

**LAND REFORM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE RURAL
SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF UTTAR PRADESH :
A STUDY OF POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD** /

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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**CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS
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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067, INDIA
1982**

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CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled 'Land Reform And Its Impact on the Rural Social Structure of Uttar Pradesh: A Study of the Post-Independence Period' by Mr. Sudhindra Bhadoria for the degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for their consideration.

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P R E F A C E

This study is an attempt to understand the impact of land reforms on the rural social structure of Uttar Pradesh. A survey on the developments in the field of land reforms shows that the impacts during pre-independent and post-independent days have been different. The progress made during the post-independent period has been much rapid as against the days of the British rule.

In agrarian societies land represents the main source of wealth and power which determines the social status. A restructuring of land tenure rules and procedure involve changes in the political, social and power positions of the groups and individuals. (In Uttar Pradesh the various progresses of land reform have effected the social structure differently. As the land tenures differed from one region to the other in Uttar Pradesh the impacts were also differed.)

The impacts of land reforms after the Independence led to the emergence of a new tenure system where the backward castes rose into higher positions of power and wealth. This has also altered rural social structure. However the success of implementation of land reform did depend on the tenure system. In eastern Uttar Pradesh where the Zamindari system was prevalent, the success was not as prominent as in western Uttar Pradesh where Ryotwari system was in existence.

This study is based on the secondary sources and the available literature in the field of land reforms. Besides the various studies of land reforms in Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere it has also utilised the various reports of the Planning Commission, Parliamentary and Assembly debates of Uttar Pradesh. These insights into the problem of land reforms and the rural social structure will be helpful for the doctoral thesis on the same area.

I am deeply grateful to Dr.K.L. Sharma for his valuable supervision under which this work has been done. I am also greatly indebted to Prof. Yegendra Singh for his constant encouragement and valuable suggestions. I express my gratitude to Prof. P.C. Joshi for giving suggestions.

My thanks are also due to Dr.Ram Sagar, Dr T.N.Jha, Radhakrishnan, Raj Copalan Nair, Balakrishnan, Anand Kumar and Ms. Ranjana.

INTRODUCTION

Analysis of the impact of Land Reforms has to be viewed with an awareness of development in terms of the total social situation. Thus Land Reforms which are intended to bring about changes in land relations will not only effect the agricultural transformation but will have effect on the rural transformation as a whole.

In agrarian societies land represents the principal form of wealth and principal source of power which determines the social status. Land tenure systems reflect land relations in rural society. A restructuring of land tenure rules and procedures involve changes in the political, social and power positions of the groups and individuals within a society.¹ Thus re-distribution of property rights in land changes the earlier social structure and sets the process for a new or different social organization.

The changes in land relations are not only propellers of socio-economic change but are also reciprocally influenced by changes in the economic, technological, social and political spheres². This can be seen from the great importance attached to various land reform programmes in the different states in

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1. Peter, Doreen, 'Land Reform and Economic Development', C. Nicholas and Co.Ltd., Great Britain, 1972, p.18.
 2. P.C. Joshi, "Land Reform and Agrarian change in India and Pakistan since 1947," The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol.1, No.2, January 1947, London, p.165.

India. India's first Five Year Plan had assigned a fundamental role to Land Reforms in the building up of a new social and economic order.

The future of land ownership and cultivation constituted the most fundamental issue in national development. To a large extent the patterns of social and economic organization would depend upon the manner in which the land problem would be resolved.

The first Five Year Plan stated that a policy for land may be considered adequate in the manner in which it would reduce disparities in wealth and income, eliminate exploitation provide security for tenants and workers, and finally promise equality of status and opportunity to different sections of rural population.³

Objectives of Land Reforms

Land Reform is often viewed as an instrument primarily for the achievement of greater equality and social justice. The guiding principle of land reform has been that the tillers of land that is the cultivators must have the opportunity of full participation in determining how the rights are defined.

Land Reform has an essential core meaning which concerns significant and purposeful changes in land tenure.

3. First Five Year Plan Report, 1952, p.184.

Specific measures may include expropriation of large estates and re-distribution of land among the tenants either for individual ownership or for collective use. There is improvement in tenancy conditions by converting tenants into owners or by reducing rental payments. In furtherance of this objective there is issuance of land titles to the tillers to provide them with greater security for transformation of traditional forms of tenure in the interest of cultivators of the land.

Land tenure institutional reform have a direct impact on the questions of development. The land tenure system provides such legal arrangements by which people in agriculture gain access to productive opportunities in Land. Tenurial systems constitute the rules and procedures governing the rights, duties, literaries of individuals and groups in the use of basic resources of land and water.⁴

Land tenure institutions help in shaping the pattern of income distribution in agricultural sector. However the land tenure institutions do not exist in isolation but have to be viewed with an integrated perspective. Peter Doreen argues in his book LAND REFORM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT that the future security of farming opportunities, are critically effected by labour, capital and product markets.

4. P. Doreen, Land Reform and Economic Development, C. Nicholas and company Ltd. Great Britian, 1972, p.17

Land reform means changing and restructuring such rules and procedures of land tenure which are consistent with the requirement of development. So potentialities of land reform must be viewed within the overall perspective of development.

Land tenure reform makes it possible for the rural sector to contribute in an effective manner for overall developmental objectives. It has a dual purpose securing a redistributive instrument and a vehicle of increased productivity.

Land reform improves the prospects of raising agricultural production since new incentives for increased work are created because of more equitable distribution. Programmes like agricultural credit, marketing, input supply, research and extension are equally relevant for raising overall agricultural productivity.⁵ Hung in his study 'Land reform and Politics', also maintains that these measures have intimate relationship with tenurial reform and the raising of agricultural productivity. It is also essential for providing a stable base for a society's economic and political development.

Importance of Land Reforms in India

After the country became independent in 1947, the objective of achieving a casteless and a classless society was

5. Peter Doreen, Land Reform and Economic Development, C. Nihholas and company Ltd., Great Britain, 1972.

enshrined in the Constitution. Land Reform was made a state subject in the constitution of India in 1950. During the post-independent period distribution of land-holding has been mainly in four forms. They are:

1. "Land Reform from above through land legislation on the basis broadly indicated by state legislatures and finally implemented by the agencies of state government.
2. Land Reform through militant peasant action from below as in the case mainly of Telengana and Naxalbari movement, and also to some extent in the case of land-grab-movement.
3. Land Reform through legislature enactments from above combined with peasant mobilization from 'below' as in the case of controlled land seizure in West Bengal under the United Front regime and of protection of poor peasants in Kerala under Congress supported CPI Ministry.
4. Land Reform from below through persuasion of landlords and peaceful pressure by peasants as in the case of Bhoodan and Gramdan"⁶

Due to high degree of concentration of rural population and extreme inequality in landlord-tenant relationship much emphasis was placed on land reform immediately after Independence. The most appealing argument in favour of land reform as it was then visualized was that it would abolish, or at least bring under control the economic and social inequalities which was the basis of traditional relations between tenants and landlords.⁷ This would lead to such distribution of land which also maximize agricultural production.

⁶. P.C. Joshi, Land Reforms in India, Allied Publishers Ltd., New Delhi, 1975, p. 89

⁷. A. Betteille, Studies in Agrarian Social Structure, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1974, p.89.

The question as to how much land should be distributed cannot be answered in general terms. The scale of re-distribution much depends on the political power of the government rather than economic consideration alone.

The first phase of land reform implementation was concerned with the abolition of pre-independent tenurial relations in India. The Britishers had established two land systems that is the Zamindari and Ryotwari in order to recognize India's agrarian structure.⁶ Under the Zamindari system the right in property were conferred upon the native tax-gatherer who was not generally involved in the actual agricultural work. In the Ryotwari tenure no intermediary proprietors were recognised but the actual tillers of the land were vested with a heritable and transferable rights of their lands.

In the first phase the objective was to eliminate intermediary interests and to bring cultivators into direct relationship with state. Here cultivators mean not only those who cultivated the land by means of family labour but also those who operated large holding through tenants-at-will.

However this could not create socially homogenous class of cultivators operating family farms of broadly the same size. Nor did it do away with the share-cropping or other forms of tenancy which existed outside the Zamindari area. The direct

6. P.C. Joshi, 'Land Reforms in India', Rural Sociology in India, Desai, A.R.(ed) Popular Prakashan Pvt.Ltd. Bombay, 1969, p.444

effect on the large class of landless labourers whether in the Zamindari of Eastern India or Tyetwari areas of South was negligible.⁹

New laws were needed to level out the inequalities which survived after the first phase of landreforms implementation. These laws were enacted in different states in the early fifties which were concerned mainly with two problems. The first problem was to either regulate or abolish such tenancy which were not taken account of in the earlier legislation. The second was to reduce more, the concentration of land-ownership by imposing ceilings on existing holdings. Here the problem of agricultural workers did not get the same attention as that of tenants. Although minimum wages of agricultural workers were fixed in principle but in practice this was not fulfilled in most of the states.

Generally there is a wide discrepancy between the provisions of law and their fulfilment in actual practice. The discrepancy between the objectives and their fulfilment arises because land reforms alter the existing balance of power.¹⁰ Landlords are usually able to exert pressure both inside and outside Parliament and Legislatures where certain loopholes are created. Thorner also says that land reform legislation and its actual implementation is such a long

9. Daniel Thorner, The Agrarian prospects in India, Allied Publishers Ltd, New Delhi, 1976

10. Doreen Warriner, Land Reform in Principle and Practice, Oxford University Press, London, 1969, p. 16.

process that it gives to the landlords ample time for manipulation.

Hence the re-distribution of land is a very difficult change to carry out. It is far more difficult to re-distribute land than to introduce institutional changes. The problem of land distribution has to be dealt with different methods because it requires some degree of ^{Coercion} compulsion in expropriation of surplus land. This makes the whole issue a political one and thus it is linked up with conflict of interest.

In Uttar Pradesh, soon after independence there was a conflict of interest on the issue of land re-distribution. The Congress Party was divided and Gobind Ballawa Pant its first Chief Minister was reluctant in implementing the recommendations of Jawahar Lal Nehru submitted to the Congress President in 1948. However Nehru's proposals were accepted in general terms and the earlier tenancy laws were reformed.¹¹

Charan Singh a protagonist of the idea of peasant proprietorship was against continuance of uneconomic holdings in agriculture.¹² He was also opposed to co-operative farming and ruled out its utility in India.¹³ On the other hand he suggested for absorption of agricultural workers into agro-industry. This was only a method to reduce pressure on land

11. P.S. Appu, Tenancy Reforms in India, Economic and Political Weekly, Spl. No. August 1975, p. 1339

12. Charan Singh - Abolition of Zamindari, Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1947, p.127

13. — India's Economic Policy, The Gandhian Blue Print, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd., New Delhi, 1978, p.24

and reduce social tensions in rural areas.

