

**LAND REFORMS UNDER Z.A. BHUTTO:**  
**1972-1977**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru  
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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**CERTIFICATE**

Certified that the dissertation entitled "**LAND REFORMS UNDER Z.A. BHUTTO: 1972-1977**" submitted by **Mr. PRAVAKAR GANTHIA** is in partial fulfilment of six credits out of a total requirement of twenty four credits for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of an M.Phil degree in this University or any other University. This is his own work.

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**PRAVAKAR GANTHIA**

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## **PREFACE**

Emerging as an utter preponderance to the national necessity for a structural change in the intensified agrarian set up, Pakistan has functionally gone through three sets of land reforms programmes. Notwithstanding, the persistent feudal elements vehemently contradicts the growing need of agrarian equality and elimination of landed property. The Pakistani politicians overwhelmingly have used such agrarian land reforms programmes as their political weapons in boosting the public sentiments in their favour.

When the perpetual question of land reforms has been implicitly harbouring the Pakistani politics for half a century, the problem of landlessness still comes to the debatable spectrum as to why such land reforms programmes failed to change substantially the unequal agrarian paradigm. Thus, the subject of land reforms in Pakistan is a matter of great concern and as such needs greater attention.

Whilst different scholars postulate divergent factors being instrumental behind the 'failure' of such programmes, this work is quite distinct in its approach. The present work concedes a partial fulfilment of the catchy problem, which poses factors like technological penetration, weak peasantry and growth of population considerably making Bhutto's land reforms programmes unfruitful.

**PRAVAKAR GATHIA**

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER – 1

### INTRODUCTION

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#### **1. Conceptual Framework of Land Reforms:**

Land reform is primarily an attempt to break land concentration. It aims at resumptions of excess land and redistribution of such resumed land among landless peasants and small farmers. Land reforms provide security of tenure and occupancy rights to tenants and small farmers. It (land reform) is a novel administrative exercise of governments.

The significance of land reform is obvious in keeping with the agrarian character of most Asian countries including Pakistan. The majority of the population in Pakistan live in villages where land constitutes not only the main source of livelihood but also the basis of social stratification, power structure, family organisation and belief system. Land reform which is intended to promote changes in land relations, is to exercise far reaching influence not only on the pattern of agricultural transformation but of rural transformation as a whole. It is also pertinent to note that land

relations are not only propellers of socio-economic change, but also influenced changes in the economic, technological, social, political and ideological spheres. Analysis of the impact of land reforms, therefore, has to be attempted keeping in view the development in the total social situation.

### **1.1 Introduction to Land Reforms in Pakistan:**

At the very outset, it may be noted that agrarian change in Pakistan was the result of various socio-economic programmes, including land reforms. Land reform in Pakistan was initially introduced by Muslim League (ML) which took over the reins of political power on the termination of British rule. Later on, the process of land reforms were furthered by Ayub Khan in 1959 and Z.A. Bhutto in 1972 and 1977.

From a historical perspective, Pakistan experienced a Zamindari system in which land grants were made mainly to those families who, in significant ways helped the British rulers for sustaining their regime. The Mansabdari and Jagirdari system which began during the Mughal period was not a hereditary structure but was based on loyalty to the rulers. The creation and institutionalization of the landlords known differently as Zamindars, Jagirdars, Nawabs, Tulukdars, Mansabdars, Waderas, Malik and so forth was an imperialist job done to perfection after

the Permanent Settlement Act of Lord Cornwallis in 1793. Land process under the British rule was strengthened further after the Great Revolt of 1857. The landlords are a class of people who do not work on land and often do not even manage it. Nonetheless, they derive income from land. The landlords owned hundreds of acres of land and increased their holdings considerably after independence in 1947. They were given state land, in particular newly irrigated land in West Punjab and Sindh and also seized lands abandoned by Hindus and Sikhs. These Hindus and Sikhs, after Partition, moved to India. They (the landlords) also seized plots allotted by the government of Pakistan to Muslim refugees from India. Most of this abandoned land, intended originally for distribution to destitute refugees from India, was seized by the leading Punjabi landlords. The landlords held more than 70 percent of the arable land in the Punjab at the time of Independence.

