agree to South Africa's request to annex South West Africa marked the beginning of a protracted legal dispute about the status of the territory. In 1950 the International court of Justice ruled that South Africa did not have to place the territory under the trusteeship system, but could not alter the legal status of territory unilaterally. In 1966 after the International court of Justice had failed to make a substantive ruling on whether South Africa's rule of territory was illegal, the U.N. General Assembly voted to terminate the South Africa's mandate and assumed responsibility for the territory unilaterally¹⁹.

In 1966, after the International court of justice had failed to make a substantive ruling on whether the South Africa's rule of territory was illegal the UN General Assembly voted to terminate the South Africa's mandate and to assume responsibility

19. *ibid* , P.89-93

for the territory; a 'Council for South West Africa was appointed in 1967, and in the following year the UN resolved that the territory should be renamed Namibia. This had no immediate practical effect, however, as South Africa remained in firm occupation of the territory. Another result of the Inter-National court of justice's 'non-decision' was that the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) under the leadership of Sam Nujema, began an armed insurgency in the north of territory. In December 1973 the U.N General Assembly recognized SWAPO as 'authentic representative of the people of Namibia'. A 'contact group' comprising of five-western member of U.N Security Council was established in 1977 for settling the Namibian issue. From April of that year the group held talks with the South Africa government and SWAPO appointed an Administrator-General for Namibia and territory's representation in South-African parliament was terminated. After a lot of international deliberations and conferences and with the active intervention of U.N and United States on 17th June 1985 the South African Government formally installed 'Transitional Government of National Unity' (TGNU) in the Namibian capital, Windhoek, which consisted of a cabinet and a National Assembly A 'Bill of Rights' drawn up by the multi-party conference, prohibited racial discrimination and a constitutional council was established under a South African judge, for an independent Namibia. As the cold war was appearing to be coming to an end, finally pre-independence elections were conducted peacefully in the second week of November 1989 under UN supervision. Their 72 seats in the constitution assembly were contested by candidates from 10 political parties and alliances; representatives of 7 parties and from to were elected. South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO) received 57.3% of all votes cast and won 41 seats. In February 1990 the Constituent Assembly unanimously adopted a draft constitution, which provided for a multi-party political system based on universal adult suffrage, with an independent judiciary and a 'Bill of Rights'. Executive power was to be vested in president who was permitted to serve a maximum of five-year terms, while a 72 member National Assembly was to have legislative power. The constituent assembly subsequently elected Nujema as Namibia's first president. On 21st march 1990 Namibia became independent. The constituent assembly became the national assembly and the president and his cabinet took office.²⁰

Land Settlements and Cropping Areas

The Namibian land set up constitutes three major regions that is north, central and south. Northern region of Namibia is covered mostly by Ovambos and partially by Bushman, Beng, Damaras, Hereras and Boasters are in center and Hattentats are found mostly in the southern part of the territory.

Most of the population (recorded at 1,826,854 at the census of August 2001) resides on the plateau. Figures of the density of population (2.2 inhabitants per. sq. km. at the census of 2001) are misleading, as the better watered northern one-third of the plateau contains more than one-half of the total population and two-thirds of the African population, including the Ovambo (the largest single ethnic group), Kavango, East Caprivians and Kaokovelders. Almost the entire European population (80,000 in 1988, including the European population of Walvies Bay, an enclave of South Africa which was ceded to Namibia in march 1994) are concentrated in the southern two thirds of the plateau; chiefly in the central highlands around wind hock; the capital; together with the other main ethnic-groups, the Damara, Herero, Nama, Rehoboth and colored excluding ports and mining centers in the Namibia and small numbers of Bushmen in the Kalahari, these regions are largely uninhabited.

In Ovambo land Omahangu (kaffirmillet) is the staple crop. Other crops include kaffir corn, beans, pumpkins, watermelons and groundnut. With higher rainfall the Okavango area and the Eastern Caprivi have the highest crop growing potential in the entire territory. The alluvial soils in the terraces of the Okavango River and some of the Okavango River and some of the well-watered sandy loam of Eastern Caprivi favor the Ovambo land crops as well as maize, which are often treated as cash crop.²¹ It is this, northern region that enjoys the largest concentration of agrarian economy.

20. Gupta, V.(1990), "A Century of Struggle Against Colonialism", in Vijay Gupta (ed), *Independent Namibia : Problems and Prospects* , Delhi :konark Publishers, PP.13-31

21. Allison, C. and Green, R.H.(1989), *Political Economy and Structural Change: Namibia at Independence*, Brighton, University of Sussex, PP. 25-26.

The central and southern part of Namibia constitutes the pastoral and cattle economy. There are three major pastoral areas in the territory, the small stock area of the south the large stock or cattle area of the north and east and the area generally regarded as suitable for both small and large stock.²²

Land Relation in Namibia

Pre-colonial Nature of land Tenure system

The agrarian system in pre-colonial Namibia was communal in nature. In pre-colonial Namibia land and agriculture were the main source of livelihood, which was changed by colonial rule, which emphasized mineral economy, which made a crucial difference in material life.

Cattle ownership was very important in Pre-colonial Namibia being an agrarian society. Cattle ownership made people powerful because only they could use more land for production who owned cattle. Class status of chieftains was determined by cattle ownership. However, land use was not made complex in-cultivation. Family was itself a unit of agrarian production where women were the most important factor. Relation between the family land and cattle were also important. Although class formation could be clearly seen in the situations when there was competition for resources like during drought. But as a whole the pattern of production was communal which could not generate surplus value on a large scale & as a result they did not had across the market.²³

Colonial Nature of Land Relations In Namibia

German occupation of South Africa started the process of colonialism the country. In the First World War Germany was defeated and Namibia {South West

22. Ibid, P.28

23. Malakar, S.N.(1995), *Land Reforms In Post Independent Namibia : Problems and Perspective*, New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, Occasional Paper nu.12, P-6

Africa (SWA)} as a former colony was transferred as a protectorate to the Union of South Africa. The Union of South Africa was under British white rule and was guided by the British constitution.

German land policy was one of confiscation on a large scale. German settlers introduced a policy of purchasing land at low prices. The Germans realized that the low prices of land at that time amounted to a tendency for settlers to buy too much land and so an inquiry was made to establish a reasonable maximum size of farm holding. This enquiry was promoted partly by the policy that a district would develop more rapidly the greater the (white) population.²⁴ Under this policy land was confiscated on a large scale. This grabbing of land had an adverse impact on the local population. Revolts and uprising took place on a large scale but they were crushed.

TABLE-1

1. African Natives	31, 40000 Hectares
2. Concession Companies	29,175500 Hectares.
3. The Government (Crown lands)	19, 250000 Hectares.
4. The Settlers	36, 84500 Hectares.
<hr/>	
Total:	83, 500, 500. Hectares
<hr/>	

Source- Malakar, S.N.(1995), *Land Reforms In Post Independent Namibia : Problems and Perspective*, New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, Occasional Paper. 12,P.7

The Table-1 clearly indicates that only 31,40000 hectares of land out of 83,500500 hectares remained in the possession of Africans.

After the German defeat, Namibia comes under the administration of South Africa Union government. In 1927 union government introduced new proclamation (no. 310 of 1927) with a slight modification in the 1912 land for settlement Act. This was applied in Namibia. Land for settlement fell into three.

24. Bley, H. (1997), *Namibia Under German Rule*, Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, PP. 37-38.

- a) Crown lands –land belonging to the crown, which had lapsed through non-fulfillment of the occupier’s contract.
- b) Private land – attainable by private treaty.
- c) Land companies holding which with in the union included a great deal of land.²⁵

The laws and regulations dealing with the settlement and transfer of land varied not only between different government but also to some extent between four provinces of the union. A transfer duty of two percent was charged on the purchase of land. The Land Settlement Act 1912, as amended was the principal enacted in the union. The Act provided for purchase subdivision and disposal of land for settlement purposes and regulated the allotment of crown lands.

The Land Settlement Act of 1912 was amended with slight variations in proclamation No. 310 of 1927. There were two methods where by land in protectorate was allotted. The first was the allotment of crown land i.e. land belonging to the state and second was the allotment in terms of section XI of proclamation No. 310 of 1927, where by the government purchased a private farm on behalf of an applicant who contributed one-tenth of the purchase price and the government nine tenth.²⁶ In the period from 1888 to 1927 the two colonial powers (previously Germany and later South African Union) confiscated a large portion of land from Namibians imposing various land settlement acts. At the time of the first occupation of South West Africa the Germans appeared to have implicitly recognized the right of native tribes to their lands, in so far that it made no explicit claim to ownership of vacant lands. Orders of 1888 and 1892 prohibited unauthorized occupation of land or transactions with natives, thus asserting the control of the state over the creation of new rights. The basis of the German protectorate, however, was a series of land purchases made from native chiefs by ludrity on behalf of the German government which usually covered their entire territory and it was mainly on the strength of there arrangements that the Germans occupied land required for colonialists.²⁷ German settlement was confined to

25. Brown, A. Gardon (1950), *The Year Book and Guide to Southern Africa*, London, P.305

26. *ibid*, P. 190.

27. Harley, L.(1938), *An African Survey*, London : Oxford, P.725.

the control and southern part of territory, Ovambo land and Okavango land in the north were practically unadministered.²⁸

After the mandate, the process of capturing and confiscating the land were accelerated. The government confined existing titles and itself pursued a vigorous policy of settlement up to 1926

Under terms of settlement. Union government found land for settlement of 301 families of Boers from Angola and contributed large sums for their assistance. The extent of colonization was shown by the fact that the Europeans in South West Africa numbered 31,600 in 1935, as against about 10,000 in 1914. The total area of alienated land was 6,293,000 acre of surveyed crown land available for alienation.²⁹ Between 1923 and 1932 eleven reserves, amounting to a total area of nearly 3,000,000 hectares were proclaimed as the White Reserves Areas. About 6,500,000 hectares (16,000,000 acre) in the east of territory, described "Reserved Native Area" were also marked for acquisition by natives in the future. The total area of land held by natives who included certain areas other than the proclaimed reserves amounted to about 16,325,000 hectares (40,339,075 acre in 1936).³⁰ In consequent phases more and more land was grabbed by the government, companies and settlers. More farms were established and settlers were promoted to capture and lease the land to increase the productivity for colonial exploitation. Till 1962 the position of land ownership was as given in table No. 2 and 3. During the colonial period Namibian population was restricted to twenty-four "African Reserves".³¹ Besides this all areas were reserved for whites, which were known as "Police Zones". The following map gives a picture of divided zones in which, we can easily find out the lands held by the whites and blacks.

28. Ibid, P.126

29. Ibid, P.626

30. *Official Year Book of The Union Of South Africa* (1937),Pretoria, P.1156

31. Melber, H. (1986), *Our Namibia*, London, Zed Books, P.43

TABLE-2
Land Ownership

Total area of territory: 82, 347, 841 hectares (1000 hectares =3.86 square miles), comprising land aside for white or non-white use: urban areas: reserve: also desert land.

	1937	1948	1955
1962			
Outside police Zone	30, 101, 000	30, 101, 00	27, 445, 618
Inside police Zone			
desert	7, 164, 860	7, 164, 860	7, 564, 971
Other	45, 025, 000	45, 025, 000	47,337, 252
 White farm lands			
a. forms in private			
Ownership	14, 708, 692	23, 749, 778	25, 828, 653
b. Government farms			
Surveyed	-----	7, 052, 200	261, 594
c. Farms leased to			
Settlers	8, 828, 187	2, 540, 413	10, 967, 166
d. Company (registered)			
farms	2, 077, 331	227, 744	810, 711
	-----	-----	-----
 Total White Farms			
approx.			
Land	25, 614, 210	33, 570, 135	37, 868, 124
39, 812, 000			
 Non- white (African And colored)			

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a. Proclaimed reserves (Within and outside Police Zone)	11, 887, 557	11, 947, 924	18, 630, 597
b. Areas Reserved for extension	4, 225, 800	-----	-----
c. Set areas but not Proclaimed	-----	13, 900	13, 900
d. Rehoboth Gebied Total Non-White Lands	1, 244, 400 17, 397, 757	1, 244, 400 15, 143, 324	1, 244, 400 21, 825, 997 21, 825, 997

Source- Malakar, S.N. (1995), *Land Reforms In Post Independent Namibia : Problems and Perspective*, New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, Occasional Paper. 12,P.9



TABLE-3

White Settlement

YEAR	White Population	Number of farms	Extent in hectares
1993	14, 830	1, 138	11, 49, 000
	(About 6, 000 Germans had been deputed by 1920's)		
1920-22	An additional 4, 844, 626 hectares allocated for white settlement in the first three Years of the mandate.		

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1935	31, 800		3, 255		25, 467, 628
1946	37, 858		3, 722		27, 413, 858
1955	49, 930		5, 050		37, 868, 124
1962	72, 000	Approx.	5, 500	Approx	39, 812, 000

Source- Malakar, S.N. (1995), *Land Reforms In Post Independent Namibia : Problems and Perspective*, New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, Occasional Paper. 12,P.10

The map shows that about eighty percent of total land belonged to the whites. The most important areas of diamond production remained under boundary of police zone, and were fully utilized for white interests. African reserve zones were reduced to a small area with all kinds of constraints. White managed to immobilize the blacks and severe their communication with other black areas. These help the white regime to disunite the people of the various regions.

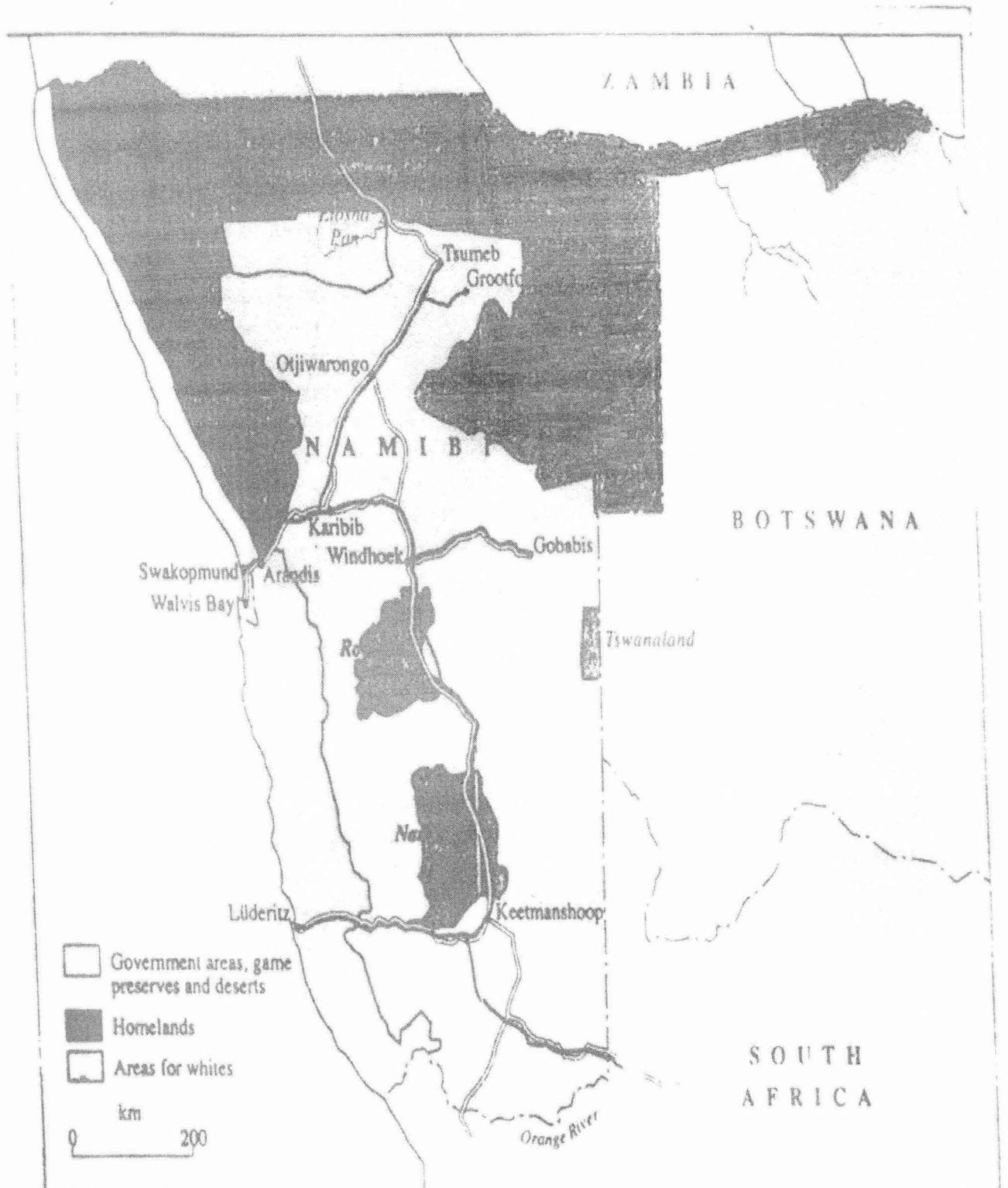
These tables indicate the land ownership conditions in 1962. From table No. 2, it is clear that about two-third land was under the white use. Even the one third which where under non-whites cannot be called the full share of blacks. Thus, blacks were almost deprived from ownership.