In Kerala a comprehensive land-reform bill was introduced by the EMS Namboodiripad government in 1957. This was the first left government having come to power through vote but here too land-reforms could not be carried out successfully. Explanation given by P.K. Michael Thanakan is that the successful abolition of tenancy itself unleashed social and economic forces which now obstruct, further re-distribution through land-ceiling.¹⁴

Land Reform, Rural Stratification and Power Structure

Our Study of "Land Reforms and its impact on the rural social structure in U.P." is based on secondary sources and existing literature on the subject. The objective of the study is to see what has been the impact of land reform in terms of both policy formulation and its implementation on the rural social structure as a whole. The main focus of this study will be on land reform in Uttar Pradesh, but it will also try to analyse the general trends in Land Reforms and its impact on the rural social structure in particular. While going into the details of the research done in this area it will seek to answer whether the land-redistribution during the post-independence period has created a new stratification system ? Also what has been its impact on the village power structure ?

14. P.K. Michael Tharakan, "The Kerala land-reform bill 1979: A note," Sociological Perspectives of Land Reforms, Shiva Kumar Lal (Ed.), Agricole Publishing Academy, New Delhi, 1982, p.156.

Both categories of caste and class are important for analytical purposes and investigation in studying rural stratification in India. There are aspects of inequality in rural India which cannot be fully explained within the framework of just one of the above mentioned categories.

Traditionally the pattern of stratification in India was based on caste system, did not permit status mobility on any extensive scale.¹⁵ But with the abolition of Zamindari, other tenurial systems and with the impact of modernization rural India has moved to a new stratified social structure.

There is a whole range of relations in rural India centring around the ownership, control and use of land. These relations are not only partly independent of caste but they have their own patterns of organization¹⁶. A study of their modalities will give an understanding of what can be described as the agrarian class structure which is an important aspect of social reality in contemporary India.

As the ownership control and use of land has changed with the implementation of land reforms at the village level, the intermediate castes have replaced the upper class in matters of economic and political influence. K.L. Sharma in his study

15. Yogendra Singh, "Changing Stratification System", Dimensions of social change in India, Srinivas, M.N, Seshiah S., Parthasarathy, V.S, (Ed.), Allied Publishers Ltd., 1977 p. 139

16. Andre Beteille, Studies in Agrarian Social Structure, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1974, p. 143

of Rajasthan villages has noted the downward mobility of Kshatriya castes and the upward mobility of middle rank castes.¹⁷

The village power structure traditionally fused into the caste hierarchy and ownership of land. "..... the mastery of economic resources, and its centralization in certain classes remained by far the most important source of power.¹⁸ The pattern of land ownership and caste hierarchies are closely related. "Traditionally the land-owners were of the highest castes. Members of the lowest castes were generally landless labourers and in-between were the middle level peasant or cultivating castes.¹⁹" Thus control over land and other resources were concentrated among the high castes. The Caste Panchayats, the Village Panchayat and other institutions of power were inter-dependent. Hence all of them were also affected by the economically and socially well-placed classes.

The Village Panchayat was a tool in the hands of landlords and could not develop as an effective instrument of power. "The Caste Panchayats, of course, represented a parallel and widespread power system but this tool had in matters outside caste rules, to be subjugated to the power of the landlords.²⁰

17. K.L. Sharma, Changing Pattern of Rural Stratification Systems: A Comparative Study of Six Villages, Orient Longmans, Delhi, 1974.

18. Yogendra Singh, "Changing Power Structure in Six Villages of Uttar Pradesh, Rural Sociology in India", A.R. Desai (Ed.), Popular Prakashan, Bombay 1969, p. 717.

19. Andre Betteille, Inequality and Social Change, New Delhi, 1972, p.23.

20. Yogendra Singh, "Changing Power Structure in Six villages of Uttar Pradesh, Rural Sociology in India", A.R. Desai (Ed.), Popular Prakashan, Bombay 1969, p. 717.

Thus the village power structure was assigned and centralized in the hands of propertied high castes. The power was controlled and wielded by high castes and classes. Opportunity for entering the power structure was restricted to high castes and higher economic classes. In the pre-independent days caste and class was congruent economically. However the situation has changed now.

During this period of transition after Independence village power structure got altered with the implementation of land reforms, introduction of Panchayati Raj and adult franchise. This new situation has given rise to conflict for power and has also upset the traditional composition of rural social stratification and power structure. The village power structure is giving way to democratic society on achievements instead of ascriptive status. Not only the village power structure but the power structure at state level in Uttar Pradesh has also undergone a change. The state and village power structure is open to all, and vertical mobility is possible for any individual participant.

Chapter Scheme

The First chapter deals with introduction and meaning of land-reforms. The second chapter will deal with the main issues that have been posed in the agrarian social structure by land reform implementation. This will be on the basis of

survey of literature in this area of research. There have been different models of land reform policy formulation and its implementation by different countries at the global level. It will take up the different approaches of land-reform in the light of Indian experience. It will also see as to what extent the external forces determined the structure and process of agricultural production and its subsequent results in relations between agrarian classes.

The third chapter will discuss the agrarian social structure of Uttar Pradesh and the changes occurred in the land relations. It will examine historically the Zamindari and Ryotwari tenures in Uttar Pradesh under the colonial rule and subsequent emerging of land relations since the implementation of land reforms.

The fourth chapter will be devoted to the emerging stratification system as a result of land reforms. The emerging stratification system and the changing land relations has had its impact on the village power structure. The relationship of land-reforms vis-a-vis the raising political influence of intermediary castes at the village and state level politics has emerged as a very significant trend. The effort will be to go into the details of changing caste and class patterns.

To conclude the last chapter will take a critical evaluation of land reform and see whether land-reform laws have succeeded in creating a less hierarchical agrarian structure.

CHAPTER II

Approaches to Land-Reform

There are several approaches to the problem of land-reform but for the purpose of our study we can categorize these approaches into three broad categories. In the first, we can take up countries like United States, Canada, Australia etc. Here the pressure on land being low, has been for the promotion of individual ownership of farms and freedom of economic organization. Here the free-hold tenure is the dominant form of ownership.

Major land-reform policies of United States were well formulated prior to 1935 and whose objectives can be summed up as following :

- 1.) "The establishment of a free land system through the elimination of the important vestiges of the feudal system by the time of revolutionary war.
2. The broadening of free land system ~~in~~ through the enactment of land ordinances of 1785 and 1788.
3. Making public land readily available through early sales policy, the pre-emption Act of 1841 and the Homestead Act of 1862.
4. Lastly, strengthening the position of family farmer through research and education as provided for in numerous Act^s

1. Progress in Land Reforms, United Nations Publications,
Department of Economic Affairs, United Nations, New York,
1954, p.4

In the second category we can include countries like Soviet Union, China and Vietnam. Here the main concern after the revolutions were to have state ownership of land and to discourage private ownership of land. In the Soviet Union the policy of land reform was to have collectivization of agriculture. This proceeded along two lines.

- (1) "The organization of peasant collective farms
- (2) The Organization of state farms"².

While in the third category we can include countries like India, Japan, Taiwan etc. There are certain differentiations between and within these three categories and they were based on ideologies behind land-reform.

The emphasis in the Indian and Japanese context in relation to land-reform has been on small farm size units and productivity. Besides, the immense pressure on land due to demographic factors can also be traced in trying to understand the land-reforms of the two countries.

The divergences in the land-reform policies arise because the motivation of the planners in the various countries are varying in ideology and class interest.³

². Louis, J. Walinsky (Ed.) Agrarian Reforms as Unfinished, The Selected Papers of Wolf Ledyinsky, Oxford University Press, New York, 1977, p. 25

³. David Lehman, (Ed.) Agrarian Reform and Reformism, studies of Peru, Chile, China and India, Faber and Faber, London, 1947, p. 13.

The first approach as stated earlier has^a thrust a towards capitalist development of agriculture in the total economy. While in the second approach, the emphasis is to have a socialization of agriculture or to proceed towards communism by establishing socialism. According^{to} Marx⁴ and Lenin⁵ both, the leading forces in every capitalist society are the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and all other social groups occupy an intermediate position and these groups inevitably gravitate towards one or the other major group. However, Mao realized the importance of an alliance between the workers and majority of the peasants because the role of the latter group in an overwhelmingly agrarian society is not less significant than that of the proletariat.

Indian Experience

In India, abolition of intermediaries and protection of tenants have been the watchword of land-reforms.⁶ As India decided to go on a path of mixed economy as visualized by Nehru, two kinds of experyⁱments were made in Indian agriculture. The All India Congress Committee sponsored a committee which came out with following suggestions:

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4. Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Communist Manifesto, People's Publishing House, Bombay, 1946, p. 31.
 5. V.I. Lenin, State and Revolution, Burmon Publishing House, Calcutta, p. 20.
 6. Daniel Thorner, The Agrarian Prospects in India, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1976, p.52.

"The committee enunciated the principal that land should be held for use as opposed to profit and as a source of employment. The use of lands by those who are either non-cultivating land holders or otherwise unable for any period to exercise the right of cultivating them, must come to vest in the village co-operative community subject to the condition that the original lawful holder or his successor will be entitled to come back for genuine cultivation⁷." Thus we see that new institutional arrangements in tenures were made which also had its implications on the social structure.

These three broad categories that have been developed for the purpose of our study rest on certain theoretical assumption in relation to the agrarian structure of a given society. In India there has been long on going debate on the nature of agrarian relations and the mode of production that exists.

As Indian society was under colonial rule for a very long period it is important to understand the various views on agrarian relations from the point of the system of land tenure that existed. The Marxist intellectuals have held several viewpoints on Indian agriculture and the nature of development that took place subsequently and until now. The whole debate centres around the idea :

7. Harsh Dev Malaviya, Land Reforms in India, All India Congress Committee, New Delhi, 1954, p.80.

- a) There is a capitalist mode of production in Indian agriculture.
- b) There is a semi-feudal and semi-capitalist mode of production in Indian agriculture.
- c) There is a colonial mode of production.

While Marx himself held that there existed an Asiatic mode of production in India, it has been refuted by various Marxist intellectuals like Irfan Habib, Maurice Godelier etc. The Notion of 'Asiatic mode of production' was elaborated on the basis of British documents describing the village communities and states of Indian society of the 19th century. A fact that strikes Marx is the absence of private property in land. He evidently held that fundamental characteristic of this system were the self maintaining unity of manufacture and agriculture within the village commune, which thus contains all the conditions for reproduction and surplus production within itself.⁸

Marx explained the passivity of Indian society by the existence of the caste-bound, traditional village communities which had completely to depend upon 'Asiatic Despotism' to provide works necessary for the existence Indian agriculture. Irfan Habib argues that Marx's writing on India had been based on a careful reading of English parliamentary papers and

8. E.J. Hobsbawn, On Marx's pre-capitalist economic formations, Enquiry, New Series Vol. II, No. 2, Monsoon 1965, p.22.

business travels. However there was gradual erosion in the ideas of Marx and Engels and particularly they can be noted in Anti-Duhring 1978.⁹ Engels provides no place for the Asiatic mode of production as a determining factor for a particular form of state. Irfan Habib has questioned the validity of the concepts of feudalism and the Asiatic mode of production for India and has suggested a neutral term, namely, Indian medieval economy.¹⁰

Maurice Godelier also holds that after reading Morgan, he abandoned earlier hypothesis or at least did no longer consider the Asiatic mode of production as a progressive formation of humanity as he had held in 1859, in his contribution.¹¹ However there has been an ongoing debate on the nature of Indian agriculture and the mode of production.