A large part of the North-Western Frontier Provinces (NWFP) and the entire Province of Baluchistan were left to local tribal customs. In some districts of the NWFP, land was brought into the Revenue Settlement mainly after the region was made a Province in the 1930s. Sindh and Punjab had direct touch with the aforesaid Zamindari system. Hence, by and large, at the time of independence, Pakistan had inherited a Zamindari system of land

tenure which got reformed later in various stages by different rulers. However, Pakistan was devoid of the other land system like Ryotwari System and Mahalwari System.

From the very beginning, Muslim League (ML) governments were aware that the question of land reforms was an urgent national problem. The land problem was national because, it (the land problem) spread over the whole of Pakistan and people all over the country (Pakistan) were suffering from such problem in terms of landlessness. So in West Pakistan, the ML-Agrarian Reforms Committee proposed in 1949 some “short term” and “Long term” measures.

Ayub Khan, the first military ruler of Pakistan, introduced Martial Law Regulation -64 (MLR-64) in 1959. He put 500 acres of irrigated and 1000 acres of unirrigated land as ceiling or 36,000 Produce Index Units (PIUs)<sup>1</sup>, whichever is greater<sup>2</sup>. Z.A Bhutto, due to his socialistic ideas introduced further land reforms. Bhutto, coming to power in 1971, fixed ceiling up to 150 acres of irrigated and 300 acres of unirrigated land, or to an area equivalent to 15,000 PIUs, whichever is greater<sup>3</sup>. It was brought down further to

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<sup>1</sup> . It is a device based on revenue settlement conducted in the forties. It is estimated as a measure of the gross value per acre of land by type of soil and was, therefore, seen as a measure of land productivity. One acre = 40PIUs.

<sup>2</sup> . Inayatullah (ed), Land Reform : Some Asian Experiences, vol. 4 (Kuala Lumpur: 1980) p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> S.M. Naseem -Poverty and Landlessness in rural Asia (Genva: ILO, 1977), p.51.

100 acres for irrigated and 200 acres for unirrigated land or equivalent to 8,000 PIUs for individual holdings under the Land Reforms Act (Act II of 1977)<sup>4</sup>. The Act of 77 was promulgated on 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 1977. However, this reform was overtaken by the overthrow of the Bhutto regime on July 4, 1977 by a military coup under Zia-ul-Haq, third coup leader in Pakistan's military rule.

Z. A. Bhutto, in a national broadcast on March 1, 1972, announced the outline of his land reforms. In the outline, he incorporated accomplishment of social justice, change in the oppressive and iniquitous agrarian system. He also stated that agriculture would be an attractive and profitable vocation. The highlights of land reforms which Bhutto introduced, were to include,

- ⇒ new and lower ceiling on individual holdings,
- ⇒ resumption of excess land without compensation,
- ⇒ free redistribution of resumed land to landless tenants and small peasants owners,
- ⇒ exemption from future payment on land bought by tenants and small owners under the 1959 land reforms,

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<sup>4</sup> Ronald J. Herring-Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Eradication of Feudalism in Pakistan, Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, March 22, 1980, p. 602.

- ⇒ new restrictions on the eviction of tenants,
- ⇒ right of pre-emption for tenants on the land being sold by owners,
- ⇒ consolidation of land holdings,
- ⇒ introduction of a flat rate land revenue system and
- ⇒ a work programme to create employment for agricultural labourers<sup>5</sup>.

Under Bhutto land reforms were introduced in two heads, one in 1972 known as Martial Law Regulation (MLR) 115 and the other under Act II of 1977. Under MLR 115 total area resumed was 512, 886 hectares out of which 296, 133 hectares were disposed of having a balance of 216, 753 hectares. The total number of persons benefited was 73,947. Similarly, Act II of 1977 resumed 68,195 hectares of land out of which area disposed of was 12,938 hectares with a balance of 55,237 hectares. Total number of beneficiaries was 168,517<sup>6</sup>.

Statistical calculation shows that total area resumed under Bhutto was 31.76 per cent of the total land resumed in Pakistan under various land reforms in different stages. Likewise, land

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<sup>5</sup>. Mahmood Hasan Khan : Underdevelopment and Agrarian Structure in Pakistan – Lahore, Vanguard Pub, 1986, p. 140.