Even after 1962, the land ownership system remained unchanged till independence was announced. Almost all the farmland remained in the hands of whites. Till 1990 “there were 5200 white farms of which 45% were owned by foreign absentee landlords”.³²

32. Malakar, S.N.(1995), *Land Reform in Post Independent Namibia : Problems and Prospective*, New Delhi, Jamia Milia Islamia, Occasional Paper Nu-12, P.11





Source- Malakar, S.N. (1995), *Land Reforms In Post Independent Namibia : Problems and Perspective*, New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, Occasional Paper. 12

Land Tenure System



RESERVES FOR THE POPULATION



-  African 'Reserves'
-  Areas reserved for whites
-  Diamond areas
-  Boundary of Police Zone

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 Kaokoveld | 13 Ovitoto |
| 2 Ovamboland | 14 Otjimbingwe |
| 3 Okavango | 15 Rehoboth |
| 4 East Caprivi | 16 Hoachanas |
| 5 Sesfontein | 17 Amluis |
| 6 Fransfontein | 18 Neuhoof |
| 7 Otjohorong | 19 Krantzplatz |
| 8 Okombahe | 20 Berseba |
| 9 Otjituuo | 21 Tses |
| 10 Eastern | 22 Soromas |
| 11 Waterberg East | 23 Bondels |
| 12 Epukiro | 24 Warmbad |

Reserves for the Population

Source-23. Malakar, S.N.(1995), *Land Reforms In Post Independent Namibia : Problems and Perspective*, New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, Occasional Paper. 12

CHAPTER – 2

LAND REFORM IN NAMIBIA : A HISTORICITY OF CONTINUTY AND CHANGE

Land Reforms: A Necessary Pre-Requisite

Land reform in Namibia is widely regarded as a pre-requisite for successful rural development, and hence, poverty alleviation. Access to land is seen as necessary for the provision of opportunities to sustainable means of livelihoods and the enhancement of dignity, well-being and economic empowerment of previously disadvantaged groups and communities.¹

At the same time, redistributive land reform must also be seen as an integral part of national reconciliation. The speaker of the National Assembly was reported as telling the president of the German Bundestag, Mr. Walfgang Thieres, recently, that land reform was not simply an ‘economic transaction’. He stated that it was ‘the price we have to pay for peace and a two way street where people have to meet each other’.

As in other settler colonies, demands for land reforms and redistributive land reform in particular, derive their impetus and strength from colonial land dispossession. They are as much a demand to bring about more equitable socio-economic development in the country as a desire to have past injustices addressed. Land dispossession was the foundation, which underpinned the wealth and power, which colonial settlers managed to achieve with in a century of colonial rule. Redistributive land reform is thus not only an economic process but also eminently political. The land question will therefore not be solved on a purely technical level, but must take cognizance of political and emotional issues as well.

a) Undoing Past-Injustice

During the colonial occupation land was forcefully appropriated from native

1. Adams, M and Howell J.(2002), “Redistributive Land reform In Southern Africa”, *World Development*, 27(5), PP.1129-1150

population. Land dispossession mainly affected indigenous pastoralist communities such as Ovaherero, Nama and Damara livestock farmers. Communities in the northern and northeastern parts of former South West Africa, which practised rain fed cultivation and live stock husbandry, were not directly affected by dispossession. While these areas were not considered to have had sufficient mineral and farming potential by early German colonialists, the relatively small German garrison also did not have the military might to subjugate the militarily and politically powerful Kingdoms in the north.²

As a result of German inability to subdue these Kingdoms, the colonial government announced in 1907 that police protection should be confined to those areas that fell within the sphere of influence of the railway line or main roads. The area was henceforth referred to as the 'Police Zone. Dispossession and colonial settlement occurred exclusively in the police zone'.

Formal colonial rule began in 1884 by the early 1890s eight concession companies had acquired rights to virtually all the land utilized by pastoralist communities. By 1902 only 38% of the total land area remained in black hand.³ The rapid loss of land contributed greatly to the Nama and Herero was of resistance against the German colonial forces in 1904, which led to the large-scale extermination of Herero and Nama pastoralists. Regulations enacted in 1906 and 1907 empowered the German colonial authorities to expropriate nearly all land of the Herero and Nama. As a result, German settlers owned 1331 farms and sum 90% of all live stock in the police zone by 1913.⁴

At the outbreak of World War I, troops from the Union of South Africa conquered the German colonial forces in South West Africa. The new colonial regime continued with the establishment of white farms in the police zone after 1915. By the

2. Werner, W.(1993), "A Brief History of Land Dispossession in Namibia", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19(1), PP.60-82

3. *ibid*

4. *ibid*

early 1950s the process of white settlement had largely been concluded. The total number of farms established by then was 5214.

Simultaneously, with the process of white settlement, the South African colonial government began to set aside land for the exclusive use of dispossessed, black communities. These areas become known as 'Native Reserves', and by 1926, 16 such reserves covering 2.4 million hectares had been established. While these reserves reversed the total ban on land possession by black imposed by the German, most reserves were established on marginal land.

South African reserve policies culminated in the mid-1960s in proposals put forward by the commission of enquiry into South West Africans Affairs (The commission, is commonly known by the name of its chair man, Odendaal) consolidate existing native reserves into tribally based 'home lands in time, these home lands were to obtain some measure of autonomy through the establishment of tribally based legislative assemblies and executive committees. The recommendations of the Odendaal commission completed the system of racially structured access to land in Namibia.

At independence in 1990, the new Namibian government inherited a highly skewed distribution of land. Approximately 36.2 million hectare of land representing 44% of the total land area continues to be held under free hold land. This land is commonly referred to as the commercial farming sector. Under previous Apartheid policies access to this land was reserved for white farmers and the free hold farming sector is still dominated by white land owners.⁵ By contrast, the non-freehold areas formally known as native reserves and referred to today as communal areas, comprise about 33.4 hectares, representing 41 percent of total land area.

These aggregate figures overstate the agriculturally usable land in non-freehold areas, as large tracts of communal land are situated in semi-desert area. Low

5. Republic of Namibia, (1991), *National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question*, Vol. 1, Windhoek: Office of the Prime Minister, P.147 ,URL: www.oxfam.org.uk , Accessed on-16/May/2006

mean annual rainfall ranging between 50-100mm and the absence of exploitable ground water renders much of this land unusable for agricultural purposes. If these factors are taken in consideration, 57 percent of agriculturally usable land falls within the commercial farming sector (36 million ha.) with communal areas occupying only 43 percent or 27 million ha.

b)Poverty alleviation

The pattern of poverty in Namibia mirrors the unequal distribution of land. Namibia has the unenviable reputation of displaying some of the highest income inequities in the world. In the late 1990s its Gini-coefficient was 0.70,⁶ which is among highest in the world. Ten percent of households representing 5.3 percent of the population consume 44 percent of total private consumption; While 90 % of house holds consume an estimated 56 percent. The richest 10 percent of the population receives 65 percent of income.⁷ The historical legacy of race space segregation that ended in 1990 left some 4,300 white farmers owning 48 percent of the land and most of the water rights, while some 140,000 mainly black house holds had access to about 50 percent of the land and constrained access to water rights. This inequality has to be understood in the context of the large proportion of Namibians (70 percent) that depend on subsistence agriculture for a living, and the fact that 75 percent of the poor are found in rural areas. Among these poorhouse holds nearly 35 percent live on less than 1 US\$ per day.⁸ From this structural inequality in access to land resources has emerged one of the most unequal societies in the region. In 2001, the five percent wealthiest Namibians controlled 70 percent of the GDP while the poorest 55 percent controlled 3 percent. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that most of the land in Namibia is semi-arid and not ideal for semi-subsistence crop and live stock production, especially among rural dwellers who are also poor in complementary resources.

6. Aliber, M. (2003), "Chronic Poverty in South Africa : Incidence, Causes and Policies", *World Development*, 31(3), PP.473-490

7. *ibid.*

8. *The Chronic Poverty Reports*, (2004-5), Manchester, PPM/Chronic Poverty Research Center P-323, URL:www.chronicpoverty.org, Accessed on-9/Jun/2006

Land redistribution is often seen as a powerful tool in the fight against poverty in areas where a majority of people are rural-based and make a living mostly, if not entirely, off the land. In southern Africa, landlessness due to the asset alienation that occurred during colonial occupation has been acknowledged as one of several ultimate causes of chronic poverty. Strategies for poverty reduction therefore, tend to focus on addressing the resultant imbalance in access to, and ownership of land resources. Land redistributing is thought to offer poor people secure livelihoods, as well as importable assets to bequeath to future generations, hence reducing inter generational transfers of poverty. In addition to redistribution, tenure reform is thought to help some landed but vulnerable households secure their livelihood through enhanced rights to land. This has been known to spur poorhouse holds to increase investment on land, and lead to better production and higher productivity.

One of the distinguishing features of chronic poverty is its extended duration or persistence.⁹ The chronic poverty report 2004-05 launched in May 2004, identifies lack of key livelihood assets, including land, as one of the major characteristic of chronically poor house holds. In regions where many people make a living mostly, if not entirely, off the land, access to land and the terms under which it is accessed often has implications for the ability chronically poor house holds to make a living. Where ownership and access to land is unequal, redistribution is often seen as a way of helping land-constrained house holds out of poverty and chronic poverty through a significant ‘one off’ infusion of assets into the house hold. Strategies for chronic poverty reduction therefore tend to focus on addressing the resultant imbalance in access to, and ownership of land resources. Land redistribution is thought to give the chronically poor a secure livelihood platform and impartible assets to bequeath to future generations.¹⁰ Land redistribution in the Post-World War II period in South Korea, Taiwan, china and Vietnam had been credited with the rapid post-war recovery and economic growth.¹¹

9. *ibid*

10. Besley, T. and Burgess, R.(2000), “Land Reform, Poverty Reduction and Growth : Evidence from India”, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*,21(2), PP. 389-430

11. Deininger, K. and May J.(2000), “Is there Scope for Growth with Equity ?”, CSDS Working Paper No. 29, Durban: School of Development Studies, University of Kwazulu-Natal, URL:www.nu.ac.zalclds/publications, Accessed on-15/Jun/2006

About 70% of the population lives in rural areas and 30% in urban areas. The farmers make a living on just 55% of the national average income (N\$17,198 in the mid 1990s). It is estimated that between 50% and 67% of all house holds (depending on the measure used) are poor. Poverty is thus most pronounced in the rural areas.

The Northern and Northeastern regions are considerably poor than the central and southern regions. Annual house hold incomes in five of the former regions (Ohangwena, Caprivi, Omusarti, Oshikato and Okavango) are taken less than half of the national average. These are regions where access to land is obtained through customary tenure arrangements and where farmers practice cultivating together with animal husbandry. With the exception of Otjozondjupa region, average household income in regions where commercial farming is taking place is above the national average. These average figures conceal intra-regional income differentials. However, Urban areas such as Windhoek, for example, increase the regional average for Khomas region considerably.

Tenure reform is thought to help in poverty reduction, as delivering secure rights to land has been known to spur further investment on land and lead to better production and higher productivity. In Sub-Saharan Africa, up to 90 percent of the land is held under various forms of customary tenure with or without legal recognition. This means that access to land in most of Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be determined by indigenous system of land tenure that have evolved over time under both local and external influences. Customary tenure gives usufruct rights based on membership (usually kinship) to a community of tribal grouping, and is often seen as a vital safeguard against the loss of access to land by the poor. At the same time, it has been observed that “these systems are flexible and under the stimulus of population growth and economic change rights have been consolidated and become more individual”. Implicitly, therefore, face with commoditisation of produce or changes in population (i.e. growth in the number of small holders), communal tenure does not offer the protection it is assumed to offer.¹²

12. Aghion, P. et al (1999), “Inequality and Economic Growth : Perspective of the New Growth Theories”, *Journal of Economic Literature*, (37), PP. 1615-1660

Contemporary discourse identifies two main perspectives on the roll of land reforms in poverty reduction. The first perspective, which we shall call the agricultural determinism school, sees agriculture in general and enhanced access to land in particular as the key to poverty and chronic poverty reduction in Africa.¹³ The narrative that derives from this school sees the creation of more smallholder farm – based livelihoods as an effective way of helping those in poverty, especially if chronic poverty exists under conditions of capital scarcity and labor surplus. The key argument is that since most of the poor in the region are located in rural areas where their livelihoods are linked to land (either directly for food or cash crop production or indirectly for employment income), enduring chronic poverty reduction can only be achieved by creating more small farm units. Post-World War II china, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam, where land redistribution and tenure reforms played a crucial role in post war recovery.¹⁴

A second perspective, ‘possibilism’, sees land as playing only a permissive role in poverty reduction. Enduring chronic poverty reduction is seen as an out come of inter play between land and several other capitals, e.g. human, financial, social and physical capital. The narrative is that rather than see the rural poor as land and water constringer farmers, we should conceptualize them as people with multiple livelihood strategies that may or may not be linked to farming at all times. Land therefore can provide them with a base from which to launch other livelihood ventures. It may provide chronically poor households with a key commodity, but one that still needs to be turned into a livelihood through other complementary activities.

In conceptualizing the poverty reducing effects of land reforms, this paper takes the view that land plays only a permissive role in poverty reduction. This permissive role varies from country to country, and even at the local level. For example, giving land to a land constrained household may allow then to produce food or cash crops, but only if household members have the required know - how, are

13. Jayne, T.S. et al(2003), “Small Holder Income and Land Distribution in Africa: Implication for Poverty Reduction Strategies”, *Food Policy*, 23(3), PP. 2563-2575

14. Putzel, J. (2000), “Land Reforms in Asia :Lessons From the Past for the 21st Century”, *World Development*, 25(3) PP. 865-

healthy enough and have access to sufficient labour power, and if input supply and transport systems work and the markets are stable. It has also been argued that the above conditions for sustainable farm livelihoods are rarely met and so households in Africa tend to combine the use of land with many other off - farm and non - farm livelihood activities.¹⁵ Other have seen there multiple activities as necessary for income and consumption smoothing or as a deliberate way of spreading the livelihood risk of agrarian failure.¹⁶

Building assets alongside income enhancement is increasingly seen as an important aspect of reducing the number of households in poverty. While income enhancement for the poor through well fare or other income generating programmers is seen as important for immediate survival. The long-term sustainability of poverty initiatives tends to depend on the ability of poor households to stay out of poverty. Assets, particularly those that are impartible upon in heritage, cushion house holds from livelihood fluctuations and in so doing provide the long term resilience needed to stay out of poverty.¹⁷ Land alone with out water may not help households depending largely on rain fed agricultural activities make a secure living. These has led some to argue that reforming land with out looking at the distribution of water rights, or developing new water infrastructure, is best a barren ritual unlikely to lead to significant poverty reduction.

Table 4 shows the four types of land reforms found in Southern Africa and the types of poverty these are likely to address. At the macro level redistribution that results in a more equitable distribution of land has been known to spur higher economic growth rate.¹⁸ This is particularly possible if land reforms are conceived of as part of a broader strategy of rural development, rather than as an end in themselves.

15. Moene, K.O. (1992), "'Poverty and Land Ownership", *American Economic Reviews*, 82(1), PP.52-86

16. Dercon, S. and Krishnan P.(2000), "In Sickness and in Health: Risk-Sharing with In Households in Ethiopia", *Journal of Political Economy*, 108(4), PP. 688-727.

17.Janyne, T.S. et al(2003), "Small Holder Income and Land Distribution in Africa : Implications of Poverty Reduction Strategies", *Food Policy*, 28(3), PP. 2563-2575

18. Aglion, P. et al(1999), "In Equality and Economic Growth : The respective of the New Growth Theories", *Journal of Economic Literature*, (37), PP. 1615-1650

Table 4 Conceptualising the poverty reduction impacts of land reforms

Land Reform Type	Poor targeted	Narrative	Possible Poverty Reduction Effects
Land Redistribution Break-up of large landholdings and creating smallholder farm plots Transfer of land from one racial group to another Land leasing through intermediary bodies Colonisation of new lands	Chronically poor	Chronically poor households usually do not own productive assets, especially land. Long-term poverty can be overcome by giving them ownership of land or facilitating access to land, and providing related capitals needed to make a living.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational effect of asset transfer • Landed poor can engage in agricultural commodity markets • Increased income and consumption smoothing opportunities • Community membership and participation in decision-making
	Descending poor	Households descending into poverty due to a collapse of livelihoods (income loss, asset loss, life cycle change or chronic illness) need a base from which to rebuild their livelihoods.	Land as a crucial starting point – gives place to construct a shelter and means to earn an income directly through production and indirectly through rents etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluctuating poor • Vulnerable non-poor 	Fluctuating and vulnerable non-poor households can fall into poverty in bad years and climb out in good years. Access to land increases stability of livelihood trends by giving households a steady source of livelihood.	Ownership of land can provide new and more stable livelihood options for income and consumption smoothing.
Tenure Reform Strengthening tenancy rights Abolishing private land intermediation Land ownership ceilings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable non-poor • Chronically poor 	Insecure tenure leaves the poor vulnerable to local formal and informal land market dynamics. Establishing a secure (i.e. formal) tenure will accord them new rights and the confidence to invest in land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing rights to assets allows continued access to land. • Investment in land, stimulating a local land sales and rental market, empowers vulnerable groups and can improve local governance.
Farm Reorganisation Land consolidation Land reorganisation (usually break-up of unviable co-operative farms or consolidation of sub-optimal farm units)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable non-poor • Chronically poor • Fluctuating poor 	Unviable land plots limits production and participation in commodity markets. Consolidating fragmented plots or reorganising land use can increase available land or present new opportunities for increasing the productivity of labour and land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating viable production units increases land availability for production. • Facilities securing individual rights to land.
Administrative Reforms Governance and administration of land rights (juridical, regulatory, fiscal, cadastral, conflict resolution mechanisms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable non-poor • Chronically poor • Fluctuating poor 	Land use conflicts and loss of land by the poor is often caused by poor administration of land rights. Modernizing and decentralising records enhances governance and administration of land rights.	The poor have secure land rights and access to legal land administration systems when conflicts emerge. This reduces danger of arbitrary dispossession.

Source- www.admas.chinhou@manchester.ac.uk

Accessed on- 20/May/2006

Growth induced land reform is only possible if it is followed by improved efficiency under condition of capital scarcity and labor surplus.

In combination with complementary assets land reforms can improve general household welfare. This is in addition to the welfare gains that emerge from poor households being able to produce their own food. In this way, land reforms can help transform household vulnerability scenarios through insurance against food and labour market shocks. However, some evidence suggests that for households that are deficient in other complimentary assets, land may not be the best pathway out of poverty as they are unable to produce food or utilize any available family labour. At the same time it can be argued that land reforms reduce the potential for the inter-generational transmission of poverty by providing or securing access to land that can be passed down to the next generation.

While there is a tendency to under play the poverty reducing effects of tenure reforms,¹⁹ it is important to recognize the importance of the terms and conditions under which land is accessed as an important influence on the way poor people make a living. There is also some evidence from India suggesting that tenancy reforms for example, can account for a 10 percent decline in poverty levels, especially among land constrained households.