Ashok Rudra argues in his study of Punjab that capitalist form of agriculture exists in Punjab. To support his argument he tests the hypothesis of differentiation of Indian peasantry.¹² On the other hand Utsa Patnaik argues that Indian agriculture is semi-feudal and semi-capitalist.¹³ Rather the transition is from Feudalism to Capitalism. Using the Marxist method to the concrete historical experience in India, she argues, that Indian

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9. Irfan Habib, Problems of Marxist Historical Analysis, Enquiry, New Series, Vol. III, No.2, Monsoon 1969, p.53
10. Maurice Godelier, The Notion of 'Asiatic Mode of Production' And Marxist Scheme of Evolution of Societies, Enquiry, New Series Vol II No.3, Winter 1965, p.77
11. Harbans Mukhia, "Was There Feudalism in Indian History?" Paper presented in a Seminar at Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1980 p. 74.

experience is highly specific one. Here it is a subjugation of a country with a pre-capitalist mode of production by a capitalist power. While Andre Gunder Frank does not agree with any of the above thesis and holds that development of capitalism has to be understood as a world wide capitalist system. So the colonial relations within it were not only transformed but the class structure and the metropolis itself.¹⁴ The main thrust of the argument is that capitalism and imperialism in their movement are parallel and they go together as against Leninist position that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism.

This analysis is important in so far as the strategy of socialist restructuring of society is concerned. It is on this basis that the peasantry will be assigned a position for re-structuring of a colonial society into an egalitarian social order. This would apply in agriculture and as a consequence the land-reform policy will have to be formulated accordingly.

However, the Indian experience in land-reform has been different as the planners of land-reform policy were motivated by different ideology and the effort was to maintain a consensus in society so as to strengthen the democratic

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12. Ashok Rudra, Capitalist Development in Agriculture, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. VI, No.45, Nov. 6, 1971.
 13. Utsa Patnaik, "One of Mode of Production of Indian Agriculture", Economic and Political Weekly, Sept. 1972, p. A-145.
 14. Andre Gunder Frank, The Wealth and Poverty of Nations, Economic and Political Weekly, Spl. No; July 1970, p. 1183



system of politics. This had its consequences on the agrarian structure of society and the subsequent changes in the rural social structure. It was the result of new institutional arrangements in the land tenures. The process of this change has its links with earlier agrarian structure, particularly during the British Raj. Now we shall examine the tenurial system during the British period and subsequent changes that followed thereafter.

Tenurial System in Pre-Independent India

In order to have a proper understanding of land reform ^{ment} implication in post-independent India, it is essential to have an understanding of the tenurial system in the past, particularly during the colonial phase.¹⁵ The British did little in the beginning to interfere with the then existing land relations. A century before the British rule and the last phase of Moghul Raj, the Zamindars had developed themselves as powerful landlords and the position became hereditary in course of time. But it was during the British rule that private rights in land was first granted by law to Zamindars as a matter of policy and revenue farmers were recognized as owners. This was done with the recourse for the colonial rule in India.

The Zamindari land tenure system generally conferred rights of private ownership in land on persons who belonged to the



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15. G. Ojha, Land Problem and Land-Reforms Sultan Chand and Sons, New Delhi, p.32.

upper stratum of society. These owners gradually became the landed aristocracy in India. Each Zamindar was completely entitled to bring vast areas of land under his tenants so that in course of time he became the owner. Such appropriated areas were called Khamarnij or sir land in Bihar. The land purchase and mortgaging of new land went on increasing the size of personal estates.

While trying to analyse the British land system it can be roughly divided into three phases.

1. "First phase related to the increasing intervention of the East India company in the matter of administration of the various small estates with a view to acquiring political possession which in itself resulted in a large scale settlement of small territories which the company finally took over.

2. The second phase related to the actual take over. During this period, especially in Bengal, state of anarchy was prevailing.

3. In the final phase they evolved such rules for the collection of revenue which was in spirit and content ruinous to the peasantry.¹⁶

We shall now analyse these concrete types of land tenure system in India. There were three principal type of land tenure systems in India during the British Raj, the Zamindari the Ryotwari, and the Mahalwari. The essence of the Zamindari

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as also of the Jagirdari system consisted in making private landlords the proprietors of estates on conditions of payment of a stipulated sum of money to the state. The peasants could obtain the holding by leasing the same farm to the landlords who stood between the state and agriculture workers.

Under the Ryotwari system lands were held direct from the state of Ryots, ie. the individual tenants. A Ryot could not be ejected as long as he was paying the fixed assesment. (Prof. K. Mukerjee in his book 'Land Reforms' defines the Mahalwari system as the following.) "The peasant compound with state for a fixed period. The village through its representative undertakes to pay, assinging each man to pay his quota. Primarily each man cultivates for himself but ultimately he is responsible for his co-villagers and they for him. They are ultimately bound together by joint responsibility. If one of them is compelled to sell his rights to meet demands upon him, the others have the right of pre-emption.

These tenures did not alone arise out of historical developments but were also part of the British rulers economic experiments and attempts to graft certain alien systems. This was done with the purpose of perpetuating their own rule and also create an intermediary ruling class between themselves and the ruled in India. It is also amply clear

from the foregoing explanation that a large number of people who could be classified as intermediaries were living on income derived from the landed property and without making any productive effort. Such a situation resulted in serious conflict of interest and the rising force of Indian National movement under the leadership of Gandhi and later Nehru, the peasantry was promised a fair deal in an independent India.

The mobilization of peasantry was quiet effective and Gandhi himself led the struggle in Champaran in early 20s. Thereafter struggles were launched in Bardoli, Gujarat and Allahabad in places like Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh. The Congress Socialist Party under Jaya Prakash Narayan also helped in radicalizing the policies of Congress Party in formulating land-reform programme. This was in the last phase of freedom struggle.

Land Reform in Independent India

The conception of 'land-reform' by the Congress Government was precisely summed up in a resolution on agriculture and agrarian reform adopted by the conference of Chief Ministers of States, and president of Pradesh Congress Committees, held in 1950 at New Delhi. The resolution contains the following passage :

"Agriculture will remain in a state of flux so long as the structure and pattern of rural economy does not become clear and definite. It is, therefore necessary to shorten the period of transition by expediting the abolition of Zamindari and Malguzare systems by payments of if necessary in bonds. Provision should be made for the fixity of tenure to the tiller.¹⁷" Thus land reforms were initiated with three objectives by the Government.

- a. To secure social justice
- b. To promote economic development
- c. To increase the efficiency of Indian agriculture.

The programmes comprised of abolition of the intermediary tenures, reforms of the tenancy systems, including regulation of rent, security of tenure and conferment of ownership on tenants, ceiling on land-holdings and consolidation of land-holding etc. Under the former tenurial system the landlords were not involved in cultivation and at times the intermediaries between the landlords and the agricultural workers were also not involved in direct cultivation.

Intermediary tenures like Zamindari, Jagirs, Inams, covered more than 40% of area of the country were abolished. Similarly in the Ryotwari areas changes were also brought about because portions of land here too was sublet. Quite a sizable area was thus held by tenants and sub tenants under

17. Bhowani Sen, Indian Land System and Land Reforms, People Publishing House, New Delhi, 1955, p. 81.

various kinds of arrangements. A reform of the tenancy was therefore imperative.

This involved regulation of rent security of tenure and conferment of ownership on tenants and sub-tenants. In order to make the institutional arrangement in land effective land ceiling laws were also passed by the state legislatures. The attempt in various legislatures to give effect to this programme have run up against many obstacles. The proposal which has generated a heated controversy in the call of "ceiling", i.e. the setting of upper limits to the size of units of land ownership, and the redistribution of the ^{land} to those with small holdings ~~or~~ none at all!¹⁸

Land ceiling measures initiated in many parts of the country in 50s and 60s which resulted in the distribution of about 8.10 lakh hectare of ceiling surplus land among 10.60 families.¹⁹ A new national policy on land ceiling was evolved in July 1972 on the recommendation of the Chief Ministers conference. By now most of the states in the country have enacted laws fully reflecting this policy. Only Nagaland and Mehalaya do not have ceiling laws as they have an absolutely different pattern of land-ownership.

18. Daniel Thorner, The Agrarian Prospects in India, Allied Publications Ltd., New Delhi, 1976, p. 52.

19. Refer Census Reports, 1960-61.

One of the obstacles in the planned development of agriculture arises out of the fragmentary structure of holdings. Most of the holdings are not small but they also consist of widely scattered fragments. A high degree of efficiency can be achieved by the consolidation of fragmented holdings. Note worthy progress has however been made only in a few states such as Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh.

Legislation and Land Reforms

However, the legislation on land-reforms has not taken into account the vast variability of land tenure systems and therefore unified legislation on diverse land tenure systems has not produced the expected equalization of the landed and the tenant cultivation.²⁰ The present position of land reform implementation is based on legislation carried out in different states. Out of the 2.25 million hectares of land estimated to ~~be~~ surplus as in March 1978 only about 26% (56 million hectares has been distributed). The slow progress is due to the large pending of cases in various courts. Several states are yet to making their tenancy laws in line with the national policy with regard to regulation of rent, security of tenure and conferment of ownership rights. In a number of states, the tenants and sharecroppers are not adequately protected against ejection. The question

20. K.L. Sharma, paper presented at the seminar on "Agrarian relations in India," organized by the School of Social Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 14-15 April.

remains of how to place the control of land in the hands of the actual tillers and to ensure that it stays with them.²¹

As already stated that legislation did not take into account the variability in tenure system nor a proper view of the diversified nature of Indian social structure which has a close connection with the system of land. As different tenurial systems existed in various states and regions and sometimes within each state, variability in structure and institution of tenure also existed. The uniform policy approach could not bring the desired changes.²² The planners and the political parties have played the most vital role in formulating land reform programmes in India. Therefore it is important to understand their role vis-a-vis land reforms in India.

Land Reform And Political Parties

The sum total of land reform laws enacted in India since 1947 constitute the largest body of agrarian legislation to have been passed in any country whose history has been recorded.²³ These legislations were brought about by the political parties in power in different states. As land reform in India is not a central subject the responsibility lies at the state level.

21. Daniel Thorner, Agrarian Prospects in India, Allied Publishers Ltd., New Delhi, 1976, p. 58.

22. K.L. Sharma, "Land Tenure, Social Structure and Change, some reflections on land reforms in Rajasthan", paper presented in Jawaharlal Nehru University Seminar, April 1980

23. Daniel Thorner, Agrarian Prospects in India, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1976, p.14.

Many a times the Congress Party formulated certain progressive measures but they could not be carried out, as there was lot of opposition in the states from their own ranks.

Besides, the congress since the days of national movement has remained an "umberllaParty" under which all sections get some concession on the other. As an "umberlla organization" it made changes in the tenurial relations in the favour of tenants but these changes have been slow and gradual. It was only in the begining that radical measures were adopted to end intermediary tenures like the Zamindari, Ryotwari, Jagirdari and Mahalwari. But sixties onwards the emphasis of land-reform has been more towards the development of land rather on the distribution aspect of land. This policy of the congress can be seen from the social base which it has created.