<sup>6</sup>. Federal Land Commission. Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan – 1979, p. 64.

disposed of under Bhutto was 23.58 per cent, balance 52.43 per cent and per cent of beneficiaries was 41.18.<sup>7</sup>

However, Bhutto's land reforms like that of Ayub seem to follow the 'Prussian Junker Capitalism'. 'Prussian Model' as explained by Lenin is to lead Junker capitalism where modernisation takes place while retaining feudal estates and abolishing agricultural practices of the peasantry. In Pakistan, modernization had taken place in the late 1960s on the advent of 'Green Revolution' and High Yielding Varieties (HYV) technology. Export of major agricultural commodities had increased. Rice, potatoes, onion, chillies, molasses etc. showed up-ward increase. Rice increased from 198,000 tonnes in 1971-72 to 879.2 thousand tonnes in 1977-78. Potatoes from 2.6 thousand tonnes in 1971-72 to 7.7 thousand in 1977-78 and so on. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Pakistan also increased from Rs. 32,883 million in 1971-72 to Rs. 47,305 million in 1977-78.<sup>8</sup>

## **1.2 Guide to chapterisation:**

Second chapter "Land Reforms in Historical Perspective, Pre-Independence" highlights on the British pattern of agrarian reforms. English East India Company (EIC) came to India in 1600

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<sup>7</sup> Calculated by the author.

<sup>8</sup> Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan 1979, p. 147.

A.D. It primarily aimed at trade and commerce with India in the initial stage. Later on, EIC through its conquest policy, won over some princely states. India, before EIC's arrival, was divided into several principalities. Each principality was independent in its own affairs of conducting state administration. These principalities were called 'Princely States'.

Sindh was annexed with British Imperialism in 1843, NWFP in the 1930s and Baluchistan at the time of Partition of India. EIC defeated Ranjit Singh, ruler of Punjab, in the Second Anglo-Sikh War of 1849. After Ranjit Singh's defeat, British annexed the Punjab with British-India in 1849. The second chapter also throws light on the agrarian structure of the aforementioned four provinces. While both Sindh and Punjab inherited a *Zamindari* system of land structure, NWFP and Baluchistan had tribal system of agrarian set-up.

Third chapter 'Land Reforms under Bhutto' throws light on Muslim League, Ayub Khan and Z.A. Bhutto and their land reforms programmes. Muslim League, in post-partition period, introduced some 'short-term' and 'long-term' measures to alter the land tenure system. It (ML) aimed at abolishing jagirs, granting ownership rights and providing security of tenure to tenants-at-will. Muslim

League fixed ceiling of 150 acres of irrigated and 450 acres of unirrigated land.

Ayub Khan, in his attempt of land reforms, introduced martial Law Regulation (MLR) 64. Under MLR-64, Ayub Khan fixed ceiling up to 500 acres of irrigated and 1000 acres of unirrigated land. Bhutto, coming to power in 1971, introduced MLR-115 (1972). Under MLR-115, Bhutto brought down the ceiling introduced earlier under Ayub up to 150 acres of irrigated and 300 acres of unirrigated land, or to an area equivalent to 15,000 PIUs, whichever is greater. Under Act of 77, the ceiling was brought down to 100 acres of irrigated and 200 acres of unirrigated or 8,000 PIUs. This chapter also highlights as to how Bhutto could not be able to achieve much in land reforms under Act II of 1977 because of his overthrow by Zia-ul-Haq.

Fourth chapter 'Impact of Bhutto's Land Reforms' highlights on tenancy regulation and security of tenure, exemption of excess land and its redistribution. This chapter also discusses as to how Pakistan showed capitalist tendency within a feudal mode. On the introduction of 'Green Revolution', Pakistani landlords invested capital, labour and technological inputs in their land. With this Pakistani economy gradually started shifting from feudalism to capitalism.