In Southern Africa, although some of the land is held under free hold titled, the majority of poor people still reside in areas under customary tenures. Although it is often argued that this form of tenure protects the poor. There is emerging evidence of active and growing informal land rental and sales markets evolving from what has up to now been considered to be a non-market commodity. For example, it is documented that the emergence of an informal communal land market as population increases trigger competition for scarce land. House holds with access to remittance income have sought to expand their land portfolio by renting extra land or 'purchasing' right of access to farm land from both traditional leaders and other individuals.

19. Griffin, K. et al (2002), "Poverty and the Distribution of Land", *Journal of Agrarian change* 2(3), PP.273-330.

In Namibia, it is shown how de-facto 'privatization' through fencing of 'communal' grazing land by wealthy and politically connected cattle owners has disadvantaged the poor communal land dwellers. In South Africa, it is documented how for a fee, ranging from R 300- R 1500 (US\$ 50-250) an individual can 'buy' land held under customary tenure from the indunas(chiefs) in South Africa. Similar observations have been made in Zimbabwe's communal lands since the early 1980s.²⁰ When access to resources like land and water become subject to informal and 'unregulated' market forces, the extent to which customary tenure is still relevant for pro-poor land policies can be contested. The above observations about the state of communal tenure in contemporary South Africa under-score the importance of tenure reforms in fighting poverty and chronic poverty in the region. Although some²¹ see tenure reforms as having a negligible impact on chronic poverty, the observation of long-term change in customary tenure shows that for the 90 percent of Africa where this form of tenure prevails fighting poverty will have to contend with how the land is accessed by the poor in the immediate and short term.

Based on the discussion so far we can say that the reality of livelihood situations in most of Africa implies that linking land reforms to poverty reduction, with out careful consideration of the context in which land can make such a contributions is misplaced.. This is in part a reflection of the limitations in the approaches of land reform programme conceptualization, and the methods of analysis in use.

c)Land: An Emotional Factor

Southern African societies still bear the lasting effects of their colonial history, in particular, the inherited structural legacies of an Apartheid system. While this special brand of white minority rule was later called 'separate development,' the euphemistic term actually describes in rather appropriate way colonization- the violent removal of people from their land. Today, gross inequalities in access to, and possession of land

20. Hammer, A. (2001), "The Day of Burning: Eviction and Reinvention in the Murgine of North West Zimbabwe", *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 1 (4), PP.550-574

21. *ibid*

are a reflection of this earlier colonial expansion.⁵⁴ Whatever rationale for seeking solutions of this impasse are utilized, this memory cannot be tilted among the generations of victims.

Only about 8% of the territories are suitable for dry land cropping, with an average annual rainfall of 500mm or more. Two-thirds of the country is classified as semi-arid and around a quarter as arid. Sixty percent of the commercial farmland (free hold agricultural land) receives on an average less than 300mm rain annually.

Given back land to a previous tiller(or actually herder) does therefore not necessarily pay off when measured in terms of economic performance, and in some cases not even in terms of self-employment.

The pragmatic approach, confining the land issue to macro-economic and fiscal policies, would however ignore the socio-cultural aspects. Consequent people reclaim their history by regaining ownership over their ancestor's lands. Such a desire has little in common with the economic rationality presented. It is a legitimate matter of dignity, self-respect and spirituality, not measurable in bare economic terms. This was articulated in the Namibian context by the previous deputy speaker of the National Assembly, since September 2001 elected bishop to the Evangelical Lutheran Rhenish Church in Namibia, as a powerful spiritual leader and representative of public morale in following way.

“Our grand parents died without seeing justice done to the land issue, our parents are dying in poverty with suffering engraved on their faces. They told us how they were living happily on their land, cultivating their crops and looking after their cattle. Together with their parents, they experienced the horror of their land being fenced around. (.). To remove the people from the land on which they have been living for generations, it to destroy and kill them, not only outside but also inside. The violation of the land rights are the violation of the soul of the people, but its restoration is the resurrection of the soul of the people and life in abundance.”²²

22. Melber, H.(200), “Economic and Social Transformation in the Process of Colonisation : Society and Satate Before and During German Rule”, in C. Koulder (ed.), *State. Society and Democracy: A Reader in Namibian Politics*, Windhoek: Gamberg Macmillan, PP. 16-48

Such an emotional dimension, rooted in issues of identity, however, simply illustrates the point that 'peoples' relationship to their environment is not only material, but also social and cultural.²³

The emotional dimension suits the aspirations and agendas of ideologically minded social engineers of the post-colonial elite. One of those is Vazuva Kaubmi. He heads the state-subsidized Pan African Center of Namibia (PACON). He drew the categorical conclusion:

“Speaking as an indigenous Namibian, I invite my white compatriots and their sympathizers to understand that the insurance policy for peace and stability is expensive. There are various options to choose from. Sacrifices must be made. The choice is theirs. The land is ours!”²⁴

Land Reforms in Namibia: A Typological Discourse.

Countries pursuing land reforms in Southern Africa can be divided into three main types. This classification has been developed to help organize the analysis of land reforms in the region and is based largely on the key features of the reforms and their links to poverty reduction.

23. Kameeta, Z. (2002), “Land Right Issues in Southern Africa with Special Focus on Namibia”, in W.Apelt & J Mathe (eds.) *Land Right. Perspective under Konflikture meidung im Sidlichen Africa*, Wuppertal : Foedus, PP. 29-32

24. Kaumbi, U.(2004), ‘The Land Is Ours’, in J. Hunter (Ed), “*Who Should Own The Land?*” *Analysis and Views On Land Reform and The Land Question in Namibia and Southern Afrcia*, Windhoek: Kannad Adenauer Stiftung And Namibian Institute For Democracy, PP.92-94.

TABLE-5

TYPOLGY OF LAND REFORM STATES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Reform Type	Countries	Key Characteristics	Poverty Focus
Type-1	>Namibia >South Africa >Zimbabwe >Malawi	>Decolonisation agenda linked to restructuring of landholding. >Politics of race in land ownership influences agenda >High potential for violent confrontation over land. >Cyclical policy attention linked to elections and key political events.	>Correcting asset alienation as a structural cause of chronic poverty. >Creating growth through more smaller and efficient small- holder production units.
Type-2	>Angola >Mozambique >Zambia >Botswana	Focus on: >Formalization of customary tenure >Reforming rights regimes >Administration of land at the local level.	>Restructuring the vulnerability profile of assisted non-poor but vulnerable households > Reformed rights regime and land administration systems to offer secure livelihood platforms >Extending rights to women.
Type-3	>Lesotho >Swaziland	>Traditional monarchy >Post decolonization agenda >Land shortage in the midst of poverty	>Strengthening rights of access through tenure and land administration reform. >Providing viable units of production

Source- www.admas.chimhou@manchester.uk

Accessed on- 20/May/2006

Type –1 Reform States.

Type –1 land reform states are Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and, to a limited extent, Malawi. We have called these ‘settled states’. By this, it is implied that these countries experienced extended periods of settler colonial rule and had

significant populations of white Africans with settled status and owning much of the land. Four key features distinguish type-1 reform countries.

First, 'asset alienation' inspired by racism and the subsequent inequitable distribution of productive resources is some of several structural causes of chronic poverty in these countries. In Namibia South-Africa and (until recently) Zimbabwe, a minority of mostly white Africans own most of the best land while a majority of mainly non-white Africans eke out a living on marginal lands. This inequitable distribution of land often fuels political passions around to election time. Reforms proceeds in fits and starts, after seeing bursts of energy close to elections and stalling during the intervening period. Events in Zimbabwe since February 2000 show that Type-1 reforms have the potential of stalling and spiraling into politically inspired violent seizure of land.

A second feature of Type-1 reform states in the dual nature of land tenure systems. Most of the best land for agricultural production is under formal freehold title while the bulk of poor land is under formal (and at times informal) customary or traditional tenure. Type-1 reform countries maintain a strategic ambivalence to tenure reforms. At one level there is a desire to secure rights of access to those under customary tenure however, there is also a nostalgia fed passion for such systems, often seen as indigenous safeguards of the rights of access of the poor. Although in reality, these systems have been modified by both colonial and post colonial encounters and no longer offer the protection attributed to them.²⁵ This misplaced belief in the merits of customary tenure means that and reforms land to be cosmetic..

A third feature of Type-1 reform countries is that they were the last countries in the region to gain majority rule. Most of the rights and political freedoms emerged from years of often-violent armed struggles. Consequently, the ruling political elite in these states still derives legitimacy from among those that led the struggle for majority rule. The significance of this is that land reform is framed in the policy discourse as unfinished business of de-colonization.

25. Berrys, S. (1993), *No Condition is Permanent : The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Southern Africa*, Madison, University of Wisconsin, PP. 127-132

In Type-1 reform countries, poverty objectives of land redistribution may be mentioned in 'selling' the reforms but the real motive is the de-racialisation of land holding that may or may not benefit the poor. This fixation with de-racialisation often subverts the poverty reducing effects of land redistribution: the best land is captured by the political and bureaucratic elite, while little post-settlement support is offered to resource-poor beneficiaries, the term 'fat-cat' is coined to refer land reforms, to this process capture by the ruling political and bureaucratic elite at the expense of the poor. At best, some vulnerable non-poor households benefit, and at worst resource-poor beneficiaries descend further into poverty

Type -2 Reform States

Type-2 reform states are characterized by a focus on the reforms of land rights and how these are administered and enforced. We have called these 'post-decolonization reform' because the absence of the race factor in the land issue creates a different dynamic, one that resolves around restructuring local governance and rights of access to land. In Angola, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia, land reforms currently focus on strengthening the rights of small holders and decentralization of land administration systems.²⁶

Type -3 Reforms States

Like Type-2 reform states, Type-3 reform states are post-decolonisation states and do not have a race based inequitable distribution of land resources as a key issue. What distinguishes these countries from the rest is severe land pressure due to their small size, the special influence of a traditional tribal authority in land issues and that struggles for land rights are interwined with general governance reform issues. Lesotho and Swaziland fit the profile of Type-2 reform states.²⁷

26. *ibid*

27. *ibid*

Land Reforms Policy and Practices in Type – 1 Reform States

Redistributive land reforms have mainly involved the twin strategies of creating more smallholders farm units by subdividing large-scale commercial farms, and restructuring the racial profile of ownership of large-scale commercial farm land. A key argument for the former strategy (apart from the political goal of social justice) is the economically determined inverse relationship between farm size and productivity while for the latter the idea is to de-racialize land ownership without disrupting commercial agricultural production. Small holders are seen as being potentially more efficient producers and therefore, giving them more land can lead to equity and efficiency.²⁸ On the other hand, the highly mechanized commercial agriculture earning substantial foreign currency is seen as an engine for economic growth.

In practice, redistributive reforms can be supply-led or demand-driven. In supply-led reforms, the state uses public funds to obtain land from the market to redistribute to those in need. The argument is often that chronically poor households lack the ability to participate in the land market either because of a combination of internal distortions in the market and lack resources by chronically poor households to participate in the land market. Until the early 1990s when plural models, especially market-based initiatives, emerged, land reforms were seen as the business of the state. The argument of state involvement is that the land market in most post-colonies has structural distortions that market forces alone cannot correct.²⁹ Supply-led approaches have played a much more prominent role in Zimbabwe and to lesser extent in Namibia. In demand driven reforms, the state does not actively take part in the actual redistribution through direct land acquisition. It plays a passive role by facilitating the participation of beneficiaries in the land market through loans. It is often said this works well for non-poor households. Table-6 shows the advantage and disadvantages of supply led and demand driven approaches. It is clear that for the chronically poor,

28. Moene, K.O. (1992), "Poverty and Land ownership", *American Economic Resources*, 82(1), PP. 52-86.

29. Deininger, K. and H. Binswanger (1999), "The Evolution of the World Banks Land Policy : Principles, Experience and Future Challenges", *The World Bank Researcher observer*, 14 (2), PP. 247-276

supply-led approaches tend to have some advantages especially when we take into account the fact that capital markets tend not to work well for those without assets.

TABLE-6
SUPPLY-LED AND DEMAND-DRIVEN REDISTRIBUTIVE REFORMS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Approach	Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages	Countries
Supply-led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Sales acquires and redistributes land >Top down selection and decision making. >Little contribution from beneficiaries >Predetermined models of resettlement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Better beneficiary targeting >Vetter beneficiary post-settlement support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Potential for excessive state paternalism >Can be slow >Potential for capture by political and bureaucratic elite >Costly to implement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Zimbabwe >Namibia >Malawi
Demand-Driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Market-driven land acquisition >State assists beneficiaries to participate in land markets through subsidies on loans or sets up special loan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Less bureaucratic less costly >Ensures only those keen to use land get it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >Poor households lose out as they cannot afford the up front costs >Poor post-settlement support. >Potentially slow >Ineffective where structural distortions of the land market exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >South Africa >Namibia

Source-www.admas.chimhou@manchester.uk

Accessed on- 20/May/2006

Table-6 shows progress with land reforms in three countries. In Zimbabwe, close to 91,000 families were resettled in a programme of planned resettlement between 1980 and 1998. In some areas, resettlement was successful in reducing social inequality among the settlers. Households that were poor at the time of resettlement were shown to have made the biggest gains.³⁰ Co-operative

30. Kinsey, B. (1999), "Land Reform, Growth and Equity : Emerging Evidence from Zimbabwe's Resettlement Programme", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 25(2), PP. 173-196

models of the resettlement schemes were declared a failure, wound up in 1996 since the beginning of the Jambanja (violent) seizure of mainly white owned commercial farmland in February 2000, 134,452 households have gained access to land. In South Africa, between 1994 and 2002 some 130,453 households benefited from state-assisted land market transfers. Similarly in Namibia some 30,000 households were resettled on smallholder farm units between 1990 and 2000, while some 300 households were assisted to buy large-scale farm units over the same period. Some 365,435 households or only 3 percent of the estimated 13 million households in the three Type-1 reform states have been given access to almost 15 million ha. of land between 1980 and 2003. If we consider the combined redistribution target figure of about 42 million ha. Of land it can be said that the redistributive reforms still have long way to run.

TABLE-7

REDISTRIBUTIVE REFORMS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Country	Mode	Year Started	Land Redistribution (Hectares)		Beneficiaries(#)	
			Target	Achievement	Target	Achievement To date
Namibia	Supply and demand driven	1990	9,000,000	829,486 ¹ 3,125,143 ²	243,000 ³	30,720
South Africa	Mostly demand driven	1994	24,660,000 In 15 Years	1, 480,000 in 9 years	Not stated	130, 453
Zimbabwe	Mostly supply driven	1980	9,800,000	162,000	162,000	205,027

Source- www.admas.chimhou@manchester.uk

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Market-Driven (Demand-Led) Land Reforms

Market-driven land reforms are part of a wider shift in thinking on the role of the state in development since the early 1980s. The market is seen as an alternative to state domination in the implementation of land settlement schemes.³¹ Non-market reforms

are seen as inefficient because they are controlled by bureaucracies with interests seen to be at odds with rapid land redistribution.³²

Two approaches to designing land reform programmes can be identified under the market paradigm. Where rural land markets are fully developed and there is effective demand for land, the market is seen as the most efficient way of resettling people. No state intervention is deemed necessary. In cases where there are market distortions and there is no effective demand for land, corrective state intervention is seen as necessary, but only in so far as the state is enhancing both the supply and demand for land through regulation or through direct assistance to the poor. The market paradigm is therefore based on the premise that the land market can be used to benefit the poor in a way that does not over commit state resources. State intervention is only accepted in a regulatory role, or through small grants to the poor to assist them to access the land via the market.

Land market imperfections, according to the market paradigm, are seen as constraining the livelihoods of the poor in three main ways. Firstly, they are seen as limiting demand for land, because the poor lack the capital to participate in the market. So there is a failure in the finance market. Secondly, the imperfections are deemed to be a constraint to the supply of land at affordable prices. The third reason relates to legal and administrative requirements of land transactions that are seen as being too cumbersome for the uneducated poor who may not have the resources to hire legal services.³³ The poor, it is argued, benefit from land market reforms through increased supply of land available for purchase. The reforms, it is argued, also increase the effective demand for land by the poor through a reduction in access costs.³⁴

31. Vanzyt, J., Kirstenetal J.(1996), *Agricultural Land Reform in South Africa: Policies, Market and Mechanisms*, Oxford University Press, PP.85-107

32. Hulme, D.(1987), "State-Sponsored Land Settlement Policies Theory and Practice", *Development and Change* (18), PP.413-436.

33. Carter, M. and Mebah, D.(1993), "Can Land Market Reform Mitigate the Exclusionary Aspects of Rapid Agro-Export Growth ?", *World Development*, 21(7), PP.1085-1100

Although there is significantly less published literature on experiences with this form of resettlement in Sub-Saharan Africa, emerging evidence from South Africa shows that market-based settlement schemes can be slow and therefore may not have a significant impact on structural inequalities over the short term. Examples from Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala and the Philippines, however, show that the introduction of market-driven land reforms increased levels of flexibility in the design of such projects, as beneficiaries are allowed to come and go as they wish. Further relaxation of ownership regulations allowed them to sell land as and when they wished.

However, results of initial evaluations of this new generation of land reforms are mixed. While indicating increasing productivity in Colombia and Brazil and settlement schemes, results from South Africa suggest that more active state involvement may still be necessary in countries where non-market forces have led to a highly dualistic ownership and operational distribution of land.³⁵ Further, market forces may actually result in the wrong target group accessing the land, or land in poorer, more marginal areas being accessed. In particular, evidence emerging from Southern Africa shows an increasing number of investments in land by the rich who are looking for tax shelters. In the end, land resettlement via the market may not reach the groups that public policy is targeting since the idea that beneficiaries self-select according to their ability to pay up front costs (rather than need) tend to limit the attractiveness of the scheme by those social groups incapable of making the investment pay returns soon after taking up land.³⁶

34. Vanzul, J., Kristen J. et al. (1996), *Agricultural Land Reform in South Africa: Policies, Market and Mechanisms*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, PP.142.