The Congress had to face stiff opposition for both carrying out ^{and} not carrying out land reforms. The Communist Party and the Socialist Party took a more radical stance in favour of agricultural workers and marginal peasants, whereas the Swatantra Party and the Jan Sangh were opposed to any changes in the tenurial system of the pre-independent days. In fact the parties like Swatantra were formed by the earlier Rajas and big Zamindars to oppose the government's policy of land reform. The party got lot of support from the princely states of Rajasthan, Orissa and Gujarat. The main objective

of the Party was to stand for the protection of the landlords interest.²⁴ This is amicably clear from the election manifestoes.

The Jan Sangh also had a similar position through being a Party of the upper middle classes in the urban areas. It drew support from the petty trading class but because of its stance of Hindu revivalism also got some support from the caste Hindus, particularly those who had landed interest. After the disintegration of the Swatantra Party its base has been usurped by the Jan Sangh now known as the Bharatiya Janata Party. It is for this reason that this party is gaining in the rural areas of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. In Madhya Pradesh they get the support of the earlier princely states.

The Socialist Party until 1977, drew ideological influence from the socialist tradition of the west and as well as from the Gandhian tradition of national movement. In its election-manifesto of 1952 the socialists on the one hand advocated the abolition of the earlier tenures of the colonial rule and called upon to encourage co-operative farming in agriculture.²⁵ They also demanded for ceilings on land and surplus land found be distributed to Harijans and marginal peasants from the lower castes.²⁶ Presently they

24. M. Ranchander, "Political Parties and Land Reform Policy - Party ideology, strategy and programmes, Swatantra Party and land policy," Political Economy of India, Sharma BAV (Ed.), Light and Life Publications, 1960, p. 169.

25. Refer to election-manifesto 1952, Socialist Party, New Delhi

26. Refer election-manifesto 1957, Socialist Party, Hyderabad.

advocate for rural development and more remunerative prices to the peasantry, after having splintered into Lok Dal and Janata Party.²⁷ It appears they have given up the programme of earlier two phase land-reforms of co-operative farming to collective farming.

The Communist Party in its first election-manifesto of 1952 maintained that through socialism alone would ~~the~~ peasantry and the working class liberate itself. But the task ^{was} of bringing about socialism under ^{the} leadership of Indian working class. To ~~start~~ with, they advocated that ceilings should not exceed three times the family holding and all land in excess should be distributed among agricultural workers and peasants without payment.²⁸ In order that these land-reform to be carried out they advocated that peasant and agricultural workers should be entrusted with the work of implementing agrarian reform programme.

Later the Communist Party got split twice due to their different positions on Indian Society and state. The first split came in the Communist Party in 1964 and later in 1967 with the beginning of Naxalite movement. Since then they have further splintered.

27. Refer to election-manifesto 1980, released at the time of Assembly Election, Lok Dal, New Delhi.

28. K. Subiah Chander Reddy, "Political Parties and Land Reform, Party Ideology, Strategy and Programmes," Political Economy of India, Sharma BAV, (Ed.), Light and Life Publishers, Delhi, 1980, p. 127.

However the role of Communists in the Telengana, Tebhaga, Naxalite movement and land grab movement in Uttar-Pradesh and Bihar in which the socialists also participated has been an important one in pressurizing the state to evolve policies of land reform in favour of the peasantry.

By and large all land-reform programmes in post-independent India were ^{by} equitable distribution of land so as to raise productivity of agriculture. The social structure also got altered due to these programmes and new social forces have become influential in the political and economic spheres. The Kamma and Reddy in Andhra, Patels in Gujarat, Kummis and Yadavs in Bihar, Jats and Ahirs in Uttar Pradesh are the emerging dominant castes among the peasants.

This change was initiated through the democratic process and different legislations which were brought in the state assemblies.

Land Reform and Judicial Process

Though the land-reform programme is a state subject the planning commission under the five year plans also set up certain guide-lines for the above purpose. The constitution was also amended to suit the land reform because these programmes suffered a lot due to the intervention made by the courts and delay in the judicial process.

The object of these amendments was to invalidate the acquisition of Zamindari or other legislation without interference from the courts. The constitutional validity of this first amendment was challenged in the Supreme Court in 1955. Petitions were filed by several Zamindars raising the common question whether the provision passed ~~as~~ was ultra-vires. The Supreme Court on several accounts upheld the rights of the Parliamentary institution to make changes.²⁹

While the abolition of the Zamindari and changes in other intermediary tenurial system carried out, the next objective was to fix the limit to the extent of agricultural land that may be owned or occupied by any person. There were thus further modification in tenures in relation to the disposal of land held in excess of the prescribed maximum and the rights of land-owners and tenants in agricultural holdings.

Hence there is no legal impediment for the legislature of a state or Parliament to pass laws within their competence for implementing measures of land-reform. Though the initial burden of proposing the same in legal form mainly rests with the state governments, state legislatures and political parties operating at the state level.

29. Refer Article 31(B) of the Indian Constitution which was Amended by the Parliament's 25th Amendment Act 1971. It was done primarily to save land reform legislation.

Five Year Plans And Land Reforms

The Five Year Plans also set out broad objectives of land policy. The First Five Year Plan states "A land policy should be evolved, which now and in the coming years, reduces disparities in wealth and income, eliminates exploitation, provides security for tenants and workers and finally promises equality of status and opportunity to different sections of the rural population." The ultimate purpose was that most suitable pattern of land tenure system be adopted with peasants farming on suitable units of cultivation under a properly determined scheme of rights. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Five Year Plans consecutively reviewed the existing ceiling legislation in different states and pin-pointed loopholes and suggested that ceiling legislation should thoroughly be re-examined and re-oriented to better legislation.

Under the sixth plan which has now been altered, a committee had been constituted with planning commission member Raj Krishna to review the progress of land-reforms. It recognized the important role of land^{reform} in rural development. Land distribution, tenancy reform, updating of land records and consolidation of holding are some of the important policy suggested to realize the objectives of land-reform. No serious changes have been made by the change of the government and the new plan of 1980-85.

The different Five Year Plans reiterated that the final goal should be to confer rights of ownership on as large a body of tenants as possible. Also three important guidelines were laid down in the Five Year Plans for the reform ~~is~~ of tenancy.

- (a) "The rent should not exceed the level of one-fifth to one-fourth of the gross produce.
- (b) The tenants should be accorded permanent rights in the land they cultivate subject to a limited right of resumption to be granted to land owners.
- (c) That in respect of non-resumable land the land-lord tenant relationship should be ended by conferring ownership rights on tenants "

*30

However through the various Five Year Plans the planning commission has also sought in both the development of land and its re-distribution. Lately the emphasis has been more on institutional change than on re-distribution.

30. P.S. Appu, Tenancy Reforms in India, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. X Spl. No. August 1957, p. 1347.

CHAPTER IIICHANGING AGRARIAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF UTTAR PRADESHLand Tenures During The British Raj in Uttar Pradesh

There existed a number of tenurial system during the early days of British Raj in united provices now known as Uttar Pradesh. Vast inequalities existed both in caste and class terms, within the agrarian structure. In order to perpetuate their rule in India, the British provided land-lord status to the Rajas, Zamindars, and Talukdars and below them a distinct village community survived¹.

The three tenurial system of Zamindari, Mahalwari and Ryotwari existed in different regions of Uttar Pradesh. The principles of Mahalwari or joint village system was first adopted in Agra and Oudh². Under this scheme the villages concerned were units by themselves. Though the original intention in the Mahalwari system was to recognize the joint character of the village community and common rights in land, but the ultimate effect had not been so.

1. Walter C. Neale, Economic change in India, Land Tenure and Reforms in Uttar Pradesh, 1800-1955, Yale University Press, U.S., 1962, p. 62.

2. Report of the Congress agrarian reform committee under chairmanship J.C. Kumarappa, AICC, New Delhi, 1951, p. 33.

The Zamindari system existed in the Eastern Uttar Pradesh and while the Ryotwari system was prevalent in Western parts of Uttar Pradesh. These tenurial system had its past links with the agrarian structure and the subsequent changes that took place after the abolition were effected.

The British officially recognised three types of villages which were Zamindari, Pattidari and Bhaichara³. The Zamindari village was with a single landlord or with a whole village jointly owned by several persons. Pattidari was based on shares inheritance and Bhaichara with shares of co-owners based on customary allotment. There were also villages where joint claim to a common area never existed at all in any form, each man or family claiming his or its holding. These were classified as Bhaichara already eligible for 'Bhumidari' rights. In addition to acquiring 'Sirdari' by virtue of these provisions, a person admitted to land after passing of the act becomes a Sirdar and a person may also come into the right by virtue of other provisions such as the penalty on Bhumidars for ^{sub-}letting.

The Asami is across between a Sirdar and protected sub-tenant. Asami rights are granted to non-occupancy tenant

3. Walter, Co. Neale, Economic Change in Rural India, Land Tenure and Reforms in Uttar Pradesh, 1800-1955, Yale University Press, U.S., 1962, p.41.

A tenant or sir or ~~Bhumidkast~~ who holds the land in live of maintenance is considered an Asami while his rights to maintenance continues. The Asami has the same rights over his land as a sirdar and is subject to same restrictions.

All land held under bhumidhari or sirdari rights is liable to revenue and all bhumidhars and sirdars are jointly liable for the revenue if a modification is made in the gazette. If a bhumidhar or sirdar is requested to pay more than his share he can recover from the holders in the courts.

A temporary adhvasi tenure for tenants of sir and for sub-tenants was created for cultivators who did not acquire one of the regular tenancies. Adhvasi rights were to disappear as adhvasis purchased bhumidhari rights or surrendered the land, but in 1954 adhvasis were granted sirdari status. The Zamindari Abolition Act⁴ of 1951 established a system of peasant proprietorship, it also made provisions for the growth of co-operative agriculture. The provision was that ten or more Bhumidars or sirdars owning thirty acres of land may register a co-operative farm. All land held by the members of the co-operative whether held under Bhumindari, sirdari, ~~or~~^{or} asami tenure deemed to have belonged to the co-operative society. This Act confirmed

4. The Zamindari Abolition Act was passed in 1952 by U.P. Government which was based on the recommendations made by the committee headed by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. The committee submitted the report in 1948 and was introduced in the State Assembly in July 1949 and was passed on January 16, 1957.

the Zamindars the possession of their unlet sir or khud-dhast. In sum the Act provided for a new heirarchy of tenure holders in place of the old one.

For the Ryotwari areas the pre-independent tenure was to continue. In these areas a class had developed of persons who were for all intents and purposes non-cultivating rent collecting intermediaries. But even the big 'Ryotwari Landlords' as we may call them were not typically in possession of such huge holdings as the great Zamindars of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. They did not enjoy comparable positions of social and political prominence from the imperial authorities.