Fourth chapter also highlights other impact like changing landlord-tenant relationship, magnitude of resumed land and its distribution and domestic as well as trans-national migration. Regarding landlord-tenant relationship, it is found that the gap between the landlords and tenants was broadened further on the introduction of scientific development. Technological changes made agriculture competitive in terms of production of crops. It was not generally afforded by the small farmers. Thus, they could not compete with the large farmers. As regards migration, this chapter highlights the upward increase in the growth of population in Pakistan. This growth of population contributed to the increasing magnitude of labourers than before. Thus, in order to seek employment, people started migrating to urban areas and to foreign countries as well.

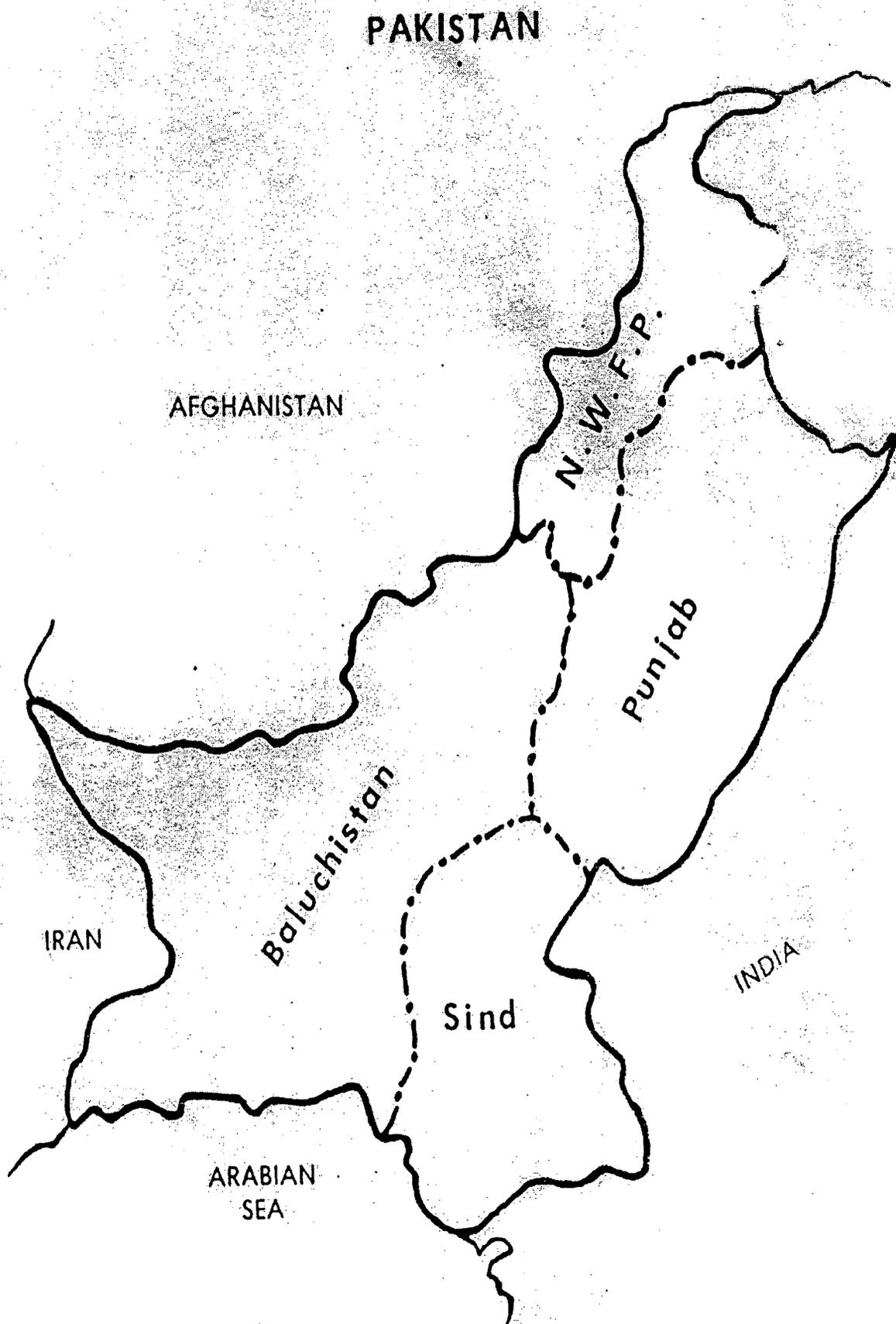
Concluding chapter throws light on the factors such as 'inefficiency and lack of consciousness' among the peasants of Pakistan, advent of HYV technology and growth of population being detrimental to the process of Bhutto's land reforms. This chapter concludes that as the above factors contradicted the process of land reforms, Bhutto was unable to fulfil his political rhetoric of 'land to the tiller', promised to the peasants during his electoral campaign in 1971.