35. Lyne, M. and Roth, M. (2004), "Making Co-Ownership Work : Helping Land Reform Beneficiaries Access Land and Financial Resource Through Equity Sharing in Southern Africa", LTC, Basis Brief No. 20, URL: www.Basis.wisc.edu, Accessed on- 25/april/2006

36. Zimmerman, F.J. (2000), "Barriers to Participation of the Poor in Southern Africa's Land Redistribution", *World Development*, 28(8), PP.1439-1460

National Conference on land reforms and land questions of Namibia in 1991

On coming to power in 1990, the SWAPO government announced its intention of transferring land to 'the land less majority' yet agreed to a constitution in which the property of citizens could not be taken without fair compensation. Government and opposition joined in a national conference on land reform in Windhoek in June 1991. In the run up to the meeting, groups representing minority ethnic interests pressed for the restitution of ancestral land. But, conflicting claims by different regional ethnic groups, which at some period of time had occupied the same territorial entities, creates a collision of interests too difficult to be amicably solved. Land was physically occupied and expropriated by the European settlers and the colonial state in the southern and central areas on Namibia declared as 'police zone'. The majority of the population settled north of this police zone and was never moved. Colonial-capitalist patterns of exploitation were established there in different ways the colonial administration relied on forms of an indirect rule. It rather sought to exploit the people by means of introducing a strictly regulated and systematic system of organized contract labour in collaboration with local headmen.³⁷ The land reform conference sought to avoid the issue by stating:

"Given the complexities in redressing ancestral land claims, restitution of such claims in full is impossible".³⁸

This vagueness allows widely differing interpretations and arbitrariness, there by creating maneuvering space for those who are in control over and execution of the power of definition. Not surprisingly, since Namibian independence a certain ambiguity by the postcolonial authorities especially towards the most marginalized indigenous 'minority groups prevailed'.

37. Melber, H. (2000), "Economic and Social Transformation in the Process of Colonisation : Society and State Before and During German Rule", in C. Keulder (ed.), *State, Society and Democracy : A Reader in Namibian Politics*, Windhoek : Gamsber Macmillan, PP. 16- 48

38. Werner, W. (2001), "The Land Question in Namibia", in W.Apelt and J. Matte (eds.), *Landrecht Perspektiven der Konfli Ktvermeidwng in Sidlichen Afrika*, Wuppertal Foedus, PP.51-72

“That the difficulties involved in disentangling competing claims of lost lands provided an ideal political opportunity to broaden the category of beneficiaries of land reform to include those who were never dispossessed in historical sense.”³⁹

Agriculturally usable land in Namibia is subdivided into the commercial farming area (approximately 36.2 million ha.) freehold land and the so-called communal areas on state land (approximately 33.5 million ha). The national conference recommended that foreigners should not be allowed to own commercial farms that absentee land lords should be expropriated and that ownership of very large farms and/or several farms by one person should cease. A Technical committee was instructed to make recommendations for the acquisition and redistribution of such land and to assess possible forms of taxation on commercial farmland. Many of the findings of the Technical committee were incorporated in the Agricultural (commercial) Land Reform Act, 1995. It provides for the acquisition of large, under utilized and foreign owned farms for resettlement, and grants the government the right of first refusal on farmland offered for sale. Compensation has to be at market prices. The Act provides for imposition of a tax on agricultural land. The passing of the Act accelerated the acquisition of commercial ranches, but on a piecemeal basis, which impeded the subsequent provision of services and infrastructure. These problems were anticipated in the research, which went into the national conference.⁴⁰

Land Reform Measures: Policy and Legal Framework

A programme of land reform was started in 1990 in Namibia. The programme consists of four main components.

1. Redistributive land reform;

39. Suzman, J. (2004), “Etosha Drams : An Historical Account of the Hailom Predicament”, *Journal of Modern African Studies*,(42)2,PP.221-238.

40. Twyman, C. et al (2001), “Community Fencing in Open Range Lands: Self-Empowerment in Eastern Namibia”, *Review of African Political Economy*,87,PP.9-26

2. Tenure reform;
3. Development of unutilized communal land; and
4. The Affirmative Action Loan Scheme.

A policy and legal framework is in place to guide land reform. This consists of the following:

- . The constitution of the Republic of Namibia;
- . Agricultural (commercial) Land Reform Act, 1995
- . White paper on resettlement, 1997;
- . National Land Policy, 1998;
- . Communal Land Reform Act, 2002.

Redistributive land reform is implemented in accordance with the provisions of the Agricultural (commercial) Land Reform Act, 1995. The provisions of the Act include the following;

- . It lays down a preferential right of the state to purchase commercial farmland;
- . It provides for market related compensation;
- . It establishes a Land Reform Advisory Commission consisting of stakeholders to advise the Minister of Lands;
 - . It prescribes the way in which commercial farmland was to be planned and allocated;
- . It provides for the sub division and survey of holdings for small-scale farming.
- . It restricts the acquisition of commercial farm land by foreigners; and
- . It establishes a land Tribunal to solve possible disputes over prices between sellers and the Government.

The Land Reform Act provides a very wide definition of beneficiaries of Land Reform. These will be.

“Namibian citizens who do not own or other wise have the use of agricultural land or adequate agricultural land, and foremost to those Namibians who have been

socially, economically or educationally disadvantage by past discriminatory practices”.

Although the white paper on Resettlement provides a slightly more specific definition of beneficiaries, it is still too wide to be useful. In terms of its provisions a broad spectrum of previously disadvantaged people will be considered for resettlement ranging from those with no access to land and no means of production to people in employment, no land but up to 149 large stock units. This cut-off point is determined by Affirmative Action Loan scheme administered by Agribank, which is accessible only to people with 150 or more large stock units. Income levels do not matter in the selection of land reform beneficiaries according to the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation.

Some observers have praised these very flexible selection criteria as a strong point of land redistribution in Namibia. Experience suggests, however that with out more narrow and specific criteria and more transparent selection procedures, the benefits of land redistribution will be captured by elite groups no longer fit this category by any stretch to the imagination.

The Resettlement Policy lists the objectives of and options for resettlement on land acquired under the Land Reform Act. Among other things, government will seek.

- . To give an opportunity to the target groups to produce their own food with a view towards self-sufficiency;
- . To create employment through full time farming;
- . To bring small holder farmers into the main stream of the Namibian economy by producing for the market; and
- . To alleviate human and live stock pressure in communal areas.⁴¹

Re-distributive land reform and resettlement are thus aimed at alleviating poverty by improving the production capacity of the poor by ‘purchasing and

41. Republic of Namibia (1997), *White paper on resettlement policy*, Windhoek: Ministry of Land resettlement and rehabilitation, PP. 4-5, URL:www.oxfam.org.uk, Accessed on-16/may/2006

allocating land to enable them to make a living'. After five years of government support, settlers are 'expected to completely support themselves'.⁴² Two white papers do not spell out exactly the level of welfare at which settlers are expected 'to support themselves' and 'make a living'. It merely asserts that 'a target minimum income level has to be established...[and] should be adjusted when necessary to reflect changes in the economy'.

Namibia's land and resettlement policies seek to bring about this improvement in the standards of living of previously disadvantaged people by transforming the large-scale commercial farming sector into small-scale units. Anticipating increasing pressures on existing land as a result of population growth, the National Land Policy proposes to make the subdivision of large scale farming units conditional on the 'maintenance of farming units of an economically unviable size'.⁴³

The determination of what constitutes an 'economic unit' was left to the Land Reform Advisory Commission (LRAC) which was established in terms of the Land Reform Act. Underlying its recommendation on minimum farm sizes was a minimum target income for beneficiaries of N\$ 15000 per annum. This figure was proposed by the central Bureau of statistics as the minimum required to provide a decent standard of living for a household of 5-6 people. Based on this figure the LRAC decided that beneficiaries should not be allocated less than 1,000 ha. In the central and northern regions for livestock farming and at least 3,000 ha. In the southern parts of the country.⁴⁴

Government's position on tenure rights to redistributed land seems ambiguous. The Agricultural (commercial) Land Reform, Act, 1995 provides for the granting of 99 years lease hold rights to allocated farming units and subsequent registration of

42. *ibid*, 8

43. Republic of Namibia (1998), *National Land Policy*, Windhoek: Ministry of Land, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, P.16, URL: www.odi.org.uk, Accessed on-30/may/2006

44. Chimhown, A.O. (2002), "Extending The Grain Basket to the Margins : Spontaneous Land Resettlement and Livelihoods in Zimbabwe", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38(3), PP.551-573

such lease agreements in the Deeds office. The land reform Act also provides for the possibility to buy an allocation after five years, subject to certain conditions. In terms of the Act, however these rights are circumscribed in so far as right to assign, sublet mortgage or in any way encumber a farming unit allocated by MLRR is subject to the written approval of the Minister. However, in a legal opinion the office of the Attorney General expressed the view that a mortgage could be registered on any lease agreement registered in the Deeds office.⁴⁵

In spite of this legal opinion, the Draft Land Tenure Policy (2002) continues to state that the right of settlers will be subject to a number of limitations which include the right of the Minister of change the agreement with settlers and the power to revoke lease if the holder is in breach of the terms and conditions relating to the productive use of the land, financial viability etc. The draft policy proposes that even the erection of buildings on a holding should be prohibited unless Consent from the minister has been obtained.

Towards the end of 2002 the minister of lands, resettlement and rehabilitation introduced an amendment to the Land Reform Act, in which he proposed that the section of the act, which provides for the option to purchase a farming unit after five years be deleted. Such land, he argued, should never be for sale. Instead, it should rather serve a place where some future potential commercial farmers should graduate from and be able to acquire their own agricultural land.

Despite the emphasis on poverty alleviation and economic development in land reform and resettlement policy papers, it is not very clear how land redistributions fits into a wider rural development framework and how significant its impact on poverty alleviation is likely to be. Amongst other things, this raises the question as to whether land redistribution is pursued to provide a basis for sustainable rural livelihoods or to satisfy the interests of the elite. The question seems relevant

45. Republic of Namibia (1998), *National Land Policy*, Windhoek: Ministry of Land, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, p.20, URL: www.odi.org.uk, Accessed on-30/may/2006

in view of the very wide definition beneficiaries, which has enabled members of the elite to benefit from land redistribution.

It is significant in this regard that neither the poverty Reduction Strategy for Namibia, which was approved by cabinet in 1998, nor the National Poverty Reduction Action Programme 2001-2005 which is based on it, pay much attention to land redistribution as a means to alleviate poverty in the long term. According to the Poverty Reduction Strategy, 'the agricultural base is too weak to offer sustainable bases for prosperity'. It foresees that in 'a quarter century from now' the large majority of the country's inhabitants... are likely to have moved into urban centers...'. These views reflect the conclusions of a World Bank study on poverty reduction' in those few areas where cultivation was possible on land presently formed by extensive methods.⁴⁶

Tenure Reform in Non-Freehold Areas

Tenure reform in the non-freehold or communal areas was not regarded as particularly important by policy makers. In view of the facts that the majority of Namibians are living off the land in communal areas and indications that traditional tenure rules and administrative structures are disintegrating, tenure reform in communal areas should enjoy a much higher priority. On the one hand, a programme of tenure reform would go some way to secure the customary rights to land and natural resources of rural people. On the other hand it would protect small-scale farmers on communal land against future land inequalities as local elites and agribusiness seek to secure rights to land. Finally, secure tenure relations in non-freehold areas may have a positive influence on investments and economic development in these areas that have been neglected under the Apartheid dispensation.

The Communal Land Reform Act which was passed in the latter half of 2002 and signed into law in early 2003 seeks to address some of these issues. In broad terms, the act provides for the registration of all land rights held in communal area. It

46. World Bank (1997), *Namibia: Rising to the Challenge of Poverty Reduction*, Washington, P.12

distinguishes two different kinds of rights to be recognized: (I) customary land rights; and (II) rights of leasehold.

With regard to customary land tenure the act recognizes and confirms the powers of traditional leaders to allocate and revoke rights in land. However, customary land administration will be formalized. Proposed Communal Land Boards will control customary allocations and revocations of land rights. After commencement of the act, applications for new allocations of land will have to be addressed in writing to the traditional authority once granted, the latter will have to inform Communal Land Boards about new allocations and furnish particulars with regard to such allocations to the board. Once the board has satisfied itself that a particular allocation does not infringe on the land rights held by another person, does not exceed the maximum area prescribed and does not fall into an area reserved for common usage, such a right will be registered by the communal land board and a certificate of registration will be issued to the applicant. In this way customary land rights will be legally protected.

Existing customary land right holders will have to apply to their respective land boards for recognition and registration of their land right. The criteria used in new allocations are applied to assess the legitimacy of such allocations. Should there be reason to doubt the validity of a claim or that there are conflicting claims, land boards will have to initiate a hearing.

The Act provides for the inheritance of customary allocations through the traditional authority of a particular area. These provisions are aimed to ensure that rights to land will remain in a particular family for as long as a family wishes to keep them. Any other transfers of customary rights can only occur with the written consent of the chief or traditional authority of a particular area.⁴⁷

The communal land reform act seeks to make unused communal land available to individuals under leasehold with a view to promote agricultural

47. Werner, W. (2003), *Land reform and Poverty Alleviation: Experiences from Namibia*, Paper Presented at the Conference on, "Land reform and Poverty Alleviation in Southern Africa", Pretoria P.14. URL: www.oxfam.org.uk, Accessed on-16/may/2006

development. This will effectively reduce the area of jurisdiction of traditional leaders by bringing customary land under the control of the state. The act empowers the Minister Of Lands to designate portions of a particular communal area with in which long-term leases may be granted for agricultural development purposes. Such designation has to be proceeded by consultations between the minister the land board and traditional authority of a particular communal area. Land Boards are only authorized to grant rights of leasehold if traditional authorities have consented to this. Should the latter refuse; the Land Board will submit the matter to arbitration.

Grantees of leaseholds may be required to survey their land at their own expense. Once surveyed, the leasehold will be registered in the Deeds office under the Deeds Registries Act, 1937.

The act also provides for the legalization of enclosures of communal pastures and prescribes an elaborate procedure for assessing such applications.

Finally, persons who are aggrieved by a decision of a traditional authority and / or Land Board will be able to appeal against such a decision to an appeal tribunal appointed by the Minister Of Lands.⁴⁸

The Affirmative Action Loan Scheme

An Affirmative Action Loan Scheme (AALS) was first implemented in early 1992. Its primary objective is to relieve grazing pressures in the non-freehold or communal areas by encouraging big livestock owners to purchase commercial farms. 49 In terms of the scheme, agri bank provides loan for a 25-year period at interest rates, which are subsidized by the government. Table 8 summarizes interest rates and government subsidies under scheme.

48. *ibid*, P.18

49. Republic of Namibia (1991), *National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question*, Vol.1. Windhoek: Office of Prime Minister, P.498, URL: www.nu.ac.zalcsds/publications, Accessed on-15/Jun/2006

TABLE-8

INTEREST RATES AND GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES FOR FULL-TIME COMMUNAL FARMERS, 1998

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 on
Applicant	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	8%	16%
Subsidy	16%	16%	16%	14%	14%	14%	12%	12%	8%	0%

Source: www.op.gov.na/agri.htm Accessed on-25/April/2006

Currently the following criteria are in place to qualify for an AALS loan;

- The applicant must be identified as a farmer in the communal areas. He/she must own a minimum of 150 large stock or 800 small stock or the equivalent thereof.
- Proof must be rendered by the authority of the communal area of the members of the applicants stock in the area.
- The applicant must furnish proof that he/she has removed his/her total stock out of the communal area.⁵⁰

Loans are granted against security of mortgage bond and productive use of land is insisted upon.

State guarantees were introduced to finance the difference between the purchase price of commercial farmland and the reasonable value of that land for agricultural and pastoral purposes. The latter valuation is based on what the land can produce, and is generally well below the market price. It was anticipated that communal area farmers might experience difficulties in financing this difference

50. Werner, W. and Vigne, P.(2000), "Resettlement Cooperatives in Namibia : Past and Future", *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 2(3), PP. 250-276.

Since 1992 a total of 231 full time farmers successfully applied for loans totaling N\$ 159.5 million under the Affirmative Action Loan Scheme to purchase 1.33 million hectares land in the free hold sub sector. Thirty one percent of this land was bought in the southern districts, accounting for only 13% of the total loan amount. The most popular districts were Gobabis where 50 people bought land, followed by Grootfontein where 44 people bought land. Outdo and Atiyiwarongo registered 35 and 25 purchases respectively. Table 9 provides brief summery.

TABLE-9

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION LOAN SCHEME: FULL-TIME FARMERS 1992-2001

Macro-Region	No. of loans	Ha. Purchased	% Of total	Amount granted	% of total
South	47	412,640	31	21, 152, 338	13
North	184	918, 131	69	138, 371, 497	87
TOTAL	231	1, 330, 771	100	159, 524, 135	100

Source: www.op.gov.na/agri.htm Accessed on-25/April/2006

The AALS was amended in the late 1990s to cater for part-time farmers as well. By 2002 a total of 137 part-time farmers obtained loans amounting to N\$ 84.1 million to purchase 758,219ha. of land one third of this land was bought in the south and the remaining two thirds in the northern and central areas. Only 12% of the loans were spent on land in the southern areas. Table 10 provides a summary.

TABLE-10

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION LOAN SCHEME: PART-TIME FARMERS 1992-2002

Districts	No. Of Loans	Ha. Purchased	% Of total	Amount granted	%Of total
South	30	249, 203	33	9, 806, 916	12
North	107	509, 016	67	74, 280, 200	88
TOTAL	137	758, 219	100	84, 087, 116	100

Source: www.op.gov.na/agri.htm Accessed on-25/April/2006

In total, 368 previously disadvantaged Namibians have benefited from the Affirmative Action Loan Scheme. Since 1992 they brought 2,088,980 hectares of freehold agricultural land through the scheme, almost four times as much as government has purchased for redistribution.