Accordingly agrarian legislation in the post-independent period has so far included no attempt to abolish this particular group of inter-mediaries.⁵ Though the Zamindari Abolition Act fitted the new tenures into the frameowrk of the village system.

Village Institutions In Uttar Pradesh

In each village a larger or smaller area was there under the corperate body of Gaon Samaj, consisting of all

5. Daniel Thorner, *Agrarian Prospects in India*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1976, p. 28.

adults who ordinarily reside in the circle and hold land in the circle as bhumidhars the village sirdars or Asamis.⁶ Soon after the independence the village organization was established by the village Panchayat Act.⁷ This was also done because managing the land and collecting the revenue had increased by the new system of tenures. The work involved in admitting new cultivations to holding was greater and the number of cultivators enjoying direct relation with the state was larger. To meet these difficulties, the revenue system and the new tenure system were fitted into the new system of local Government of Panchayats.

The Gaon Panchayat* consisted of 31 members with a President and a vice-President. This was elected by the Gaon Sabha consisting of all in a village or group of villages which technically should meet twice a year.

The Gaon Panchayat exercised power, as it was incharge of common property, amenities, local problems in general and also the administration of criminal and civil justice. To raise money for the Gaon Panchayat they could the rent payer to a very minimum sum. The Gaon Panchayat could also tax trades, professions and buildings not covered by the on

6. Walter C. Neale, Economic Change in Rural India, Land Tenure and Reforms in U.P., 1800-1955, Yale University Press, United States of America, 1962, p. 231

7. Panchayat Raj Act XXVI was passed by the Government of U.P. in 1974.

* The word Village Panchayat and Gaon Panchayat have been used interchangeably.

rents. The budget for Village Panchayat should be approved by the Gaon Sabha.

There was also a local council and court known as the Panchayati Adalat which could try union cases and fine upto Rs. 100. The decision of this court could be reversed by the sub-divisional Magistrate, Munsif or other Officer. The Panchayati Adalat consisted of five members from each Gaon Sabha and these members or the panchas as they are popularly known elect their own Sarpanch.

These bodies at the village level were to be all elected bodies through the system of adult franchise. As different land-reform measures were introduced and with the passage of time a new pattern of stratification and village power structure emerged. Both in the Panchayats and other village level institutions people from different castes and classes moved upward into the decision making bodies. So the introduction of land reforms and the democratic process helped in the changing of status of the exploited and discriminated sections in the village.

As a result of Zamindari abolition, it had its implications on the agrarian structure of society and the subsequent changes in the rural social structure, particularly the village power structure. It was the result of

new institutional arrangements in the tenures. The process of this change has its links with earlier agrarian structure, particularly in the British Raj so it would be necessary to have an understanding of the then tenurial systems and the changes that followed thereafter.

Land Tenures In Post-Independent Phase in Uttar Pradesh

After the Abolition of the Zamindari tenurial system in Uttar Pradesh in 1952 a new system of tenurial relations was created. The State Government created three permanent kinds of tenure known as the Bhumidhari, Sirdari, and Asami⁹ roughly comparable to the owners, hereditary tenants and statutory tenants of earlier acts. Adhivasi tenure was created as a transitional measure to take care of tenants of sir.

The Bhumidhar could have exclusive possession of land and could use it as he pleased, sell and transfer it, provided the recipient will not transfer in any other way more than thirty acres and also a mortgagee could not take possession. He may not lease his land unless the person is an unmarried, physically incapable of managing his land etc. The penalties for evasion of restrictions were severe and

9. Refer Malaviya, H.D., Land Reforms in India, AICC, New Delhi, 1955, p. 111.

where a transfer was made illegally the Gaon Sabha could see to eject the transferee. Where the Bhumidhar lets his land illegally the less^{er} automatically becomes a sirdar if the area was less than thirty acres. The claim of the State upon those Bhumidhars who were formerly Zamindars was restricted to the amount of the old land revenue assessed on the portion of the holding which was retained. A total of about two million Zamindars benefitted from this provision.¹⁰

Bhumidhari tenures were granted to the intermediaries in respect to their sir,¹¹ khudkhasht and grovelands. The recipient of Bhumidhari rights did not receive these rights on all the sir and khudkhasht he held, but only upon his proportionate share in a joint holding.

A sirdar could also become a Bhumidhar by paying to the Government ten times his annual rent in one lump sum. The sirdar had exclusive possession of his land as long as he used it for agricultural or horticultural purposes. He may let the land on the same conditions as bhumidhar which in most cases meant that he could not let his land in any other form of transfer except inheritance. In the case of any illegal transfer by a sirdar the transfer was void, the

10. Daniel Thorner, Agrarian Prospects in India, Allied Publishers Ltd., New Delhi, 1976, p. 68.

11. Aditya Nath Jha, "Agrarian reforms in the State of U.P., India" Land Tenure, Parsons, Pen and Raup (Ed.), University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1956, p. 149.

transfer may be ejected and the sirdar automatically loses all rights in land. The status of the sirdar was markedly inferior to that of sirdar.¹²

Sirdar tenure was granted to tenants-holding on special terms in oadh, expropriatory tenants, occupancy tenants not because of the absence of ancestral shares although there was custom of brotherhood. The villages which came on were founded late in which a local personage had seized possession and set himself up as a Zamindar shortly took up the appearance and tributes of the older villages as the descendants multiplied and divided the land.

A peculiarity of the Zamindari of ~~an~~ ancestral shares was that the burdens were allotted without any regard to whether one share had become much unproved while another had deteriorated. The general system in Pattidari was to let the land held in common and use the proceeds to pay the land revenue. If the total was more than sufficient to pay land revenue the excess was divided according to the ancestral share and if the amount was insufficient to pay the land revenue each Zamindar had to make up the deficit in the same proportion.

12. Daniel Thorner, The Agrarian prospects in India, Allied Publishers Ltd., New Delhi, 1967, p. 25.

Peasant Unrest in Uttar Pradesh

In the middle of 19th century just after the mutiny many changes were brought about by the Britishers. The first step was to confiscate all property from those who had actively participated in the revolt in favour of those who had remained loyal.¹³ More rights were also conferred to the Zamindars after this.

Three years after the mutiny marked out an era of relative stability in land-holding. There was a host of changes due to the increasing commercialization of agriculture also. But no major changes in land relations were introduced by the British government.

The study of Thomas Metcalfe on "Land^l holders, and British Raj," focuses that the Rajputs were the major land-owning castes and the bulk of the Zamindars and taluk-dars were from this community. Brahmans were next to them in the ownership of land. The Yadavs, Kurunis, Lodhs belonging to the peasant caste community were tenants.

The most awful conditions were of peasants and agricultural workers who were essentially from the intouchable social category and fall outside the Varṇa Model. The Shudras who were fourth in Varṇa Hierarchy were the tenants.

13. Thomas R. Metcalfe, Land, Landlords and the British Raj, Oxford, University Press, 1979, p. 158.

In the earlier 20th century and thereafter the peasant participation in the National Movement increased and their demands were included in this struggle. In the late 1920s Jawaharlal Nehru organised the peasant struggle in Uttar-Pradesh. It was the provincial unit of Uttar Pradesh, where Indian National Congress first raised the demand for Zamindari Abolition so a major step could be taken in improving the status of peasants.¹⁴ This was also done to broaden the social base of the Congress Party and to enlist the support of the peasants. They also suggested far-reaching agrarian reforms.¹⁵

A committee was appointed in 1936 under Purshotam Das Tandon and Lal Bhadur Shastri and Sampurna Anand as its members to study the agrarian condition in Uttar Pradesh. This report strongly advocated for the abolition of the Zamindari and made appeal in favour of peasants. It stated, "That economic conditions of the peasant is miserable. No peasant wants to leave his land but they are being constantly marginalized because the rental demand, land revenue, and the profits of the inter-mediaries have increased?"

Subsequently another committee soon after the independence was formed with J.C. Kumarappa as chairman to suggest concrete changes as the Zamindari Abolition and other intermediary tenures were to be changed. The committees recommendations were followed in Uttar Pradesh as well. The committee

14. Harsh Dev Malaviya, Land Reforms in India, AICC, New Delhi, p. 98

15. Refer U.P. Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report, 1937, p. 5.

suggested that there could be no lasting improvement in agricultural production without comprehensive reforms in the country's land system. The recommendation were accepted and the bill was introduced in Uttar Pradesh Assembly for the abolition of the Zamindari System. A big step in the land reforms was thus introduced.

Land Redistribution in Uttar Pradesh

After Abolition of Zamindar Act, the Adhivasis were given Sirdari rights and in 1976 all sirdars became bhumidhar without right to transfer.¹⁶ Now there are only two tenures that is the bhumidars and Asamis. Asamis hold either land of disabled persons or are cultivations of precarious lands in which no stable rights can accrue. A census of land-holding was conducted in 1971 and the position was found to be as follows:

TABLE I

Particulars	No.	Area Hectores	Percentage No.	Percentage (Area)
Operational holdings	15,638,999	18,158,487	100	100
Wholly owned and self operated	15,117,989	17,488,616	97	97
Leased in land (Gaon-Sabha)	74,535	37,357	0.5	0.2
Leased in land (Gaon Sabha)	94,614	72,051	0.6	0.4

Government of Uttar Pradesh

16. M. Zaheer, "Policy and implementation of land-reform in U.P. India," Land Reforms, Some Asian Experience, Inayatullah (Ed.), APPAC, Kuala Lumpur, 1980, p. 202.

These figures show that the situation of Uttar Pradesh is different to that of other states. Here 67% of the holdings are below one hectare and are therefore uneconomic. There are as many as 5.4 million landless agricultural labourers which constitutes 20% of the rural population.¹⁷ These uneconomic holdings cannot by any means be eliminated without pooling of land and joint cultivation.¹⁸

There were measures to reduce the size of holdings and distribute the land to share croppers and agricultural labourers of which the revised ceiling Act of 1973 in Uttar Pradesh is quite important. This was evolved after the conference of Chief Ministers in Delhi in 1972 and a national guideline was adopted. Under this guideline the family was redefined so as to include the tenure holder on his spouse, minor sons and minor unmarried daughters. The ceiling area was reduced to 7.3 hectares of irrigated land for a tenure holder having a family of five members.

In 1977 an area of 105, 298 hectares was declared surplus. Out of this over 87,798 hectare was distributed as pointed in the study of M. Zaheer in his study of land-reforms in Uttar Pradesh distribution 47, 637 hectors of land has been made to 115,894 persons according to the same study. The average works out to 0.41% per allottee.

17. *Op cit*, p. 203

18. Baljit Singh, Next Step in Village India, A Study of Land-Reforms and group Dynamics, Asia Publishing House, Delhi, 1961, p. 92.