The concluding chapter states unlike peasants of Japan and Taiwan, peasants of Pakistan were unable to exert force on Bhutto Government to accelerate the process of land reforms. Advent of HYV technology also in the similar vein, made agriculture competitive. Small farmers could not compete with the large farmers because of lack of fund and burden of debt. Ultimately, in most cases, small farmers sold off their land and worked as daily wage labourers. Growth of population (3 per cent) also complicated the process of land reforms programmes. With the growth of population, the number of members in the feudal family increased. The feudal lords in order to sustain their families, were in need of more land. This need of more land eventually led to land concentration. Small farmers being debt stricken sold off their land to the moneylenders who were landlords in most cases.

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## CHAPTER - 2

### LAND REFORMS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: PRE-INDEPENDENCE



PAKISTAN

AFGHANISTAN

N.W.F.P.

Punjab

Baluchistan

IRAN

Sind

INDIA

ARABIAN  
SEA

## **CHAPTER – 2**

# **LAND REFORMS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: PRE-INDEPENDENCE**

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### **2.1 Introduction**

A historical perspective of land reforms in Pakistan owes its origin to the British introduction of agrarian set-up. Present Pakistan, before partition, was a part of British-India. It includes the four provinces – the Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).<sup>1</sup> A short history of Pakistan's land reforms, pre-independence, has been given below for better clarification of our understanding of the nature of such reforms under Bhutto.

### **2.2 A Short History of Pakistan**

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan lies in South Asia comprising India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives. It is bordered by India to the east and by

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<sup>1</sup> See the map at page no. 12.

Afghanistan and Iran to the west. It has also a short frontier with the People's Republic of China in the far north-east.

Administratively, it has four provinces, such as the Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and NWFP with respective capitals at Lahore, Karachi, Quetta and Peshwar. Geographically, it has an area of 796, 095 sq. Kms.,<sup>2</sup> a little larger than Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh as a whole, with a total population of 13,05,79,571.<sup>3</sup>

Pakistani society is multi-racial and multi-lingual as well. Its principal races are Pathanas, Sindhis, Punjabis and Baluchis. Lingually, the Pakistani people speak Urdu (National Language), Punjabi, Pushto, Sindhi and Saraika with a good hold of English being extensively used. As regards religions, Pakistan has Islam, Christianity and Hinduism.

Historically, Pakistan has its origin from India due to latter's bifurcation in 1947. Earlier, the present Pakistan was a part of British India.<sup>4</sup> White people through their diverse policies of annexation such as conquest, Subsidiary Alliance,<sup>5</sup> Doctrine of

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Karachi, Pakistan.

<sup>3</sup> Development Advisory Centre, Karachi, Pakistan.

<sup>4</sup> Those princely states conquered by Britishers is known as British India, the rest being India.

<sup>5</sup> It is a policy of winning Indian Princely states peacefully. It was propounded by the then Governor General Lord Wellesely (1798 – 1805).

Lapse<sup>6</sup> etc. got the Indian territories annexed with their territory which is distinctly labelled as British India.

Pakistani Punjab which was earlier a part of the Indian Punjab, was annexed to British India in the years 1848-49 after the historic Second Anglo-Sikh- War. Similarly, Sindh got merged to British Imperialism through British Policy of Conquest in 1843. This has been elaborately discussed later on. NWFP through a prolonged history of British conquest confronted the same fate as Punjab and Sindh had already faced. It (NWFP) was annexed to British-India in the 1930s. Eventually, partition of India into two geographical entities, such as India and Pakistan, led Baluchistan to merge with the latter. With this ended the historical demand of the Muslim League for a separate homeland (for the Muslims). The Muslim League's demand of Pakistan which was initially in an embryonic form, came to its much awaited realization on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947, just one day before India got independence.