The role of donors

In 2000, the events that unfolded in Zimbabwe resulted in a huge increase in interest in land reform across in the region. Government in neighboring countries announced that land redistribution was to be greatly accelerated. At the same time, they gave under taking that land reform would proceed according to the agreed constitutional principles that protected private property rights. In both Namibia and South Africa, there is an unbridgeable gap between announced and the financial and administrative resources for realizing them. Throughout the region, donors are being asked to contribute to the resolution of the problem.⁵¹

However, donors find it difficult to justify funding any programme that does not impart directly on poverty reduction. As argued above, there is likely to be continuing scope through out the region for development aid, to redistributive reforms that will benefit the rural poor. However, support should not be confined to land redistribution. Support to countries strengthening the right of the rural poor through tenure reform should also be considered. The overarching rationale for assistance would be to support a more equitable distribution of land and economic opportunity and avoid agrarian conflicts, which could further disrupt the economy and civil society of the region.

Constitutional Provision for land reform

The immediate post-independence period was characterized by a policy and institutional vacuum. In particular, ethnically defined representative authorities that administered tribal homelands and the corresponding legislations were abolished.

51. Lister, S. (1991), *Aid, Donors and Development Management*, Windhoek: NEPRU, pp. 54-55

Regardless of whether the concept of tribal homelands is accepted or not, it can be argued that these provided communal farmers with a certain sense of security.

For all its positive aspects, the constitution of the Republic of Namibia did little to ameliorate this dilemma. While the right to private property is enshrined as a basic human right in the constitution, the latter does not offer similar protection of right to land and natural resources conferred under customary land tenure system.⁵² Instead, it vests ownership of communal land in the state. Article 100 stipulates that 'land, water and natural resources below and above the surface of the land. Shall belong to the state if they are not otherwise owned. An opinion is expressed that 'this section is meaningless until all other ownership rights are resolved; the state, by default, takes title to property after all other possible forms of ownership are determined'.

The National Land Policy reiterates the point that government is the owner of communal land. Acknowledging the provisions of schedule 5 of the constitution that all communal land is vested in the government, the policy commits government.

'To administer this land for the benefit of traditional communities residing on such land for the purpose of promoting the economic and social development of the Namibian people'.⁵³

A part from divesting residents of non-freehold areas of all ownership of land, some of the provisions of the constitution may have the unintended effect of undermining whatever tenure security people may enjoy under customary tenure arrangement. An example of this are some of the provisions contained in article 21(1) and (2), which provide for the free movement of people through out Namibia and the right to settle in any part of Namibia.

52. Manji, A. (2001), "Land Reform in the Shadow of the State: the Implementation of New Land Laws in Sub-Saharan Africa", *Third World Quarterly*, 22(3), PP.327-342

53. *ibid*

The National Land Policy is rather vague on how this ought to be interpreted. While it acknowledges these fundamental rights, it points out that they do not amount to 'land ownership or property rights'. This seems to suggest that these constitutional rights cannot be interpreted to mean a claim to property rights.

Article 66 which provides that 'both the customary and common law of Namibia.... shall remain valid to the extent to which such customary or common law does not conflict with this constitution or any other statutory law 'seemingly recognizes customary land law, and thus provides indirect protection.

Resolution 13 of the land conference may have also contributed towards increasing tenure insecurity. The resolution recommended that access to communal land be provided regardless of tribal or ethnic criteria and stated, with alias, that 'all Namibian have the right to live wherever they choose with in the national territory'.⁵⁴ Although the resolution also stated that in request on request access to communal land, 'applicants should take account of the right, and customs of the local communities living there' that was. More conveniently ignored when stronger communities elbowed their way into valuable grazing area of weaker and more marginal communities.⁵⁵

People's conference

The initial stages of the policy and legislative process in tackling the land question must be characterized as having been highly participatory. Underlying this approach was a commitment by government to a process of national consultations in order to reconcile opposing perceptions on the land questions. In his opening speech to the Land Conference, the President described thus commitment to consultation before formulation a national land policy as demonstrating government's commitment to democracy.⁵⁶ In addition he stated that.

54. Republic of Namibia(1991) *National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question*, Vol.1. Windhoek : Office of Prime Minister, P.35,URL: www.nu.ac.zalcsds/publications, Accessed on-15/Jun/2006

55. Wener, W.(1997), "Land Reform in Namibia: The First Seven Years", *Geo Forum*,21(2),pp.185-192

‘In having chosen the path of national consultation and participation in addressing the land question, my government hopes to have laid the basis for an on-going process of democratic consultation on other major issues as well.’⁵⁷

In order to facilitate a process of national consultation, the office of the Prime Minister was tasked to organize a National Conference on Land Reform and The Land Question, which was held in mid-1991. In order to qualify for an invitation to the conference, people had to prove that they were bonafide users of land. The conference brought together 500 participants from all over Namibia. The distribution of delegates at the conference was as follows: Agricultural Organisations-145 delegates: Community Organisation-105; Traditional Leaders-72; Wild Life and Tourist Organization -3; Religious Organizations -9; Women Organizations -21; Business Associations-3; Political Parties-50; other NGO -11; Parastatals-5; individuals-9; ‘Land Less Representatives’-2; Farm Workers-5; Individual Women-20. They deliberated for five days on pertinent issues regarding communal as well as commercial farmland.

There can be no doubt that the land conference was a dramatic departure from colonial practices which regard to the involvement of ordinary people in the policy process for the first time in the history of the country, large number of people were mobilized to discuss an important national issue. However, few if any attempts were made after 1991 to keep up the momentum that had developed with regard to public consultations prior to and during the land conference. Not only did consultations come to an end until 1996, but no action was taken on resolutions which addressed acute land management and land tenure issues in the communal areas.

Delays in policy formulation and government’s failure to consult civil society at large after the land conference increased demands that NGOs and civil society grouping should play a more prominent part in shaping land policy. To this end

56. Republic of Namibia (1991), *National Conference on Land Reform Act, 1995*, Windhoek : Office of Prime Ministe,p.6, URL: www.nu.ac.zalcsds/Publications, Accessed on-15/Jun/2006

57. *ibid*, P.7

Namibian NGOs established an NGO-working committee on land reform in March 1994 'in order to conduct a review of present reform measures and to provide a forum for the popular expression of opinions on the land question'. In September 1994 the committee hosted the people's Land Conference in Marietal, Southern Namibia. Although conducted on a smaller scale than the National Land Conference, the Marietal conference followed similar lines and procedures. Several pressing land issues were discussed in small groups and compiled into a report. As a result of the conference, the working committee under the secretariat of the Namibian Non-Governmental Forum, resolved to lobby government to make draft legislation and policies on land and natural resources available for public consultation before submitting to the National Assembly.

It would appear as if this process has yielded some results. The Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation has requested NANG to assist in conducting consultations. Several consultations have been submitted to a consultative conference on Communal Land Administration in September 1996 in Windhoek. Several traditional leaders and senior cabinet ministers from various regions attended the conference.

CHAPTER – 3

SOCIO – ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LAND REFORM IN NAMIBIA

The General Economic and social situation during independence

Although Namibians were and still are poor, like a number of other African countries, Namibia has abundant natural resources. There are about 50 minerals found in the country, including uranium, diamonds, copper, zinc and lead.¹ Its seawaters have plenty of good varieties of fish and it has good agricultural land suitable for crop cultivation and ranching.

The mining industry has historically been considered to be the pillar of Namibia's economy. At the time of independence, mining, agriculture and fishing contributed about 35-45 percent to GDP and 85-90 percent to export.² In 1992, mining and quarrying contributed 20.1 percent to GDP, coming second to 'government', which contributed 25.2 percent. The same year US\$ 454m was earned from the export of diamonds. They represented about 36 percent of total export earnings. Mining also contributed significantly to government revenue. Investment in mining came mainly from South African firms and western multi-national corporations. About two-thirds of investment in Namibia's mining industry came from multinational corporations based in south Africa.³

There were no Namibian interests. No manufacturing industries based on mining were developed. Minerals were simply exported unprocessed. At the same time mining companies remitted huge amounts of profits. Such remittances and individual externalizations of funds amounted to about 35% of GNP⁴. In this way the

1. Mehrotra, S.(1990), "The Economic Constraints Facing Free Namibia", in Vijay Gupta (ed.), *Independent Namibia : Problems and Prospects*, Delhi, Konark Publishers, PP.104-161

2. Asanti, S.K.B. and Asombang W.W.(1989), "An Independent Namibia: The Future Facing SWAPO", *Third World Quarterly*, 11(3), P.7

3. Rogers, B. (1976), *White Wealth and Black Poverty*, London: Green Wood Press, PP.192-211.

4. *ibid*

country was denied necessary funds for further development. According to SWAPO, not only were foreign firms in Namibia under taxed, but they also engaged in transfer pricing.

The lucrative cattle and Karakul ranching business was also monopolized by white settlers. Cattle had to be transported to South Africa for slaughtering and processing. South African customers bought the animals at below world market prices.

Generally the Namibian economy was also characterized by sectoral imbalance. Commercial agriculture was based mainly on ranching; large-scale food crop production remained neglected. Similarly, manufacturing was an insignificant sector of the economy. It did not account for more than four percent of GDP.

Hence, economic activity was mainly concentrated in primary production. However, mining and fishing were not big employers. About half of the economically active people were engaged in small-scale agriculture, that is 'subsistence' farming. In strict economic terms, they constituted the labor reservoir for the white dominated sector.⁵

In his independence address, president Nejoba set out as the main task of the new government the goal of achieving 'a society that provides opportunity and property for all'. However, as he was aware, enormous obstacles had to be surmounted first. A large number of the country's one and half million people, as many as two-thirds, were very poor. Most of the poor were black victims of Apartheid. Unemployment was high also. As many as 30% of the workforce was unemployed. Eighty-five percent of people in informal employment received wages below the poverty datum line (set by South Africa).⁶ Black to white income differentials were 1to25 and 1to12 in rural and urban areas respectively. There was also a wide gulf (1to6) between the income of the relatively well-off blacks and poor blacks.

5. Muvatera, N.S.(1990), "Man Power Issues in Namibia : Prospects for Black Advancement", *Southern African Political and Economy Monthly*, 3(8), P.11

6. *ibid*,P.1

Mainly as a result of deliberate South African policy of neglecting education and training for black the illiteracy rate was 68 percent. Another consequence was that skilled jobs both in the public and private sector were dominated by whites, while; black Namibians were mainly engaged in low paid unskilled jobs. Health care and other social services were inadequate. Infant mortality was as high as 106. Under the social pension scheme, which was universally applicable to people aged 60 years and over and to the disabled aged 16 years and over, different rates of benefits applied to different racial groups. Blacks received the lowest benefits. Many people who qualified were actually left out because of administrative inadequacies.⁷

The Namibian struggle for political independence was over. A new struggle began, struggle for economic independence, for development, for taking control of their natural resources, for an

economy that will benefit the whole population and put an end and to the plunder by South Africa and transnational capital. One of the first tasks of the South West Africa Peoples organization-SWAPO which had taken control of the government of Namibia was to restructure the Namibian economy.⁸

The SWAPO had inherited a country shaped by a century of foreign domination and disadvantage in the last decade by war, drought, under investment and falling commodity prices. SWAPO, not only had to confront economic under development of the past, but because of its socialist declarations a future clouded by an uncertain relationship with the western financial community which had close links with Apartheid regime Pretoria. Moreover, the pro-South Africa sections of the white Namibians were uncertain about their role in the economic machinery of Namibia. These elements had been fed by western controlled media, which has been spreading mis-information that SWAPO would go all out for large-scale nationalization and the white Namibians would be forced to give up their personal and

7. Kaure, A.(1990), "Provisions of Social Services in Namibia", *South African Political and Economic Monthly*, (SAPEM), 3(8), PP.25-26

8. Chhabra, S.(1990), "Tasks Facing SWAPO Leadership", in Vijay Gupta (eds.) *Independent Namibia: Problems and Prospects*, Delhi:Konark Publishers,PP.32-34

private property, their business and their jobs. The distortions by media arose by the fact that in its election manifesto SWAPO had not been shy in espousing “its belief in the moral superiority of socialism over capitalism”.

SWAPO’s Attitude on Nationalization and Land Reform-

In the course of liberation movement, land issues produced high nationalist feelings among Namibians ultimately strengthening the freedom struggle. The aspirations for return of land were more than those of land reform.⁹ Many black Namibians had expected their traditional land to be returned to them after independence. However, the Land Conference convened by the government in 1991 decided against this. It also decided against the idea of reparations being paid to blacks for the loss of their traditional lands.

By the time of independence, SWAPO had already abandoned the socialist programme adapted in 1976 under which it had pledged to redistribute land by giving it to the tillers.¹⁰ A very important economic plank of SWAPO is that it will not take away the vast stretches of land held by the white farmers. According to an estimate 65 percent of the farming land is owned by the white that constitute only seven percent of the population. But, SWAPO has been saying that the land owned by some absentee landlords, living in Germany and South Africa will be taken over to be distributed among the landless African majority.

It is the measure of SWAPO political sincerity and maturity that it wanted the white to continue staying on in independent and multi-racial Namibia. Namibia wanted the white professionals, doctors, lawyers, engineers and accountants to stay, also the white civil servants. He would like to see that the white provide continuity in profession and the administration promising no discrimination against them.

9. Malakar, S.N.(1995), *Land Reform Independent Namibia : Problems and Prospective*, New Delhi Jamia Millia Islamia Publication , Occasional Paper Nu-12, P.18

10. Kaela, C.W.(1996),*The Question of Namibia*,London:James curry Publication,p.76

A sort of economic and social status quo desired by a SWAPO ruled government would be taken to mean that the whites would continue to enjoy all the privileges.¹¹ SWAPO advocates a system encompassing the state will have ownership of significant part of the country's economic resources. No whole scale nationalization of the mines, land and other productive sector was however, envisaged in the foreseeable future. Equity formed the basis of SWAPO's vision of a 'just social order'.

SWAPO during its national independence struggle had operated from Angola and had close links with Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Ethiopia. In the period of over two decades it had closely watched the problems, which there revolutionary (referred to as socialist and/or Marxist) governments had faced in restructuring their economy. It was fully aware that dogmatic ideological position could cause disaster. It knew that its economic policy had to be pragmatic to be acceptable to those who were likely to invest in its growth. It also knew that Namibia suffered from a serious shortage of qualified personnel capable of taking over the task of growth of economy.¹²

Very few options were open before independent government headed by SWAPO to build a new structure for an independent Namibia. The SWAPO government must not allow any fall in the economic growth level, instead its new proposals should advance the growth rate to improve the living condition of majority of the people (whites owned an estimated 60% of private property and earn at least 10 times more than black on an average) and attempt to end social and regional disparities. So the problem is not of nationalization of white's property (industry, farms business etc.) But to so organize it that long deprived sections i.e. the blacks, do not continue to suffer. The SWAPO leadership realizes its needs the cooperation of the white community-in civil services and in private sector while moving towards greater local ownership and control.¹³

11. Chhabra, S.(1990), "Tasks Facing SWAPO Leadership", in Vijay Gupta (ed.), *A Century of Struggle Against Colonialism*, Delhi:Konark Publication,PP.41-42

12. Leys, C.and Saul, J.S.(1995), *Namibia's Liberation Struggle : The Two Edged Sword*, London : James Currey Publishers,P-31

13. Gupta, V.(1990), "Tasks Facing SWAPO Leadership", in Vijay Gupta (eds.) *Independent Namibia: Problems and Prospects*, Delhi:Konark Publishers,PP.32-34

Thus, land reforms are likely to be very high on the SWAPO agenda to build an independent economy. These reforms would be directed to end the present policies of land allocation on racial basis. This will enable transfer of land to the land less farm workers. Under the land redistribution programme some of the land held by the large land holders- white or black (absentee or resident owners)- will go to those who work on land but do not own it. This according to SWAPO does not mean full-scale nationalization of land. It would seek the establishment of a mixed sector made up of state farms, cooperatives, peasant family, farming and private commercial farming. "This strategy of mixed ownership is proposed to promote broad participation of the Namibia people in the country's agricultural production and in the sharing of its surplus value".¹⁴ The objective of these changes is to bring about a balance between stock ranching and crop production to make Namibia self- sufficient in food.

To achieve higher agricultural production and agro-industrial development, finances from mining sector would be transferred to the agricultural sector. The SWAPO proposes to invite foreign assistance to promote establishment of agro-industries grain mills beverage, distilleries, food proceedings and packing and canning factories, as well as small agricultural units for the production of agricultural implements. Other measures include ban on the export of unprocessed karakul pelts. SWAPO proposed to seek joint ventures for processing and manufacturing fashion industry in order to export the pelts as finished products.

The SWAPO had asked the white commercial farmers not to abandon their farms as independent Namibia will still offer them better opportunities for comfortable and secure economic undertaking than foreign countries.¹⁵

14. Ethiopion Herald (19th March 1989), Cited by S.N. Malakar, *Land Reform in Independent Namibia : Problems and Prospective*, Occasional Paper Nu. 12, Jamia Milia Islamia University, P.15

15. Gupta, V.(1990), "Plans for Economic Growth", in Vijay Gupta(ed.), *Independent Namibia: Problems and Prospects*, Delhi:Konark Publications, PP.87-104

Impact of Land Reforms in Namibia

Namibia is one of the type-1 reform state confronting the twin challenges of an unequal and racially-linked land ownership and chronic poverty in communal area. Although the Namibia Round Table Conference on poverty reduction in November 1995 identified landlessness as a major cause of poverty, it is, however, a truism that most of the land is as agriculturally marginal as it is unequally distributed between racial groups.¹⁶

For rural household, however, landlessness falls quite far down on a list of courses of poverty. A UNDP study in 1995 suggested that of ten important causes of rural poverty, landlessness was only the fourth most cited. A household income and expenditure survey done by the CSO also featured on a list of ten. Inserting enough, neither Namibia's official poverty reduction strategy, approved by cabinet in 1998, nor the National Poverty Reduction Action Programme for 2001-2005 links land reform to poverty reduction.