Different Measures of Land-Reforms in Uttar Pradesh

Since the Abolition Zamindari a number of other measures have been introduced in order to make the land-reforms effective and altering the agrarian structure Uttar-Pradesh. Susequent land-reform measures in Uttar Pradesh can be summed up as Uttar Pradesh urban and Uttarkhand Zamindari Abolition and land-reforms Act 1960, Uttar Pradesh Jaunsar-Bawar Zamindari Abolition of Ceiling on Land-holding Act 1974 and Uttar Pradesh Land-laws 1975. Besides, the Zamindari Abolition Act has been amended on 26 occasions.¹⁹

In spite of all effort to change and end tenancy, share-cropping and sub-letting, through various land-reform measures in Uttar Pradesh, these efforts have not been very successful according to the study, (Baljit Singh and Mishra) on land-reforms.²⁰ The thrust of the study is that sub-tenancy cultivation before Zamindari Abolition was 4.96% and now it is 1.83%. This does not include the area cultivated as share-croppers or held without consent. Land taken for share-cropping is only by marginal peasants, and particularly by Asami as non-tenure holders.

19. M. Zaheer, "Policies and Implementation of Land-Reforms in Uttar Pradesh", Land Reforms, some Asian Experience, Inayatullah, (Ed.), APPAC, Kaula Lupper, 1966, p. 185.

20. Baljit Singh, Shridhar Mishra, A Study of Land-Reforms in Uttar Pradesh, Oxford Book and Stationary Co., Calcutta, 1964, p. 159.

elaborate

These ~~evaluate~~ measures of land-reforms in Uttar Pradesh for land reforms also suffered in the hand of bureaucracy at local levels. The Patwari who kept the village record also sided with land-lords. Daniel Thorner in his study, points out that, "In the eyes of the most of the people in his circle, the Patwari is very important and powerful official. Effors in advertently made by him in the village records effect powerfully the fortunes of the cultivators, a dishonest Patwari has therefore considered oppertunities for exertion. Most of them make good use of the oppertunity. Of the disputes fought in the revenue courts is a ruinous cost to the cultivator. Many would have never arisen at all but for the wrong entries in the revenue records"²¹.

It was in the sphere of ditermination of a air and Khudkast that the Patwari worked out some mischief. The prelinenries and the legislative progress in Uttar Pradesh after Zamindari Abolition gave them an oppertunity such as had never occured to them before. They did not fail to avail themselves of it.

The action of Patwari was not only mischevious but a also inseparable. One cannot go to Uttar Pradesh village today without being told by some peasants about lands on

21. Daniel Thorner, Agrarian Prospects in India, Allied Publishers Ltd., New Delhi, 1976, p.47.

which they should have become sirdars but due to Pa misdeeds persisted in the hands of Zamindar turned Bhumidhar.²² As to those peasants who actually became sirdars and exercised rights to become Bhumidhars only 1/3 were eligible to do so. The majority of them lacked resources on thought that it was an affair not worth investing. Nonetheless, it is true that millions of peasants purchased Bhumidari rights in some areas of Uttar Pradesh and have been able to enjoy for the first time prestige and prerogative of ownership.

22. Op. cit -- p. 48.

CHAPTER IVChanges in Rural Stratification and Power Structure in
Uttar Pradesh

As this study deals with the problem of 'land-reform' these relate to the nature of social order, social stratification, inequality, social justice and power structure. These issues are important to sociology because of the theoretic divergences about the explanation of social stratification. It is explained either in terms of :-

- a) The need in society for ranking the roles and status of its members, commensurate with their relative normative utilitarian significance for society and the consequent rewards.
- b) The ranking and differential rewarding of roles and status commensurate with their access to the extent of institutionalized power.

The first explanation roughly corresponds with what is known as the functionalist and the second with the conflict theory of social stratification¹.

Indian rural community is not comprized of a home-genuous group with idential interest but varies depending on the ownership of land and its distribution. Therefore a structural approach is necessary to understand the system of stratification. In this caste has been important category

1. Yogendra Singh, "Sociology of Social Stratification", A Survey of Research in Sociology and Social Authropology, ICSSR, Vol. 1, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1974, p. 311.

and still remains to be but the dimension of class has become more important particularly in light of different land-reform programmes pursued in the post-independent period. The past three decades after independence, has transformed agricultural production, distribution of land which resulted into the alteration of socio-economic structure of rural society.

The old caste stratification resting on the equilibrium of village occupation and mutual functional dependence which was the basic characteristic of the village self sufficient community, was disturbed by the British rulers.² The agrarian system as it evolved during the British regime was based on Zamindari, Ryotwari or the mode of revenue collection generated more or less a similar agrarian class structure.

The Zamindari system had the Zamindars, tenants, and agricultural labourers as the main agrarian classes. The ~~next~~ Ryotwari system consisted of two types of peasants the Ryot peasants and the Ryot land-lords.³ The agrarian class structure everywhere in India had a feudal character because the Zamindars were tax gatherers who were the non-cultivating owners, the tenants were the cultivators without

2. A.R. Desai, Rural Sociology in India, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1969.

3. Yogendra Singh, Sociology of Social Stratification, A Survey of Research in Sociology and Social Anthropology, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1974.

security of tenure and agricultural labourers had the status of bonds-men who were hereditary attached. This continued with the British colonial power.

Changes in Rural Stratification

The changes in the rural stratification has been viewed by Dr. K.L. Sharma as both upward and downward mobility in the Rajasthan villages. Dr. Sharma studying six villages in Rajasthan from the point of changes in the social stratification has noted that the earlier landlords of the Jagirdari tenure have slide-down in the class status. The position of the agricultural workers remains by and large the same but the middle class peasantry have now become the new landlords after independence.

On the other hand Daniel Thorner uses native categories like 'Malik', 'Mazdur' and 'Kisan' to describe the three main classes in the rural social structure. Socially the resident maliks form a small and distinctive group within the village. The Kisans are from cultivating or artisan castes and the Mazdur are drawn from the Harijans.⁴

4. Daniel Thorner, Agrarian Prospects in India, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1976.

Land and Social Structure

The study of agrarian social structure is the study of groups connected with land. As land constitutes the main factor in rural society, the formation of groups is primarily connected with the differentiation of rights over land. From this one can view the division of society into various classes of owners and non-owners of land.

"For the Indian context, the social existence form of labour power was not serf-labour on the lord's land as under classical feudalism but pre-dominantly labour by self employed peasants in small plots of cultivation leased in from under various systems of Panchayats of rent to landlords.⁵ In the European context there were division into classes with sharp antagonism. Thus Indian agrarian structure was fundamentally different both in respect of property and social structure. Even as a social class the land owning class did not possess the social cohesion and homogeneity of the Nobility of Feudal Lords of Western Europe.

The peasants themselves were divided into various sub-categories on the basis of land under their cultivation, the security of tenure and the mode of rental payment.

5. P.C. Joshi, "Agrarian Structure and Social Change", Sankhya, Series B, Vol. 31, Parts 3 & 4, 1969, p. 482.

Particularly in the Zamindari areas of eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, the Zamindaris relative weight was greater than that of landlords of the Ryotwari areas of western Uttar Pradesh, Punjab etc. The most important dimension, however was caste and agrarian relations were inter-related and the upper castes dominated the property structure on the eve of independence. The peasant producers were drawn from backward castes.

Changes in Land Tenure and Power Structure

The sociological approach to power-analysis emerges from the assessment of its functional role and as the cohesive element of social structural configuration. It is treated as not only to a political system but also as the integrative principles of social structure and stratification.⁶ The ownership or control of land is certainly the most important support for village power structures and therefore we find that those who own the land resist any efforts to re-distribute land.⁷

6. Yogendra Singh, "Changing Power Structure in Uttar Pradesh village", Rural Sociology in India, A.R. Desai, (Ed.), Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1969, p.711.

7. Keith Ewerich, Rural Power Structures and Rural Organization in the Formulation of Land Reforms, Land Reforms: Some Asian Experience, Inayatullah (Ed.) APPAC, Kuala-Lumpers, 1980, p. 371.

During the pre-independent period the power structure of the village was founded upon the tenurial system on the one hand (Zamindari, Jagirdari, Ryotwari, etc.) which represented the material and economic interest and the village and caste panchayats on the other which symbolized the basic social dimensions of the rural policy. The relationship between the power-structure of the villages with the system of land tenure was inter-woven with rights of property on the rights of ownership of land.

The Zamindari system had a vital role to play in the village power system of the villages, so much so that it grew into a power institution and influenced the selection of leadership and at times it also defined the role of caste and community Panchayats. A systematic analysis between the tenure system meaning thereby that the castes and class who control land and the power structure therefore should be the focal point of study of rural pattern of power. The power structure of the Indian village largely depended on the right of ownership and caste. In the pyramidal power structure of the village the upper castes were at the top.

Mobility in the New Tenure System

After independence important changes have occurred in the economic and social sphere of rural society. The composition of groups at the top of the social pyramid and mobility

of major elements from the middle to the top of the pyramid has occurred in the intervening period. These changes have not been uniform, and the Ryotwari areas have observed more changes than the Zamindari areas.

The sharp decline in absentee landlordism practiced by big Zamindars, Talukdars, and Jagirdars is a significant indicator of this change. Even those who were not absentee in character have been significantly reduced as a result of the restoration of tenancy lands from their control and the establishment of the direct relationship between tenants and states. However the earlier landlords have not gone out of existence.

Still there are landlords who are owning large holdings and lease out their land under various disguises to tenants who are the actual cultivator of these lands. The new peasant proprietors can be also categorized in two broad categories. First come the rich peasants who have acquired only rights of restricted ownership or in many cases are past land lords.

The trend of crystallization of a new type of dominant interest group at the top of social pyramid with a commercial orientation is there. The recruitment of new social elements at the top of the property structure from the commercial and

peasant strata is there. There is a ramification of the dominance of this group from the economic to the social and political spheres. The shifts that have come about at the middle and the bottom of the pyramid are due to the changes at the top.

Changing Power Structure of Uttar Pradesh

In the whole of Eastern Uttar Pradesh two major form of land tenure were to be found, (a) the talukdari and Zamindari, (b) while in the Western Uttar Pradesh the Ryotwari tenure was there. The exact structure of power differed from the Zamindari villages to the Taluqdari villages. In the joint Zamindari villages the total body of proprietors was divided into Thoks; Thoks into Pattis and it was actually these different Thoks headed by one or more lambardar which acted as an independent unit of power.⁸

The tenants and other functionary castes were divided into Thoks and so belonged to the power jurisdiction of Thok concerned. In one joint Zamindari village there could be more than one such unit of power.

8. Yogender Singh, "Changing power structure of Uttar Pradesh villages", Rural Sociology in India, A.R. Desai (Ed.) Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1969, p.715.

The jurisdiction of Zamindari power groups was (a) collection of rent, (b) collection of house tax, (c) distribution of pasture land and timber to their tenants at the occasion of death, or marriage and, (d) to hear appeal against the caste Panchayats of their tenants belonging to different castes.⁹

The body of power personal consisted of (a) the ~~lombardah~~, (b) the elders from various landlord households and, (c) the Godait who was the lower caste messenger. At times the village Patwaris and Chawkidars help was taken although these were responsible directly to the Mukhia ~~of~~ the police-headmen, one ~~of~~ for each village appointed by government from among the landlords.

In the Talukdari village there were sub-proprietors on Thokdars. The Officers appointed by used to excessive power over the villages on behalf of the Talukdars, who used to hear appeals only in important matters. The body of village Panchayats was constituted of the ~~lombardars~~ from different and landlord ~~shah~~ holders. Whereas the Zamindari system used to divide the village from the point of view of structure of power, the village Panchayat was a broad based structure of power rather a federation representing all rural sub-structures of power, i.e., the caste Panchayat and the Thok and Patti of the Zamindari system.

9. Yogender Singh, "Changing Power Structure of U.P. Village" Rural Sociology in India, A.R. Desai (Ed.) Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1969, p. 715.

Theoretically it occupied a very powerful and supreme status in the structure of rural power but in practice it was always oscillating for authority between the rival factions of landlords. Generally it used to remain dormant in the structure of rural polity and used to take a manifest structural form when the prestige of the village as a whole was in danger

The caste Panchayat too occupied an important position and was an important institution of power. In case of abolition of landlordism and introduction of the newly elected Panchayat system, they have come to be highly activated with the result that formation of strong caste and the horizontal mobility in the caste organization has become common pattern. Now they have become potential instruments controlling the mode of social economic and power relations of the groups in the village community. They are a source of good amount of social tension and ferment in the rural social structure.

The general pattern which emerges in Uttar Pradesh is that the power system of villages before the abolition of tenurial systems created by British of mastery over economic resources and its concentration in certain social class, ^{are} ~~was~~ by far the most important source of power. The village Panchayats remained a tool in the hands of landlord both in the Zamindari and Ryotwari areas and would not develop as an effective instrument of power. The other point

is that village settlement and land tenure had deep relation not only with the power structure but also its social system.¹⁰

A new pattern of power emerged after 1947 when radical land-reforms were introduced and the older tenurial system was altered. The primary objective of the new system of power was to democratize the base on the basis of people acceptance. The leadership pattern as it emerged after the first election in the villages demonstrates that the goal of diffusion of power in each class and caste of the village community had not succeeded. But subsequently with the passage of time and panchayat election and programmes of land-redistribution, members belonging to communities ~~and~~ other than upper castes have moved into important positions of Panchayat.

There is overwhelming evidence to demonstrate that the groups, classes, and castes, who were politically and socially suppressed so far are making substantial efforts to come out on top of the power structure of the village. During the Panchayat elections in almost every village the key offices which went to the upper classes were keenly contested by the lower and intermediate classes.

10. Yogendra Singh, "Changing Power Structure in Uttar Pradesh Village", Rural Sociology in India, A.R. Desai, (Ed.) Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1969, p. 723.

Dr. Baljit Singh in his study notes that caste and faction thrive on each other and give strength also.¹¹ These factions often represent splits within caste on the basis of kinship and lineage for the purpose of personal gains. No broad social objectives are involved in these splits. Such faction alliances invariably results in splitting into two or three powerful rival groups. These cut across caste boundaries in several cases and at times an entire caste joins as single unit. Land is the issue which causes the major factions. The landed households only fight each other through kinsship groups and rival lineages within their caste but also involve all the rest of the households in the village.

Pressure on Land in Uttar Pradesh

There is poverty and shortage of land almost in all villages but in some areas it is more acute than the other. Within the general poverty range there are ^{extreme} extensive differences of rich and poor on account of unequal distribution of land. It was hoped that through the distribution of land under the land-reform programmes social inequality in the rural areas would be reduced. On the contrary these hopes are not materializing.¹²

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- ✓ 11. Durga Mishra, Underdog, the village Uttar Pradesh experience, The Patriot, New Delhi, 4th September 1947.
 ✓ 12. Mangal Dev Visharad Report submitted to Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, 1974.

Besides the rules laid down for distributing land to the ~~agriculturing land to the~~ agricultural worker are very stiff. There agricultural workers come sixth under the priority laid down for distribution of Gaon Samaj land.¹³ The procedure laid down for granting Pattar or land right is also unduly cumbersome. It is noted that the patta-holders do not get land even after obtaining pattas. The average size of the land given to a landless agricultural labourer is one standard acre or less than that. It is also relatively inferior in quality and that is why the government has by legislation excepted the beneficiaries from payment of land revenue for three years from date of allotment.¹³ However measures like not stamp duty on land purchase by Harijans have been also made by government of Uttar Pradesh. The measure was adopted by the Janata Government.

Another important point in land reform programme in Uttar Pradesh has been the variability of change in two different regions of Uttar Pradesh. As different institutional arrangements had existed in the British period the changes occurred thereafter are very glaring. Progress of agriculture in Ryotwari areas is much higher than in the

13. Bhattacharjee, Land-Reforms in Uttar Pradesh, Hindustan Standard Calcutta, 15th May 1976.

Zamindari areas. This is due to the parasitic nature of landlords that were there in the Zamindari areas who were the rent collectors on behalf of the state. The mechanization and development is much more in western Uttar Pradesh as against eastern Uttar Pradesh.

In western Uttar Pradesh the Jats and other intermediary castes are the dominant land-owning castes now. While in eastern Uttar Pradesh, Rajputs or Thakurs and Bhumihars are dominant land-owning castes. Thus we see that the changes occurred in the agrarian structure of Uttar Pradesh have an intimate relationship with the institutional arrangements of the past.

However, the emerged power system has a tendency to incline in favour of the groups who can control the economic expectations of the people in the village. From this point of view, any future dynamics of rural power system will be in direct response to the economic change introduced and the pattern of rural economic growth and land relations.

CHAPTER VC O N C L U S I O N

The question of land-reform in India assumed a high priority at the policy making level immediately after Independence. The agrarian upheaval in different parts of the country under the Nationalist leadership in the pre-independent days and by the Communists on the eve of independence made a sharp thrust in focusing at the urgency of land-reforms.

Very soon after the independence there emerged three major agrarian theses and based on this political action related on this political action related to the land problem was also carried out. These contributed to three major trend in the country, which in the broad sense of the term continue even today. They are :-

1. "In 1947 the Congress Agrarian Reform Committee, a high level body appointed by the president of Indian National Congress, released its report which presented analysis of the agrarian problem in India also a programme of land-reforms within the Parliamentary Democratic framework. This report was the major policy document which provided the guiding principle for agrarian policy to be followed by all Congress Governments in the country.

2. In 1948 the Communist Party of India adopted a new political theses at its 2nd Congress at Calcutta which put forward the slogan of land to the tiller and the strategy of militant mobilization of peasants for an agrarian revolution. This basic theses was further elaborated in a major policy document called on the Agrarian Question in India in the same ~~the~~ year.
3. Again in 1948 some of the followers of Mahatma Gandhi also made a major policy decision under Vinoba Bhave to launch the Sarvodaya movement which, a year later, assumed the form of the well known Bhoodan Movement."¹

There were not only three major programmes for social and political action but also three diagnosis of the land problem in India. Those who were responsible for formulating them were guided by a 'world view' and the related restructuring of land-relations. These leaders drew upon social and economic theory for this work. For instance M.L. Dantwala, Bhowani Sen and Jaya Prakash Narayan who were eminent economists, experts on the agrarian question and intellectually oriented played a major role for preparing the programmes for the onset~~teno~~^y of these trend.

However, there is a wide gap between land-reform ideology projected during the freedom struggle and thereafter and the actual measures, introduced for land reforms.² That is land-reform as ideology and programme are two differer

1. P.C. Joshi, Land Reforms in India, Trends and Perspective, ALLIED Publishers, New Delhi, 1975, p. 38.

2. Yogendra Singh, Sociology of Social Stratification, Survey of Research in Sociology and Social Anthropology, Vol.1, Popular Prakashan, Bombay 1974.

aspects of land reform policy. The latter is a blue print for the purpose of action and implementation where as the former is an instrument of political exhortation or support mobilization.

Land-reform at the ideological plane has been for a radical agrarian programme. This radicalism on the one hand arouses the expectation of the peasantry and on the other hand provoked the threatened interest of the rich landlords who were generally from the upper castes. In many areas they took prompt and precautionary measures so as to defeat the objective of land reform.

The declaration of general aims of land reform policy itself caused some far-reaching changes in the agrarian system and the prevailing relationship among classes connected with land but egalitarian transformation in the class structure of the villages has not taken place.

The gap between the principle and practice in the land reform is a resultant of Indian Government's in various states concern to tread the middle path between extreme revolutionary land re-distribution on one hand and providing of just security of tenure on the other hand. The security of tenure includes land ceiling on land-holding and the ending of intermediary tenure.

The impact of land reform on the rural social classes has been uneven. It led to the eviction of smaller tenants as is evident from the decline in the percentage of holding. The uneven nature of the impact of land-reform has benefited middle class peasants. In Uttar Pradesh for example the traditional Zamindars were mostly Rajputs, Brahmins or Bhumi~~dhars~~^{who}, are now increasingly overwhelmed in economic and political competition by the middle class peasants belonging to the Ahir and Kurmi and other intermediate castes. The power of the feudal families is on the decline and the 'Charan Singh' phenomenon is a reflection of this rising aspiration and strengthening of the middle class peasantry.

Another important dimension of the land-reform programme was through the Co-operative movement in India.

Land Reform and Co-operative Agriculture

Experience in many countries has shown that co-operatives can serve as a method by which peasants can help each other to improve their position. But the success of rural co-operatives presupposes a modicum of social equality, political democracy and economic viability. These conditions have not been present in the Indian village and are still not present.

The Congress Party drew up a programme in 1958 of co-operatives through legislation to link land-reform and co-operatives. The suggestion was that surplus land from ceiling of large holding should not be distributed in tins and bits. Instead in the interest of developing a more progressive and better yielding agriculture in the country. Development of rural co-operatives at smaller scale in the direction of land reform has been attempted. This was done in the early fifties so as to move towards a Socialist Society. Moreover this effort of the government has largely failed. Different studies have proved these micro-level efforts did not receive popular support from the rural society because of the given heterogeneous character of rural society. The class for whose benefit this scheme was started was also never involved in its development.

In many places these co-operatives are being run by ex-Zamindars as in the case of Nawanga in Kanpur district. The ex-Zamindar and new landlords was serving as the Director of the 'new society' and his lands got preferential treatment.

Another aspect of the rural co-operatives is that at times few families dominate in these co-operatives.

3. Daniel Thorner, "Contact for rural co-operatives in Rural India", *Rural Sociology in India*, A.R. Desai, (Ed.) Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1969, p. 493.

The members of these co-operatives are also absentees and those present employ labour and are not involved in direct ultimatum.

Bureaucracy and Land Reform

Within the framework of the feudal system of government the major responsibility of implementation is with state level machinery. The Federal Government tends to prepare guidelines for action and leaving the action with the state governments. This essentially means that formally speaking there is no direct link between the central administrative machinery and the village level administration.

The rural elite and bureaucracy are also hand in glove to frustrate land-reform measure. Such easy alignments between the bureaucracy and the rich land-owners exists for various reasons. At the lowest levels the bureaucratic functionary are themselves ~~small land-owners~~ are bribed by the rich land-owners. On a reciprocal basis such bureaucrats become ready allies in the manipulations of the landlords.