“ In other words the Namibian government does not view land redistribution as one of the major instrument in reducing poverty. In fact, there is an inexplicably pessimistic view expressed in the Poverty Reduction Strategy, namely that the agriculture base was too weak to offer a sustainable bases prosperity.¹⁷

In Namibia land reform is not just about correcting resources alienation. It is about completing the process of decolonization. This in part stems from largely unresolved issue of the future of landed white Africans in Type-1 reform state. Land reform policy has therefore tended to emphasize and deploy substantially high levels

16. Palmer, R.(2003), “Struggle to Secure and Defend the Land Rights of the Poor in Africa”, *Austrian Journal of Development Studies*, XIX(1),PP.6-21

17. Sherbaume, R.(2001), “Rethinking Land Reform in Namibia: Any Room for Economics?”, Windhoek: Institute for Public Policy Research(IPPR opinion,13),P.15,URL: www.odi.org/uk, Accessed on-30/May/2006

of the resources to achieve the de-racialization goal. Initially there was a desire to do so without compromising the foreign exchange earning capacity of the large-scale commercial farms sector. However, addressing parliament on 25th February 2004, Prime Minister Mr. T.B. Gurirab indicated that some 240,000 Namibians still awaited resettlement. Increasing impatience among the electorate at the slow pace of de-racialization has thus seen some moves towards compulsory land acquisition - beginning March 2004. Land reforms in Namibia have proceeded via a two-pronged strategy since independence from South Africa in 1990. One strategy has been to de-racialize commercial farming and farm ownership through targeted assistance, initially to the elite among communal farmers, and since the late 1990s, the new bureaucratic and political elite.¹⁸

Thus, the state has assisted groups previously discriminated against to participate in the land sales market. Given the relatively small size of the Namibian population, the rate of transfer to a new black elite is often hailed as a success by regional standards.

Supply Led Land Reforms In Namibia

While it was possible to initiate demand led land purchase assistance, soon after independence it was not until the mid -1990s that the National Resettlement policy established a clear framework for resettlement. The delay in coming up with a policy, and actually setting up a programme, has been attributed to a critical shortage of technical staff. Under the Agricultural (commercial) Land Reform Act No.6 of 1995 and the National Resettlement Policy White Paper of 2001, this programme targets poor Namibians from communal lands, as well as commercial farm workers. The state purchases land from willing sellers. Ideally beneficiaries should be landless bonafide 'small holder farmers' with some livestock and some income. Between its inception in the mid-1990s and 2003, some 829, 486 ha. Have been bought at a total cost of N \$ 121 million to resettle 30, 720 households.¹⁹

18. *ibid*, P.17

19. Cliffe, L. et al (1994), *The Transition to Independence in Namibia*, Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner, P.205

A report by Namibia's Legal Assistance center makes the observation that "the reality of life in the resettlement projects is of settlers being dumped on a few hectares of poor land, equipped with hoes and shovels, and expected to earn a living". Such lack of support is seen to drive resettlement households in cycles of vulnerability and poverty, which has required the state to maintain some level of welfare support. In some cases, households are reported to be sub-letting the newly – allocated land to communal farmers in need of grazing, for a fee.

Thus, supply-driven land reform in Namibia is a process that has provided land but is yet to make a difference in the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. In Namibia fixation with numbers (of beneficiaries, hectares, sums of money) and the rate of de-racialization has meant an inadequate focus on the transforming variables – a factor that has meant resettlement schemes become an extension of the poverty traps found in the communal lands of these respective states.

Problems Of Land Reforms In Namibia

There is a combination of factors due to which the land reforms are not being implemented effectively in Namibia –

- The process of de-colonization and transfer of political power had been one of controlled change as a result of internally and externally negotiated settlements. The legitimate governments were required to honor a rule of law based on the recognition of existing property relations. Land owners at independence, therefore, were legally entitled to their farms and protected by common law – as painful as such endorsement of previous injustice in some cases might be. Namibia's president Sam Nujoma paints a misleading picture when he suggests that as a result of an imperialist conspiracy Namibians were denied the opportunity to address the land issue differently. As a matter of fact, Namibians-as represented by the liberation movement SWAPO – were part of a deal: 'land and property rights were never the subject of public debate' and the 'aspect of the Bill of Fundamental Human Rights' that gave guarantees to exiting property owners

received surprisingly little attention during the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly prior to independence.²⁰

- The hasty step for nationalization could have proved harmful because the entire production process and mechanism of organizing land production could have collapsed. The fear of nationalization had left a negative impact on white farmers who were vital factor in organizing land farming. They had already shown their disinterest in production, as the production had gone down from 14.8% real growth rate in 1990. Such deterioration might cause a deepening of the agrarian crises in the country, if the government shows any inclination towards hasty land reforms in years to come. White farmers and foreign companies can immediately make up their mind to shift their deposit to abroad in case of nationalization. This transfer of deposits could only have caused a great loss to the Namibian economy.

As most of the high profile jobs and civil services are under white population, alienating them would have caused collapse of government, as in that case Namibia would have needed alternative to compensate for the vacuum created by blacks and blacks in Namibia are not adequately trained yet to shoulder the Responsibility.²¹

- Political office bearers and bureaucrats used their energy during the initial period of consolidating post colonial power structures to secure their own farms, often through access to land provided by the state. Members of the new political elite were among the beneficiaries of drought relief through state financed drilling of bore holes on their private farms, thereby adding revenue and aid funded to their property. That is why some scholars have coined the term ‘fat – cat’ land reforms to recognize the idea that the new bureaucratic and political elite

20. Malakar,S.N.(1995), “Land Reforms in Namibia: problem And Prospective”, Occational Paper nu.12, New Delhi:Jamia Milia Islamia publication,PP.12-13

21. *Namibia Human Development Report*(1998), “Environment and Human Development in Namibia”, Windhoek ; United Nations Development Programme(UNDP),P.45

have access to state resources to participate in the private land sales market, while ordinary poor households who need the land to make a living have still not benefited.

- Unfortunately, the possession of land is associated with wealth-even if this might be the wrong conclusion (at least in its general form): aggregated data for Namibia suggest that the land utilized by the (hardly existing) ‘average commercial farmer’ (and his laborers) is not yielding the high monetary income one might expect: “If total value added by commercial agriculture (N\$ 565 million in 1997) were evenly divided between the 6,337 farms, the average value added per farm would amount to about N\$ 90,000, including wage bill to an average of six farm workers, return to capital employed, land rents and own labor.”²²

This does of course neither imply that there are no wealthy ranchers, nor question that commercial farmers are much better off than most of those in the communal areas, whose average annual income is estimated according to the same source at about N\$ 3,000. The point is however, that among commercial (white) farmers land ownership-even under ‘ordinary’ circumstances is not taken for granted a guaranteed and secure existence. There is even speculation that with the introduction of the land tax commercial farming units will have to close down due to lack of economic sustainability. Farming in Namibia, is increasingly ‘a rich man’s hobby’. As he suggests it turns into a life style choice for the urban rich prepared to subsidize their farms from other principle sources of income. A government policy trying to encourage black Namibians into commercial farming, therefore, has to rely on heavy subsidization - just as it had been the case under the deliberate policy of settling farmers from South Africa’s poor white Afrikaans speaking under class in the then ‘fifth province’ from 1920s onward. In a striking analogy to this earlier period, land policy is therefore in the first place about pigmentation of the skin.

“While some have tried to argue that land reform is important to boost the

22. Sherbourne, R.(2003), “A Rich Man’s Hobby”, in J. Hunter (ed.), *Rethinking Land Reforms in Namibia*, Windhoek: Institute for Public Policy Research, PP.8-18

country's economy and reduce poverty, in their hearts most people know that the Namibians should own more of Namibia's commercial farm land. In reality everything else-agricultural out-put, the treatment of farm workers, poverty reduction, environmental, sustainability...is very much secondary.”²³

- Lawmakers have shown reluctance in implementing policies favorable for land reforms. It can be clearly seen in the fact that there has been delay in imposing land tax despite the fact that it is an obvious tool for at least reformist social transformation based on generated revenue. While the Agricultural (commercial) Land Reform Act of 1995 provided the legal frame work, it took almost another decade until taxes are likely to be finally introduced during the fiscal year 2004/2005 with the adoption of a land tax bill.

Also painfully slow was the action with regard to the purchase of farm land for resettlement purposes. By the mid-1990s, the Namibian authorities had acquired only some 100,000 hectares of free hold land for redistribution – less than a handful of so-called commercial farms.²⁴ After a decade of independence, the farm land bought by the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation amounted to 54 farms, totaling 341,000 hectares.²⁵ For many years, the Ministry did not even spend the annual budget allocated for the purchase of farms. The problem was not mainly the reluctance of commercial farmers to abandon their property within the ‘willing seller – willing buyer’ policy advocated. In contrast:

“By 2001 the government has been offered 759 commercial farms. A total 505 of these farms were turned down, leaving them for sale in the private sector. The government has shown interest in 254 farms since 1991, or about one farm in three put on sale, but only actually purchased 97 for land reform purposes, only about 13% of the farms sold in Namibia over this ten year period”

23. Sachinknya, L.M. (2003), “Land reform in Namibia and Zimbabwe : A Comparative Perspective”, in J.Hunter (ed.), *Rethinking Land Reform in Namibia*, Windhoek: Institute for Public Policy Research, P.74

24. Werner, W. (2001), “The Land Question in Namibia”, in I. Diener and O. Graaefe (ed.), *Land Reforms and Land Rights in Southern Africa*, Windhoek: The Namibia Economic Research Unit (NEPRU), P.272

25. Werner, W. (2000), “Agriculture and Land”, in H. Melber (ed.), *Namibia : A Decade of Independence : 1990-2000*, Windhoek: The Namibia Economic Research Unit (NEPRU), P.45-48

It may be said that strategy formulated in the white paper of resettlement policy of 2001 has so far failed not really because of a lack of farms on the market. If the quality of the Land on offer would not promote a meaningful redistributive effect by resettling people, it would actually support the argument that Namibia's climatic and environmental constraints do simply not allow to generate circumstances under which people would be enabled on a meaningful scale to make a decent living from the land.

Inadequate government capacity for land reform is a recurring problem, not only in Namibia. The relevant government agencies are short of skilled and experienced staff and suffer a high rate of staff. Poor co-ordination between agencies responsible for resettlement and/or former support are a further constraint.

NGOs and academics often call for land redistribution to be simplified and accelerated. Yet its complexity in a constitutional democracy tends to be greatly underestimated by those who have not tried it. A numerous and widely displayed army of well-trained field staff is essential to inform people of their entitlements and to facilitate the many and complex legal, financial and administrative tasks involved. A related requirement is that of adequate land valuation, survey and public land tenure records. In the absence of these, landowners can easily frustrate land acquisition or benefit through inflated prices.

Adequate post-settlement support must also be provided if new farmers are to succeed. The numbers and type of field staff required will vary with the type of farming system. Where customary groups acquires private livestock farms, adjacent to communal areas, it is a simple matter to remove the fences and extend the tribal commonage. Where the use of resettled land is to be changed (e.g. From ranching to mixed farming), more support will be needed for infrastructure, land clearing and initial ploughing as was the case with many projects in Zimbabwe in 1980s.

The Collapse of the Soviet Union And East European System have hampered the process of stepping up a radical reforms now Namibia could not expect any support from international community, which it would had easily got and utilized for countering the pressure by the western capitalist democracies. Now in this unipolar world dominated by American and west European capitalism, Namibia runs the danger of being ex-communicated and imposition of international sanctions on the country as was in the case of Zimbabwe, after it adopted the radical land reforms in 2000. Western countries have also increased the pressure on Namibia to prevent it from proceeding on the path of Zimbabwe.²⁶

And lastly as in Zimbabwe, the issue of farm workers is becoming more acute as land redistribution progresses. Re distributive land reform in Namibia faces a particular dilemma with regard to farm laborers. The dilemma is determined to a large extent by the fact that the land targeted for distribution is of a marginal nature with limited scope for intensification. At present, the commercial farming sector employs on an average one laborer and his dependents on 1,000 hectares of land. In terms of the recommendations of The Land Reform Advisory Commission, allocations of agricultural land should not be less than 1,000 ha. In the central and northern regions and at least 3,000 hectares in the more arid south. A rough calculation suggests that sustainable redistributive land reform will not necessarily put more people on the land than are currently employed in the commercial farming sector.

More to the point, however, it must be assumed that most farm workers on redistributed land have lost their jobs with out compensation.²⁷ At present no integrated plan exists to accommodate farm laborers with in the wider ambit of land reform and rural development. For as long as this is not in place, farm laborers are likely to be the losers of land reform, and in a very profound sense, redistribution would solve one problem: the need of the land less by creating another one: land less and unemployed agricultural workers.

26. Malakar, S.N. (1995), *Land Reform In Post Independent Namibia : Problem and Prospective*, New Delhi : Jami Millia Islamia, Publication, Occasional Paper No. 12, P.13

27. Werner, W. (2002), "Promoting Development Among Farm Workers: Some Options for Namibia", NEPRU Research Report No. 24, Windhoek: Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit, P.24, URL:www. Oxfam.org.uk, Accessed on-16/May/2006

Land and Agrarian Question in Settler Africa

In Settler Africa, the legacy of Settler colonial land and livestock expropriations which accompanied colonial conquest, and the nature and extent of reparations, which are demanded, based on 'living memory' and as an element of resolving the national question.

This nationalist land question of Sovereign right and of redressing racial and ethnic imbalances in property and economic relations has tended to be underestimated in spite of the numerous indigenous land struggles evident today. Land reform programmes in this situation where compensation of current large land holders is considered almost normative, force popular expectations that former colonial masters should pay the victims of current land reform expropriations, if not also the victims of colonial expropriation, who have suffered long term loss.²⁸ Some countries with historic land problems including various Latin American countries, Japan, Taiwan and so forth, had received financial support for their land reform from former colonial or imperial (USA) powers, especially in the context of cold war political hegemonic efforts, reparations for colonial land losses in Africa have not been adequately addressed. African governments the Zimbabwe government in particular, allege that racism and protection by international donors of their land owing 'Kith and king' and their capital in Africa's at the center of the land reform dilemma land of the political controversy current structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and poverty reduction strategies, which define lending and development assistance on condition of neo liberal economic and governance reform undermine national capacities to redress these land grievances according to the 'rule of law'. This feature emphasizes the colonial and external dimension of Africa's land question and reform processes, and the political controversy of market driven land reform strategies in the context of neo liberal 'globalization'.

Consequently, demands for agrarian reform in Settler Africa have struck at the heart of the dominant national/cultural identities through which the conditions of

28. Mamdani, M.(1996), *Citizens and Subjects : Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* , Prince Town University Press, U.K., P-36

super-exploitation are reproduced. In Africa however the issues of race and class have been strongly politicized for a longer period²⁹ and armed national liberation struggles against colonialism intensified these. The attainment of majority rule across the continent, with in the neo-colonial framework, was characterized by the nurturing of small indigenous extraverted bourgeoisies combined to defend nationally the disarticulated pattern of accumulation.³⁰

Therefore, Africa has land questions whose social significance cannot be overstated. Land scarcity, denial of access to natural resources by large landholders and the state, through laws that exclude many, as well as land privatization, all contributes to human distress, poverty, landlessness, homelessness and so forth.

Conflict Over Land Reform in Southern Africa

Colonial land policies institutionalized racial inequity with regard to land in Southern Africa. Recent attempts to confront the consequences of historical land expropriation, as well as to redress contemporary land-based inequities and discriminatory legislation and institutions, have generated renewed racial conflict in the sub region. Land-related conflicts today arise increasingly from initiatives to forcibly repossess rights to land and its natural resources. The greatest Threat to Security in Southern Africa lies in unequal land ownership patterns in countries where poor people's livelihoods depend on farming. Formal employment is unable to absorb the numerous unemployed, land short, landless and homeless.³¹ Land conflicts along racial lines in Zimbabwe suggest that reconciliation without justice and social integration of whites is fragile at best.

The legacy of racially unequal land control, confronts mainly the former settler colonies of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, as well as Malawi Swaziland and Botswana, which experienced low-intensity settlerism. The independence

29. Fanon, F. (1966), *The Wretched of the Earth*, London: Penguin Books, P.36

30. Mayo, S. (2001), "The Land Occupation Management and Democratization in Zimbabwe; Contradictions of Neo Liberalism", *Journal of International Studies*, 30(2), PP. 311-330

31. Tevera, D. and S. Mayo (2000), *Environmental Security in Southern Africa*, Harare: SAPES Books, P.17-18

constitutions guaranteed the protection of private property by sanctifying willing-seller-willing-buyer approaches to the disposal of freehold land for its redistribution.

A major problem in addressing the land conflict is the racially based ideological distortion that shrouds social, political and economic debates about land in Southern Africa. The key land reform myths of interest here are that:

- 1 the land rights held by white minorities over the land they expropriated historically are not only legally valid but also socially and politically legitimate;
- 2 the freehold land holding system – which, in the case of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa is white dominated – and private land markets are efficient and superior to customary (so-called “Communal”) tenure, thus justifying their preservation in the hands of minority white landowners. In general, the so-called “communal” land tenure is therefore considered a constraint to productivity and commercial farming;
- 3 the post colonial land-reform policies are irrational and undermine food security and confidence in the economy because they place the short-term political problem of redressing historical and racial imbalances ahead of economic stability;
- 4 Small holders misuse their land ecologically, while white farmers utilize their land efficiently in terms of the scale of area used and yields per unit of land; and
- 5 White farmers are generically superior technologically and are efficient producers while black farmers are subsistence farmers who contribute little to the economy.

These myths reflect an historic understanding of the origins and development of the white-controlled large-scale farm sector, ignorance of the important role played by black small holder farming in the region and the deep-rooted racism used to justify inaction on land reform.

Settler colonialism and land expropriation are at the root of the land and race problem. Conflict today results from part violence over access to land and natural resources during pre-colonial conquests that continued in the colonial period, during which there was polarization along racial lines due to the ill treatment of blacks by whites in farms, mines and towns. While the primary motive was land expropriation, proletarianization was instituted as a means of turning blacks into a cheap labor force

on farms and in mines.³² In order to develop a manufacturing base for white consumption, the white settler regime had to expropriate land as the key means of production, followed by exploitation of cheap black labor. Greater national control by whites in colonial legislatures found expression in an institutional framework strongly biased in favor of the interests of monopoly control overland by whites. By owning the most and best of the land, whites gained control over black farmers in the hinterlands by forcing the farmers to work for terms set by the whites.