In almost all the states the responsibility of land-reform implementation has been entrusted to the bureaucracy. In states where the political will was lacking or not entirely favourable for the land-reforms,

the conservative and traditional status quo oriented attitude of the bureaucracy negatively effected the process of implementation. The attitude of bureaucracy was to be lukewarm and apathetic. Not only those who occupied higher executive position but even functionaries lower down the rung were all associated in one way or the other with the interest of the land-lords. The case of 'Patwari' in Uttar Pradesh at the time of Zamindari abolition is the most glaring example.

State governments too do not care much to activate the bureaucracy through its party cadre or peoples participation in land-reform programme being carried out. In Indian political thinking it has somehow assumed that legislation alone will bring about the desired changes. Much attention has not been paid to bureaucratic machinery vis-avis land reform and the procedures to be followed.

Most states have not developed any manual for functionaries involved in this work. They have been contacted with the haphazard functioning and issuing of uncoordinated directives in the form of circulars. Those circulars exist in essential areas of activity deserving pointed attention.

One of the weaknesses has also been the absence of essential data base and proper land records. It was

necessary to make records upto date before embarking on any measure of implementation. In 1973 the 'agrarian reforms committee' argued for a separate department with a director and commission at the top and district. Venue for actual work should be taluk or tehsil where the executive of the lower rung should be stationed. The officers should enjoy comprehensive administrative powers in his own jurisdiction. Then only we will be able to make a break from the legacy of British colonial era.

The difficulties are not merely at the implementation level but also emanate from the provision of the law themselves. The provisions are either sometimes too vague or such loopholes are there that defeat the purpose of the law itself. Under the constitution, the state legislation does not become law until the President gives his assent. After he signs, the bill becomes an Act and law. At times immense time lapses between the original resolution and the eventual enactment.

Once the law has been printed in the state gazette it may be said to have completed a stage in its life cycle that is the legislative phase. It now moves into the stage of implementation which involve both the judicial and executive arm of the state governments. The most extreme case of this kind of prolongation occurred in Bihar. First ~~the~~ the case was brought before the Patna High Court. ~~Where~~ the constitutionality of the law was challenged. The landlords suit was upheld, whereafter the central government introduced and passed an amendment in terms of trying

to Amend constitution itself. The Bihar landlords than challenged this amendment in the Supreme Court.

This kind of process has been there in almost all the states. As a result the landlords get a lot of time for transferring the land ~~of~~ changing the papers and deeds related to land.

Land Reform and Conflict

Land reform has contributed in its programme towards accentuating social tensions and disturbance in the traditional power structure at the village level. The earlier agrarian structure was an integrated whole, effecting the economic, political and social spheres. It was also a framework of inter dependence of these social groups, providing social and economic security to all.

The most significant aspect of land-reform in India is that it has modified the earlier framework without changing the basic structure. Consequently this has disturbed the earlier framework and power structure but new form of inequality and exploitation has taken roots. Land-reform policy has contributed towards re-structuring of the parasitic landed class into a production oriented commercial landed class. This new emerging class is not restrained by any sense of obligation to the society and in its more craving for land is ruthless towards the rural poor.

Thus, exploitation of the agricultural worker has assumed new forms and the marginal peasantry is also getting impoverished and a process of proletarianization is taking place. The state government in India have adopted a middle of the road policy leading a to a widespread social unrest and tension in rural India. This policy has also served the interest of the rising intermediate classes and has tended to create uncertainty and insecurity for the rural poor.

On the other hand the intermediate class made a joint front with the rural poor to oppose the rich landlords of the upper castes. But it also made common cause with the landlords to oppose any interpretation of any land-reforms in terms of the re-distribution of land in favour of the rural poor, belonging particularly from schedule castes community. This was the attitude of an emerging intermediate class simultaneously keen to oust the traditional landlords and suppress agricultural workers. The existence of this peasant group provided the social motivation for the unique middle of the road type of policy of land-reform.

The conflict between the old landed class and the dynamic intermediate peasant group found its reflection in land reform programmes and alternative paths of agrarian organization. Here it is necessary to state that neither

during the pre-independent period nor in the post independent era there was any meaningful articulation of the interest of the rural poor. The ideology of land-reform is generally anti-landlord and represents an articulation of general peasant interest.

Peasant Struggle for Land Reform

The challenge to the feudal class structure emerged with the rise of National movement. Not only was a radical agrarian ideology accepted but the National leadership undertook the cause of the exploited peasantry and led kisan movement through the country. Though it was strong only in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Gujarat in the early stages.⁴

In subsequent years the demand for abolition of peasant exploitation by the landlord classes was extended to other states. The All India Kisan Sabha was formed which took up the demands of the peasants. After the All India Kisan Sabha was split in Bihar in 1941, the different left groups never succeeded in uniting again. In the post independent period the socialist organized themselves under the Hind Kisan Panchayat. Presently the Lok Dal has a strong peasant organization in the name of Kisan Sammelan. Its influence is limited to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana.

4. Bipan Chandra, Freedom Struggle, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1972.

The most violent and bitter peasant struggle were waged between 1946 and 1950 in Telengana and Bengal. The peasant armed struggle in Telengana took the form of guerilla action against the Razakars and later against the forces of Indian Union. A parallel government was established in about 2,500 villages and according to communist claims 10 lakh acres of land was seized from the landed classes and distributed among the agricultural labourers and poor peasants.⁵

Another alternative to the legislative land reform has been Acharya Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan. The focus of this is on improving the position of the most sunberged and lowest and in the social structure in the rural areas. Assuming that there were 50 million landless peasants in India, Vinobaji set himself the task of collecting in land gifts of 50 million acres, so that one acre could be given to each landless agricultural workers. With an average of 5 members, each such family, it was hoped would end up with 5 acres. He called in Gandhian terms upon the compassion for the plight of the landless and to demonstrate their compassion by donating to this movement one-sixth of their holding.⁶

5. H.D. Malaviya, "Agrarian unrest after independence", Rural Sociology in India, A.R. Desai (Ed.), Popular Prakashan Bombay, 1969, p. 397.

6. Daniel Thorner, Agrarian Prospects in India, Allied Publishers Ltd., New Delhi.

The inspiration for Bhoodan type of land reform came to Vinobaji after he visited the Telengana region of Andhra. The movement got good support and got seizable land between 1952 and 1954. The largest share of this land was collected from Bihar. The high hopes raised by the initial success did not last long. Besides the land gifted was generally waste land not used for cultivation.

The fundamental weakness of this movement is that its appeal is directed not to the landless but to the rich and landed and so much depend only on compassion. However their approach can be considered as an important strategy on the part of the people to ensure land-reform progress. So land-reform have been carried out both by state and at time through peoples pressure at the local level.

Land Reform and Changing Consciousness

Due to the land reform programme there is a change in the objective situation which has created conditions for subsequent change in the subjective outlook. Certain sections of rural society consisting of the small peasants and agricultural labourers now perceive the relation of the rich and poor or exploiter and exploited much clearer than before.

With the given back ground the case for land reform gains strength not only for equitable distribution of land but also far greater material security for rural poor.

This alone could provide viable economic order for agricultural development. So land reform assumes importance also in terms of promoting equality for creating basis for stable social order.

Bettelle in his study of agrarian social structure argues that due to land reforms there is a weakening of hierarchical distinctions. As the new land-owners engage themselves in work and as such the increased relationship between work, and ownership has also reduced. India's older agrarian order is on the way out?

The top of the traditional agrarian hierarchy has been reduced in importance and transformed in quality too. The zamindars, Talukdars, and Jagirdars, who had occupied a position of unchallenged supremacy in the economic, political and cultural life are no longer in that position.

Those who were earlier at the top of the agrarian hierarchy were characterized essentially by absenteeism and very few had been connected with actual agriculture. It is this top of Agrarian hierarchy who ^{have} been reduced economically by land reforms.

7. Daniel Thorner, Agrarian Prospects in India, Allied Publishers Ltd, New Delhi, p. 77

The top of the agrarian hierarchy now contains smaller proportions of rentier elements. Some of the earlier rentier elements have taken to different mode of production organization, partly in order to be on the right side of law-existing ~~or~~ anticipated.⁸

The distribution of land by size of holding represents only one aspect of social inequality which has to be viewed both as a system of relation and as a system of value.

The fact that the social distinctions between land-lords and tenants are becoming less rigid does not mean that all distinctions are disappearing. Now the major inequality exists in the ownership of land. In areas of Ryotwari as against Zamindari the distinction between big farmer and small is socially less significant than the traditional distinction between the land-owner and tenant which persists to a large extent.

Land reform has thus failed to reduce substantially ~~of~~ some of the basic inequalities in India's agrarian social structure though it has succeeded in abolishing the rights of superior intermediaries. These changes have not only occurred due to the redistribution of land

8. Andre Bettille, Studies in Agrarian Social Structure, Oxford ~~xxx~~ University Press, New Delhi, 1977, p. 79.

but also certain exogenous factors like technological changes too have played a role.

Another important dimension is the relationship between land-owner and agricultural labourer from the viewpoint of Indian agriculture. There is a large class of landless in the agricultural sector constituting over 20% of agricultural households.⁹ Given the high percentage of population on the land and low rate of migration to industry in general terms there is little likelihood of any radical change in the social and economic situation of agricultural labourers in most parts of the country. There is no concrete evidence whereby these sections may be given preferential treatment in the re-distribution of land through the land-reform programmes. The land reform hardly touched their changes of development, and an effective organization of collective bargaining on long term basis also seems to be very narrow.

To sum up land-reforms have pointed out that :-

- a. Impact of land reform have been positive for the intermediate castes which has brought them up into higher position in land-ownership and power-structure.
- b. It has altered the traditional agrarian structure but has failed to provide land and social security to the rural poor.
- c. The rural poor has neither been articulate nor organized at the political level to influence the reform programme.

9. Andre Betteille, Studies in Agrarian Social Structure, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1977, p. 91.

Lastely, the ineven impact of land-reforms in Uttar Pradesh can be traced in the roots of earlier tenu-rial system and social structure which existed there. The implementation of land-reform in Western Uttar Pradesh of Ryotwari tenure has been more positive as against the Zamindari areas of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, particularly far the tenants. The earlier tenants in ~~Mttar~~ western Uttar Pradesh have all become peasant proprioters but the eastern Uttar Pradesh picture is slightly different. The Zamindar's of the higher castes converted lot of land into benami holdings and also into khudkast land. Thus the tenants could not get the same benefits which their coun-terpart could get in western Uttar Pradesh.

The other factor in these two different tenures is the development and growth of agriculture in the Ryot-wari area is higher than the Zamindari area. The Moderni-zation of agriculture in the western Uttar Pradesh is also higher than that in the eastern Uttar Pradesh. However the common factor for both ~~there~~ area is that the ~~pre~~sent castes and the earlier tenants have emerged as a powerful ~~gax~~ group in rural areas. They have a formidable position both in the village and state level power structure. How-ever rural poor of western Uttar Prakesh is also better off than the eastern Uttar Pradesh due to the relative prosperity of peasants in western Uttar Pradesh. Neverthe-less the overall impact of land reform on the rural social structure of Uttar Pradesh has been towards change, favou-rable only for the intermediary castes and tenants who are now the peasant proprioters.

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