White farmers have always been able to rely on the police, the judiciary, white parliaments and white technical experts to protect their absolute control over land. They have often acted as though they had absolute power and control over the lives of the black farm workers and other people who lived on their land. "Assault and murder are common place and very few of the whites were prosecuted even when charges were laid".³³ In the guise of protecting landed property, the colonial state created administrative systems for the white settlers and excluded the indigenous blacks.

Beyond race, there are other land conflicts precipitated by ethnicity with numerous minority groups being denied access to land. In Botswana, the land of the so-called "Bushmen" was expropriated by large mining concerns for diamond mining, with piecemeal compensation to the tribes. In Zimbabwe, while the ethnic dimension is currently clouded, there are tendencies to question the land rights of minorities and long-standing migrants. The Herero in Namibia and the Maasai in Tanzania, both minority ethnic groups, have suffered the same fate, as land expropriated from the white landowners has tended to be transferred to the majority ethnic groups. As a result, the original claimants have suffered from lack of land rights.

The White Commercial Farm Economy

It has become an almost indelible Southern Africa perspective that commercial

32. Arrighi, G. (1973), "The Political Economy of Rhodesia" in G. Arrighi and T. Saul (eds.) *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa*, Monthly Review Press New York, PP. 87-103

33. Claassins, A. (1989), *Umhlaba Rural Land Straggles in Transvaal in 1980s*, Cape Town :Trac/Black Sash Publication, P.15

farming is large scale and practiced by white landowners, while subsistence farming is practiced by the black peasantry. Although in a few instances there are piecemeal efforts to “buyout” black elites into large-scale farming through affirmative action programmes, large-scale commercial farming remains dominated by whites in terms of land ownership, value of production and the “social status” associated with it.

Competition for land from black elites tends to have been contained through restrictions on land sales in the communal areas and on racial grounds, on freehold zones during the colonial and postcolonial periods. Thus, a few rural elites have been able to use land as a basis for attracting credit, while white dominate agricultural financial loans. Moreover, blacks could not, by law, consolidate their communal area land for commercial production, as this was seen to lead to stiff competition against white farmers.³⁴ Protection of the white farming economy was also found with in export agriculture, through marketing policy and infrastructure, as well as in production, increasingly, domestic food markets and labor-intensive commodities for export markets, such as cotton, are dominated by black small holders. However, due to the location of communal areas far away from main lines of transport, their returns are relatively marginal.

State subsidies have historically been used to support white farmers because they are considered key in exports, while the food security concept was used to augment subsidies to the large-scale commercial forming sector. Colonial and postcolonial regimes have supported research stations located in white farming areas, and have focused the development of infrastructure (public dams, roads and communication and power networks) among white farmers to the exclusion of blacks. This has widened the differential productivity of white agriculture compared to that of the black peasantry.

To date, the racially blind land policy in Southern Africa does not accept international mainstream agricultural economics debates, which argue that smaller-sized farms tend to use their land more productively in terms of higher unit yields and use of labor. The trend based on self-exploitation of domestic labor in peasant

34. *ibid*,P.27

households. Particularly of female and child labor which has led to impressive small farm performance in Malawi and Zimbabwe, has not adequately changed beliefs about black small holder efficiency.³⁵ The belief in the greater efficiency of large farms has also been a key constraint to progressive land policy in non-settler states before and after independence.

In 1980s, land policies in Southern Africa promoted individual indigenous capitalist farmers who were drawn from the ranks of senior politicians civil servants, retirees and other formerly non-agrarian indigenous business people. Once again, macroeconomic and agricultural policy regimes ensured that various resources, such as credit, foreign currency and infrastructure, were mainly allocated to both white and indigenous large capitalist farmers. The effects of such preferential resource allocations were wrongly taken to imply that large-scale farming was more effective than smallholder farming in Southern Africa. This had the effect of legitimizing the expansion of large-scale land holdings and discouraging land reform in those countries where growing land ownership imbalances were exacerbating land shortages, land degradation and rural poverty.

Environmentalism and White Control of Tourism

Southern African environmental discourses tend to regard land husbandry by blacks as intrinsically poor, implying that the environment will collapse if land is redistributed. The perception is that only whites value and nurture the environment, while agronomic practices of blacks, such as inter cropping, are thought to destroy the soil. Thus the “conventional” settler introduced system of agriculture-planting crops in straight lines, and using advanced technology and chemicals, which again, the blacks are thought to be incapable of using are considered superior systems. However, recent research has disproved those notions.

Yet, indigenous technical knowledge promoted by liberal environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seems to suffer from a lack of real agronomic

35. Weiner, D. et al (1985), “Land Use and Agrarian Productivity in Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 23(2), PP. 205-232

alternatives that can take blacks in communal areas beyond current community – based natural resource projects that do not improve the standards of living of the majority. The common middle-class perception is that the poor degrade land while the white large-scale commercial sector uses land efficiently. This belief underlies the excessive focus of NGO Schemes on “protecting” land and “educating” the peasantry on sustainable land use, rather than an advocacy for land redistribution.³⁶

NGOs are at the root of the further alienation (transfer) of natural resources and monopolistic control of tourism by white minority companies in alliance with regional and multinational corporations. In countries such as Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa white individuals, companies and regional mega-tourism ventures have expropriated land in the coastal zones. In the past, racial discrimination meant that blacks could not have access to holiday resorts.

More importantly, the cost of coastal prime land for tourism development was made artificially high to deny access to blacks. Fighting for access to beaches and fishing rights on oceans was therefore central to the liberation struggles in those countries that were not land-locked.³⁷ The project of subjugating blacks is under-pinned by the discourses on environmental aestheticism(ecoculture, ecotourism), which now claim to preserve primordial black cultures as part of the image of the African wilderness. Thus, ecotourism allocates monies to trickle into landless black communities, while the bulk of the benefits of land control rest with external financiers and safari operators. Furthermore through the so-called Trans boundary “peace parks” involving two or more countries, global capital has found an avenue for land expropriation in the context of foreign direct investment. In Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, many of the black, white and foreign elites tend to allocate to themselves large tracts of land for commercial farming or tourism and, in addition, lobby the state for favorable tourism policies. The marginalization of the majority of the people tends to create political conflicts with those minority groups who seek to control such benefits. The political and economic consequences of those problems in the region are

36. Adams, M., Sibamdaetal S. (2000), “Land Tenure Reform and Rural Livelihoods in Southern Africa”, in C. Toul Min and J.Guan (eds) *Evolving Land Rights, Policy and Tenure in Southern Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, PP. 72-108

37. Binswanger, H. and Deincingen, K.(1993), “South Africa Land Policy : The Legacy of History and Current Option”, *World Development*, 21(9), PP. 1451-1475

broadly the same: poverty, enforced high population density uncustomary lands, land degradation, lack of resources to invest in adequate land management and political uncertainty.

Post-Colonial Aspects of the Land Problem and Its Global Dimensions

The current wave of neo liberal interpretations of the land question, which emphasizes liberal political and market rights of existing land owners-rather than social justice, popular social rights and the redistribution of resources is fundamental to the structural adjustment prescriptions facing most African countries. These economic and political reforms in Southern Africa promote the interests of white business, black middle classes and global capital, rather than the survival and economic needs of the rural poor and working classes. The present focus on democratization and the rule of law in the land reform discourse not only protects minority land rights over those of indigenous people, but also polarizes society along a continuum of artificially defined value difference.

There is a perception that national and global coalition of industrial and agricultural capital aim to protect the property rights and benefits of a few white minorities, while paying lip service to land reform and poverty reduction. Increasingly global conventions such as those of the World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), place countries in the South under pressure to strike a balance between sustainable development and land reform. The NGOs, largely led by the middle class and following neo liberal development agendas, emphasize the “Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) discourses rather than land reforms that challenge resource ownership patterns as a basis of addressing environmental problems.

Negotiated and market assisted land reforms are now being promoted by global institutions such as the World Bank³⁸ as a method of conflict resolution

through the provision of fluiding, although for the last two decades their emphasis has been on market-based reform. However, market-assisted land reforms tend to protect and empower white landowners who have greater leverage in land transactions, leading to the transfer of unsuitable land for popular resettlement requirements. Yet the same global institutions also call for export incentives and the protection of private investment through national laws and global conventions such as the WTO, which do not favor the mainly black small holders. The most destructive of these contradictory global market-based policies is the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy. Whose subsidies have increased smallholder poverty, without supporting land reform.

Contested Settler Notions of Land Size

In the former settler colonies, per capita arable land ownership has been declining due to an increase in population in the communal areas. The small gains made by piecemeal land resettlement have been severely eroded due to population increase. However, the greatest remaining security threat lies in the fact that a few white farmers own most of the best arable land in oversized farms, white poverty among the majority has been increasing. While poor black small holders and the landless call for increased land redistribution, rural elites call for access to larger plots on the commercial farms. Zimbabwean bureaucrats have recently prescribed land size ceilings in all of the natural regions, based on rather out dated notions of what farm sizes are required for 'viable' commercial farming.

Farm sizes in the region reflect the trends in land ownership. In Namibia the average size of a white Large Scale Commercial Farm (LSCF) is 5,700 hectares. In Zimbabwe the average is 2,500 hectares. In the communal areas, the average farm size is roughly two hectares, and in resettlement areas it is five hectares. In South Africa, 28.5 percent of the farms are larger than 1,000 hectares. The resettlement programmes in the region are proceeding on the basis of small-sized farms for blacks averaging

38. Berry, S.(1993), *No Condition is Permanent : The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Sahara Africa*, Madison: University of Wisconsin, PP. 127-132

less than 10 hectares of arable land in Zimbabwe. Land reform based on controlling farm sizes through ceilings has not been pursued in most countries.

This leaves a few landowners holding outrageously large tracts of land using the cut-off point of over 10,000 hectares owned either through company or individual title and as single or multiple farms, about 66 landowners (with 158 farms) occupy over two million hectares of Zimbabwe's land. Most of these farms are multiple-owned company farms. Eight individuals, for instance, together owned 13 farms occupying 158,531 hectares of which 29 percent of the area was owned as multiple farms. Multiple farm ownership, whether by companies or individuals, is thus, a decided feature of Zimbabwe's landed gentry.³⁹

The criteria used to determine viable farm sizes are based upon a legacy of white settler notions of "small-scale" farms as subsistence oriented, while the large-scale white farms are considered "commercial". Although this categorization is posited as a function of different resource levels, there is still a clear class or racial (social) element to it. Large land sizes are said to be necessary for mechanized agriculture, such as the use of combine harvesters, which blacks are said to be unable to acquire. The large-sized lands are said to provide leverage for multiple land uses on a single farm, including leaving some of the land lying fallow for some of the time.

In order to conceal the underutilization and speculative uses of land, white commercial farmers and multinational companies have tended to convert their land to wildlife ranching. Nonetheless, investing in game ranching or tourism in the form of conservancies requires expropriation of large-sized lands, which in some countries, is achieved through land consolidation. Such lands are held in various share-holding structures that remain dominated by small groups of white landowners and exclude the majority blacks, who, in turn, contest such arrangements through the illegal "occupation" of lands. The tourism sector has excluded blacks because it is believed that marketing tourism products is too technical for black smallholders, who it is argued, should concentrate on less technical efforts, for example, raising crops such as

39. Chitigo, T. (2000), "Land violence and Compensation: Reconceptualizing Zimbabwe's Land and War Veterans debate", *Tack Two*, 9(1), PP.1-27

maize and sunflower, rather than horticulture.⁴⁰

The racist notion is buttressed by the belief that blacks require land only for home consumption and residence and not for commercial use. However, the output performance of small holders, including resettled black farmers and those who have invested in peri-urban areas, demonstrates that with adequate access to land, blacks can contribute substantially to domestic and export markets. Unfortunately, white farmers and some donor circles continue to pursue the misplaced notion that when blacks obtain large-sized land through state support, it is only a reflection of unproductive cronyism. However, since historically whites have obtained large-sized lands through the same procedures, which were aimed at commercializing farming, such notions are unfounded.

Politics and Demand for Land Redistribution

The demand for land redistribution, in terms of redressing the historical and racially grounded inequities and of meeting the growing needs of both the black poor (rural and urban) and black elite has been a consistent feature of Southern African politics and policymaking. Recently, most of the countries in the region have been formulating land policies in response to public pressure for redistribution. These efforts are dominated by official perspectives that tend to emphasize the conversion of customary tenure systems to private freehold land tenure systems. Most official analyses of the land question have, however, tended to underestimate the nature and scale of demand for land redistribution, and to ignore the racial tensions that have persisted as a result of the unfinished land reform agenda.

The demand for land reform takes various forms and arises from various sources. These include formal and informal demands; legal and underground or illegal, forms of demand for land redistribution; demands that may be based upon the restitution of historic rights; and contemporary demands based upon different needs.

40. World Bank (1995), *Zimbabwe Achieving Shared Growth: Country Economic Memorandum, Vol.2*, World Bank: Washington, D.C., P. 632

The various socio-political organizations that mediate such demands include civil society organizations, farmers' unions, political parties, war veterans' associations, business representative's associations, community-based organizations and traditional structures. Such structures are central in the evolution of the demand for land redistribution. The social content of these structures, however, is decidedly racially polarized in Southern Africa, while the class composition of the "visible" policy actors has been elitist.

Since the de-colonization of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia starting in the 1980s, the debate on land reform has been mainly focused on market instruments of land transfer, although these have failed to redress the legacy of racially inequitable land ownership. Despite broad consensus among governments, the landless, landowners and the international community on the need for land reform in the sub-region, the land reform debate has remained shallow.⁴¹ This is mainly because the predominantly urban-led civil society has not formally embraced the land reform agenda due to the enduring, class-based orientation of its leadership, especially in the NGO movement. This has relegated rural social movements on land reform to informal politics, while giving prominence to more organized, middle-class civic groups and policy organizations that typically advocate market-based methods of land reform and liberal rights issues.

The onset of structural adjustment programmes, as well as multi-party "democratization" regimes, have reinforced the liberal dimension of the land debate, which "opposition" movements have adopted in the process of transition to a liberal economy, however, informal rural politics, and land occupation in particular, have remained the primary sources of advocacy for radical land reform and, indeed, have succeeded in keeping land reform on the agenda. Over time, the salient land demands for the black middle classes and elites within civil society organizations, and both the ruling and opposition parties, were made within a liberal electoral and human rights framework, which avoided the fundamental issues of economic restructuring and

41. Basselt, T.J. (1993), "The Land Questions and Agricultural Transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa", in T.J. Basselt and D.E. Crumney (eds.), *Land in Africa Agrarian System*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, PP. 1-26

redistribution of resources.

The race issue emerges in debates about land reform because the land to be acquired is expected to come from largely white-owned land, and the beneficiaries are black. The reality is that the state has had to respond to agitation by black social movements, traditional leaders, rural community leaders and black affirmative action pressure groups to facilitate land reform as a basis for healing the wounds of past grievances. Attempts to address the land question tend to be construed as racism on the part of those demanding land from the state, although land shortages and needs are real.

Historically, Southern Africa, in general, has not had an organized civil society that has made radical demands for land reform or land redistribution. Under colonial rule, the land cause was led by liberation movements, and in the 1970s, was pursued by means of armed struggle. In the postcolonial period, the civil society groupings that have existed have been predominantly middle class, with strong international aid linkages that have militated against radical land reform, while formal grassroots organizations have tended to be appendages of middle class driven intermediary civil society organizations. The rural operations of civil society within a neo liberal framework have been characterized by demands for funds for small “development” projects aimed at a few selected beneficiaries.⁴² The state of affairs has left a political and social vacuum in the leadership of the land reform agenda.

The indigenization lobby seems to have transformed the meaning of land reform on the “return of lost lands” by appealing for the de-racialisation or “blackening of the ownership base of commercial farm land. Some of its proposals appear to be a racial substitution formula for capitalist farming. The emerging indigenous capitalists, large white farmer organizations, black technocrats and many NGOs, have, however, tended to support the shift of eligibility criteria for access to land from the “landless” and “insecure” to the “capable” “productive” and “efficient”, within the terms of the neo liberal global development paradigm.⁴³ These changing terms of the land reform

42. Pankhurst, D. (1996), “Similar but Deferent? Assessing the Reserve Economy Legacy of Namibia”, *Journal of South African Studies*, 22(3), PP. 405-420.

debate were buttressed by optimistic expectations of foreign investment, which was expected to subsume land reform through other socio-economic development, including employment creation. In this context, land reform came to be perceived as almost unnecessary.

The re-emergence of land reform on the developing world agenda in the mid-1990s, and the re-launching of the resettlement programme in Zimbabwe, mark the current phase of dialectic among peasants, government and global institutions. After the failure of structural adjustment to live up to its rural development promise, the land question has resurfaced as a legitimate item on the poverty reduction agenda of the World Bank while, at the national level, the same failure has placed demands on the ruling parts to resuscitate its liberation promise.⁴⁴ De-racialization of commercial farming has been gaining importance in current land redistribution programmes at the expense of the landless. In Zimbabwe, the land reform policy of 1990 emphasized support for promoting emergent black large-scale farmers in what appeared less as a resettlement than a land reallocation programme intended to redress imbalances, South African and Namibian policies also sought to empower black commercial farmers as an integral aspect of land reform. In this context, special groups, such as war veterans, have received particular attention.⁴⁵ In Zimbabwe for instance, the government reserved a 20 per cent Quota of resettlement land for war veterans in 1995, while master farmers and agricultural graduates were to benefit from the land allocations of medium-to-large-scale farms under the newly established tenant farmer scheme.

Reaction in Namibia Over Slow Pace of Land Reforms

In the new states of Namibia the Question of land redistribution has never been adequately addressed, despite liberation rhetoric about fighting for lost land. Despite promising start, little progress has been made with land reform over the last decade,

43. World Bank, (1995), *Zimbabwe Agricultural Sector Memorandum*, World Bank:Washington, D.C. P.317

44. Sachikanye, I. (2005), "The Land is the Economy: Revisiting the Land Question", *African Security Review*, 14(3), PP.31-44.

45. *ibid*

the majority of population saw little to no progress in terms of creating access to land. The small amount of land redistribution that has been attempted in the sub region has been constrained by unrealistic legal and constitutional frameworks, which lead to costly and slow processes of land acquisition and transfer of land rights to various beneficiaries. Land redistribution policies have been unduly influenced by market-oriented preconditions, which eventually militate against the land needs of the poorest people and of those who are landless. The events that unfold in Zimbabwe in March and April 2000 have reverberated throughout the region and resulted in a huge increase in demand for land reform in Namibia. Despite the great differences between the countries there are reasons for believing that similar land invasions could sooner or later, take place across the region. In the absence of a concerted and sustained effort by government to redistribute land, there is a danger that land invasions could again be used as a rallying point to mobilize political support. There has been some tussling over the manner in which the Zimbabwe land problem should be handled, in the Namibian Parliament. While the black legislators from the liberation movement background tend to expect such conflicts to spread into Namibia if land reform is not pushed, their white counterparts from liberal political parties have tended to put pressure on their governments to condemn land occupation and to ensure that the situation in Zimbabwe will not occur in the country.

But, SWAPO adopted a proactive role to address the land issue to contain the dissatisfaction tiding over due to slow pace of land reforms in the country and prevent the situation from becoming similar to Zimbabwe.

In 2002, twelve year after Independence, the party congress of SWAPO of Namibia passed a resolution, which urged government to expropriate 192 farms owned by absentee landlords. While this was within the legal and constitutional discretion governing the country and reiterated the recommendations adopted, soon after Independence by the National Land Conference of 1991, it was not implemented by those SWAPO cadres in government.⁴⁶ It wasn't until a newly emerging political space in 2004 did the land issue also re-emerging as an ingredient to the open contestation over the succession to Namibia's president Sam Nujoma. In order to -

46. Melber, H.(2005), "Land and Politics in Namibia", *Review of African Political Economy*, 103(135), PP.135-142

avoid any legal constrain Namibian government passed a law in 2004 equipping itself with the power of compulsory land acquisition. This was done due to the slow pace of land reform because of the adoption of the policy of “willing seller-willing buyer” and un willingness of white farmers to part from there farms.

In a special announcement television at the end of February 2004, Namibia’s Prime Minister Theo Ben Gurirab confirmed the new policy approach as indicated shortly before by Minister Pohamba in Parliament: ‘From now on Government would expropriate land’. Zimbabwe’s Minister of Information, Janathan Mayo, on an official visit in the country at the time, expressed his satisfaction about the historical movement he could witness. During early April, a team of six experts seconded from Zimbabwe, visited Namibia to assist in the evaluation of seized land. In his May Day Speech president Nejuma Confirmed that expropriation of farms would not only target under utilized land but also serve as a punitive measure. He warned ‘minority racist farmers’.

“that steps will be taken and we can drive them out of this land...as an answer to the insult to my Government”.

A letter of 10 May by Minister Pohamba at a time when the internal competition for the nomination as the party candidate for the next term as president was in full swing-was sent to some 15 farmers expressing interest in acquiring the property. The recipients were ‘cordially invited to make an offer to sell the property to the state and to enter into further negotiations in that regard’. Among the farms were those, which were on record for recent labor related conflicts; but there was also a game ranch owned by a foreign national who had invested considerably in a luxurious farmhouse. Among his guests was Namibia’s Head of State who enjoys the occasional hunting safari; one wonder why this farm has been selected as a priority.⁴⁷

Since the expropriation letters were distributed, a minority group of racist hard liners among the white farmers embarked on a course of public confrontation. At a

⁴⁷. Melber, H. (2002), “Contested Territory Land in Southern Africa: The Case of Namibia”, *African Security Review*, 11(2), PP.77-85

meeting in June they articulated openly arrogant and self-righteous defiance to government policy and blamed commercial farmers union for its sell out strategy. This added fuel to the flames and made the land issue the most controversial topic in public debate by mid-2004. Sam Nejuma the SWAPOs president since its foundation and in office since independence, he ultimately had to abandon the campaign for a fourth term beyond March 2005. He declared crown prince Hifikepunge Pohamba, like himself a first generation activist, is the current Minister of Land, Resettlement And Rehabilitation as his successor. The parliamentary and presidential elections held in November 2004 confirmed Nejuma confidante as his successor and next Head of State. He was nominated by SWAPO as candidate from three contesters by an extraordinary party congress held at the end of May 2004 after an intense period of internal struggles turning ugly and showing the full force of autocracy by the president.⁴⁸

Hifikepunye Pohamba, won a landslide victory, with more than 76% of the vote in the country's third elections since independence, according to final results released on November 21st by the Electoral commission of Namibia (ECN) shows that SWAPO took 625,605 votes or 76.4% of the 818,360 valid votes cast. The best performer of the six opposition parties Benjamin Ulenga, from the Congress of Democrats (COD), only managed to get 59,549 votes, or 7.3%. SWAPO is also to retain its 55 seats in the 72-seats parliament, as it garnered 619,066 votes in the parliamentary elections or 75% of the 827,042 valid votes. Further to its advantage, the 17 seats held by four opposition parties currently will be between six in the next National Assembly. COD and the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), each holding seven seats now, will have only five and four seats, respectively, in the new parliament. The presidential and national assembly elections both registered a voter turnout of 85%, the highest among all the three general elections held since Namibia's independence, from the South African Apartheid regime in 1990. Various parties, including the ECN, the ruling and opposition parties as well as observers from African Union and Southern African countries have described the elections as generally free and fair.⁴⁹

48. *ibid*

49. "Najoma's Man: The President's Chosen Successor Easily Wins", *Africa Reserch Bulletin, Economic, Financial, and Technical*, 41(11), (2004), P.15987

All these statistics shows that the question of land reforms have not taken such menacing form so, that it can dent the popularity of SWAPO and has not yet become a common rallying point around which opposition parties can draw the support. But, no doubt the unrest among the masses as a response to the events occurred in Zimbabwe and slow pace of land reform in Namibia can be clearly seen among masses, on which opposition parties can hope to en-cash in future. Taking this into account SWAPO is also compelled to change its approach towards land reforms.

The president Hifkenpunge pohamba also lost no time in putting his stamp on the acquisition of white owned land for the resettlement of black farmers. It was the new governments' intention to increase significantly the amount of land to be acquired, either on a willing-seller-willing buyer basis or by expropriation, pohamba told the Sunday. Times Newspaper in an interview.⁵⁰

The land acquisition target has risen from 9m hectares to 15m, about 18% of Namibia's total land mass and half of the 30.2m hectares currently owned by white farmers. Black communal and commercial farmers own about 31.5m hectares. Pohamba said the government would lose no time in expropriating the 192 white owned farms from acquisition from unwilling sellers. So far, 14 farms have been served with notices appropriation. "In the final analysis", said Pohama, "we are going to expropriate, it is going to be done constitutionally, lawfully and properly, but it is going to be done". However, the extent of the eventual land takeover is unclear, and white landowners do not expect to see a whole-scale Zimbabwe-style grab.⁵¹

The response from landowners to new legislation has been disappointing. The Ministry of Lands and Resettlement has expressed concern at the slow pace of land reform, saying the existing framework is tainted by bureaucratic procedures. Speaking at the official opening in Windhoek on September 7th of a symposium on land reform in Namibia and Southern Africa, permanent secretary Frans Tsheehama said that the procedure that needed to be followed before acquisition were the prime cause of the

50. "Namibia: New Presidents Business Priorities", *Africa Research Bulletin, Economic, Financial, and Technical*, 42(3) (2005), PP. 16361-16362

51. *ibid*

delay.⁵²

‘As a result’, said Tshechama, “land offers received could not be adequately assessed on time”.

“The land reform programme is presently characterized by procedures that have resulted in a slow pace of delivery. Land offers received cannot be adequately assessed on time”, he said.

From a government perspective, the challenge was “to fast track these processes through a review of procedures and improved levels of integration across the line institutions”. Tshechama said a critical assessment of the cumbersome processes had been done, but more needed to be accomplished. Tshechama challenged the owners of multiple farms to come up with workable and tangible efforts that would make land available at affordable prices at the right time.⁵³

Despite an N\$50m budget from the treasury every year for land acquisition through the willing-buyer, willing-seller principle, and the response from landholders was far below expectation, he said. The pace at which the farm offers are coming out to the market is very slow.

Most of the farms received are from low rainfall areas or in many cases; the farms are too small for some one to make a living. Such farms will, naturally be found to be unsuitable for resettlement and waived.

With the pace of land reform being so slow, government was considering compulsory acquisition as another legal option. In a bid to avoid catastrophic consequences and ensure sustainable growth of the agriculture sector, government said it was imperative to “de-racialize” farming. Government was calling upon key stakeholders to set up permanent platforms for dialogue meant to steer a transparent

52. “Namibia: Slow Land Reform”, *Africa Research Bulletin, Economic, Financial, and Technical*, 43(9), (2006), PP. 16646-16647

53. *ibid*

and democratic national land reform programme.

Before his election, pohamba was in charge of Namibia land reform, and he avoided action that could alarm investors.⁵⁴

With all these new initiative and renewed interest in land reforms. It is hoped that process of land reform will gather some momentum and avoid any Zimbabwe like situation. There is evidence that, over the next few years in Namibia, increasing numbers of freehold farms will become available for redistribution. The average age of white farmers is reported to be about 55 years, few of them have pension schemes and are obliged to stay where they are. The majority would leave if they could obtain what they feel to be a reasonable return for a life's investment. More and more farmers are unable to service their debts. In most cases, banks will be prepared to reschedule a loan on the grounds that repossession would be difficult and costly. Repossessed farms quickly deteriorate unless sold or auctioned in a depressed market. Younger generation reluctant to take up farming as profession government hopes that in future more arable lands would be offered to the government

54. *ibid*

CONCLUSION

In Southern Africa, historically land had been an important symbol of the struggle of indigenous people against the exploitation and unjust rule of the white minority. The return of traditional land is associated with the psychological need of people in these countries to come out of slave mind set to which they are tide, even after independence. Land reforms are also essential to raise the black masses from the slumber of poverty, addressing unemployment among them and improving their standard of living, which lags far behind to that of white population. Land is also the largest source of employment for black population in this region.

Thus, because of the importance which land occupy in the lives of the people in this region, historically land have constituted the stuff of politics, continue to do so in modern societies. The patterns of land allocation under colonial rule were defined in terms of conquest.

Thus, the demand of land reforms was continued to be made after independence. But, the pace of land reforms was very slow, because of many legal constrains and unwillingness of white farmers to part from their fertile farms. The principle followed by the governments was 'willing seller, willing buyer'. It is because of this slow pace unrest begun to grow among the masses and pressure for reforms began to increase. These included the black bourgeoisie's aspirations to own land, pressure for tenure reform, and the imperative to link land reform to a broad development strategy.

In Zimbabwe, pressure on government increased so much due slow pace of land reforms that government initiate radical land reforms in 2000 under Fast-Track Reform Programme (FTRP). Under this masses of blacks invaded the white owned farms in large numbers, expelling whites and capturing the farms. The programme entailed a comprehensive redistribution of land that was accomplished with considerable chaos, disorder and violence. As about 11 million hectares changing hands with in a three-year period, it was the largest property transfer ever to occur in the region in peacetime. It replaced nearly 4,000 white farmers whose land had been

transferred by the state to 7,200 black commercial farmers and 127,000 black recipients of small farms by October 2003. So, the programme entailed a comprehensive redistribution of land but was accomplished with considerable chaos disorder and violence. Zimbabwe had to bear the wrath of western countries and was boycotted from all international forums like Common Wealth. Their president Robert Mogambe became black listed by western powers and was described as major destabilizing force in the region. There was also considerable drop in the food production of the country. From being a regional breadbasket, Zimbabwe has become a food importer. It is also seen that while liberal democracy and neo-liberalism have clear limitations in the context of equity and redistribution, authoritarian nationalism of the kind asserted in Zimbabwe during this period was a dangerous development, because it could open the way to corrupt, abusive and exclusionary practices in the implementation of land reform.

The events of Zimbabwe gave wings to the imagination of blacks in Namibia also, and it was felt that due to slow pace of reforms Zimbabwe like invasions can occur in future in this country also. Although it has not gained threatening socio-political dimension yet. The government realized the gravity of situation, and adapted the compulsory land acquisition Act in 2004.

But, in order to lead a swift transfer of land from whites to blacks and avoid any chaos and avoid attracting international hostility, the government of Namibia should follow certain policies in land reforms.

The continued uncertainty over the legal status of land that is seized by the state and transferred to individual settler producers undermines confidence in the land reform process and invites further conflicts among the beneficiaries. Delay in the legal transfer of the land will affect the resettled, the displaced and the remaining white commercial farmers. This is likely to have a detrimental effect on productive use of the land. Also, unless the clarity is reached on this issue, the new farmers may not be prepared to make substantial investments in their properties and production capacities. The granting of clearly defined land rights and responsibilities would unlock the value of their land, and enable it to be used as collateral for loans that would allow new farmers to develop their land to its full productive potential. Even

while compulsory acquisition of white farms, the whole procedure should be legally carried out.

Second is that the farmers whose lands are taken over should be systematically compensated. The international community may not be prepared to support the land reform process financially unless fair compensation is seen to be made to those farmers whose farms have been taken over compulsorily. At the very least, compensation should be awarded for improvements that the farmers made to the land and for property taken over, although compensation levels need not be excessive. They should also pay for standing crops at the time of the transfer of land. If this were to happen, it would lighten the burden on the government to some extent. It would also resuscitate the good will of the international community. So, the Namibian Government should resist the demand by black community to acquire white farms with out any compensation.

Thirdly, the skill levels of most of the resettled farmers is low. The highly technical and intensive farming which the white farmers adopt for the productions is not replicated by black farmers. Few of the black farmers have received financial resources and technical skills to cultivate with equal success as that of white farmers. The more intensive production processes require skills that government extension services are ill equipped to provide at present. So, government should start a programme to recover a major portion of the skills that will be displaced by transferring land to black farmers. A package of incentives should be offered to persuade displaced former farm workers who passes farming experience and skills to move back into agriculture. Such a package would combine a restitution of property rights, and the offering of soft loans and grants. It would also offer opportunities to former farm workers that would improve the productivity levels of commercial agriculture.

Fourthly, the infrastructure that is urgently needed in the agricultural areas includes roads, bridges, irrigation facilities, livestock dipping tanks and marketing depots. In addition, the new farmer households need schools, clinics and housing. Currently, much of the existing infrastructure is woefully inadequate as in a dilapidated state.

There is also a pressing demand for credit and inputs such as seeds and fertilizer. A major weakness in the land reform process has been the inadequate provision of these essential requirements for new farmers, which has led to the low production levels. The challenge of building an adequate input supply chain should be addressed as a matter of urgency. However, the manufacture and distribution chain for farming necessities must be sustained by a financial structure that affords credit facilities to all farmers. The current system appears to favor the interests of large commercial farmers; it has not been sufficiently responsive to the need of farmers resettled on small properties.

Fifthly, the plight of the farm workers who lost their jobs as a result of land reforms or are expected to lose their jobs must be addressed more urgently. Most live under extremely difficult conditions and some have become destitute. The farm workers who are jobless, landless and without homes in communal areas have tried various coping strategies. Piecework on the farms where they live is often temporary, insecure and badly paid. Some earn income from informal trading in agricultural produce and second hand clothes, and in craft materials in local markets. These activities should be supported by the setting up of market stalls and depots for buying and selling their wares in and near by towns and communal areas. Assistance in developing distribution networks and services would boost the growth of small craft industries using local raw materials.

Female workers who are no longer employed on farms should be supported by helping them to start income-generating projects such as rearing poultry, sewing clothes and uniforms, baking and jam making. The skills that farm workers have acquired in crop production, the use of agricultural machinery, the repair and maintenance of equipment and the use of agro-chemicals should not be wasted. A programme should be introduced to tap into their skills and use them effectively. There is a concomitant need to identify specialized skills among former farm workers and to initiate a programme of certification of such skills. The compilation of skills databases that are accessible to new farmers, whether their land allocations are large or small, could benefit both the farmers and the skilled workers. Finally, there is a strong case for providing land to those farm workers who have lost their jobs and have no other means of earning a living.

And sixthly, the Namibian government has adopted a piecemeal approach to the land question. The redistribution of land has not been integrated into a wider agrarian and development strategy. In the quest to deal with the land question, the government did not address the critical issues of land use, agricultural production and land administration. However, there is growing realization that certain conditions are essential to agricultural transformation including sustainable growth in productivity. Such growth is largely dependent on the successful development of key partnerships and alliances between government and private stakeholder groups, strong institutional arrangements; research and development, market linkages and improved human capacity.

It is believed that agrarian up-liftment should be tied to a vision of industrial transformation. The structural evaluation of the economy requires that an increasing percentage of employment and contribution towards the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) should come from industry, rather than agriculture. Only as the engine of industrial growth gathers momentum will people migrate from the countryside to urban centers, reducing the pressure on natural resources and freeing up land for farmers who wish to expand their operations and incomes.

In the last it is speculated by certain scholars that no matter what all efforts Government of Namibia makes to increase the efficiency of black farmers, if land reforms will be carried on, there will definitely be a sharp drop in the productivity. This a country like Namibia can ill afford because already Namibia imports almost 50 percent of its food grains in normal years. On this basis they oppose the land reforms. But, this sort of argument is rather dangerous as it favors the continuity of the land tenure system which is based on colonial system and results in continuous domination of whites over blacks and keeping blacks backward and improvised. Land reforms are most essential in Namibia not only to eradicate the legacy of colonism, but also because it will make the agricultural sector more efficient, because, many more people would be engaged in producing for the economy. More generally, land distribution would increase the possibility of participation in the economy for a wider range of people, rural and urban, whether they belonged to the poor or the middle classes. The Western countries should also stop exerting undue pressure on Namibia to holdback radical land reform programme and give their cooperation to carryout peaceful land redistribution, if they want to avert another Zimbabwe in Namibia.

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