Land reforms which present day Pakistan inherited at the time of its birth is traceable to the British period. The land tenure systems inherited by partition were concretized during the British Raj in India. British land tenure system generally began toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century on the introduction of Permanent Land

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<sup>6</sup> Doctrine of Lapse is the brainchild of Lord Dalhousie (1846-1856), which is also a policy of annexation.

Settlement of 1793 (Lord Cornwallis). Land reforms in Pakistan had virtually experienced dual confrontations-one under British East India Company (EIC) and the other under that of British Crown.<sup>7</sup>

Even though East India Company (EIC) came to India in 1600 A.D, it could not initially settle itself because of commercial competition among the French, Dutch, Portuguese, Danes and English. During its formative period, it was a mere trading company. Later on, EIC defeated Siraj-ud-Daula, Nawab of Bengal, in the historic Battle of Plassey (1757) and made Bengal one of the three Presidencies (other two were Bombay and Madras). In 1765, British got the power of collecting 'diwan' (revenue) from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa after defeating the combined rulers of Bengal, Oudh and Delhi. Suja-ud-Daula (Nawab of Oudh), Shah Alam II (Mughal ruler of Delhi) and Mir Quasim (Nawab of Bengal) fought against the British in the battle of Buxar in 1764. The combined rulers were defeated and Mir Qasim granted (the British) the power of collecting 'diwan' from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

The British conqueror of India sought to derive economic advantage from their rule in India. British industrial and mercantile interests, advocating free trade principles, prevented the

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<sup>7</sup> Government of India Act – 1858, passed after Sepoy Mutiny, ended East India Company's rule and India came under the direct supervision of the British Crown.

EIC from raising any substantial revenue from high custom tariffs.<sup>8</sup> The company's government in India had, therefore, to rely on land revenue as the principal source of income for the state. As such, land revenue matters received the maximum attention of the new colonial rulers that resulted in pursuing different types of land reforms by the Britishers in India.

Early British administrators of the EIC considered India as a vast estate and acted on the principle that the company was entitled to the entire economic rent, leaving to the cultivators merely the expenses of cultivation and wages of their labour. And as such, the early administrators, in almost all parts of the company's territories, resorted to the 'farming' of land revenues.

Land tenure under the British hegemony conclusively marked a tripple-pronged system, such as *Zamindari*, *Mahalwari* and *Ryotwari*. *Zamindari*<sup>9</sup> is a designing system where specific land was given to a person, faithful to the British treasury. The *Zamindari* system, to some extent, stipulated the future revenue yet to come to the British treasury. However, the system was only confined to eastern India comprising Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and some parts of U.P. The area under *Zamindari* system accounted for 19 per cent of the total area of British India.<sup>10</sup> *Mahalwari*

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<sup>8</sup> R.P. Dutt – India to-day.

<sup>9</sup> Derived from the word '*zamin*' which means 'land' and '*dar*' that stands for 'possession'.

<sup>10</sup> B.L. Grover – A New Look at Modern Indian History, S. Chand and Company Ltd., 1993, p.241.

system signifies the type of land settlement, that was primarily based on a specified land called mahal<sup>11</sup> which was prevalent in Northern India spreading over U.P. Central Provinces (M.P.) and some parts of the Punjab. It covered nearly 30 per cent of the area under the Britishers.<sup>12</sup> The *Ryotwari* system was in vogue in Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai) presidencies. *Ryotwari* is the first system of its kind in which *ryots* (farmers) were directly linked to the Britishers. It was the most popular revenue system since it covered a massive area of 51 per cent of the total area of British India.<sup>13</sup>

The British agrarian reforms marked a structural change at the introduction of Permanent Settlement in 1793 A.D. The previous agrarian scenario of India was of divergent structure, such as annual, quinquennial and decennial system under Lord Hastings (1772-1785). However, under the Permanent Settlement, the state's land revenue demand was settled once for all and the *zamindar* was recognized as the owner of the land assigned to him. The *Zamindar* was authorized (by the Britishers) to mortgage, bequeath and sell the assigned land. The state held the *zamindar* responsible for the payment of land revenue and in default thereof the land could be confiscated and sold out. Chart - 1 highlights the land tenure system in Pakistan in 1947.

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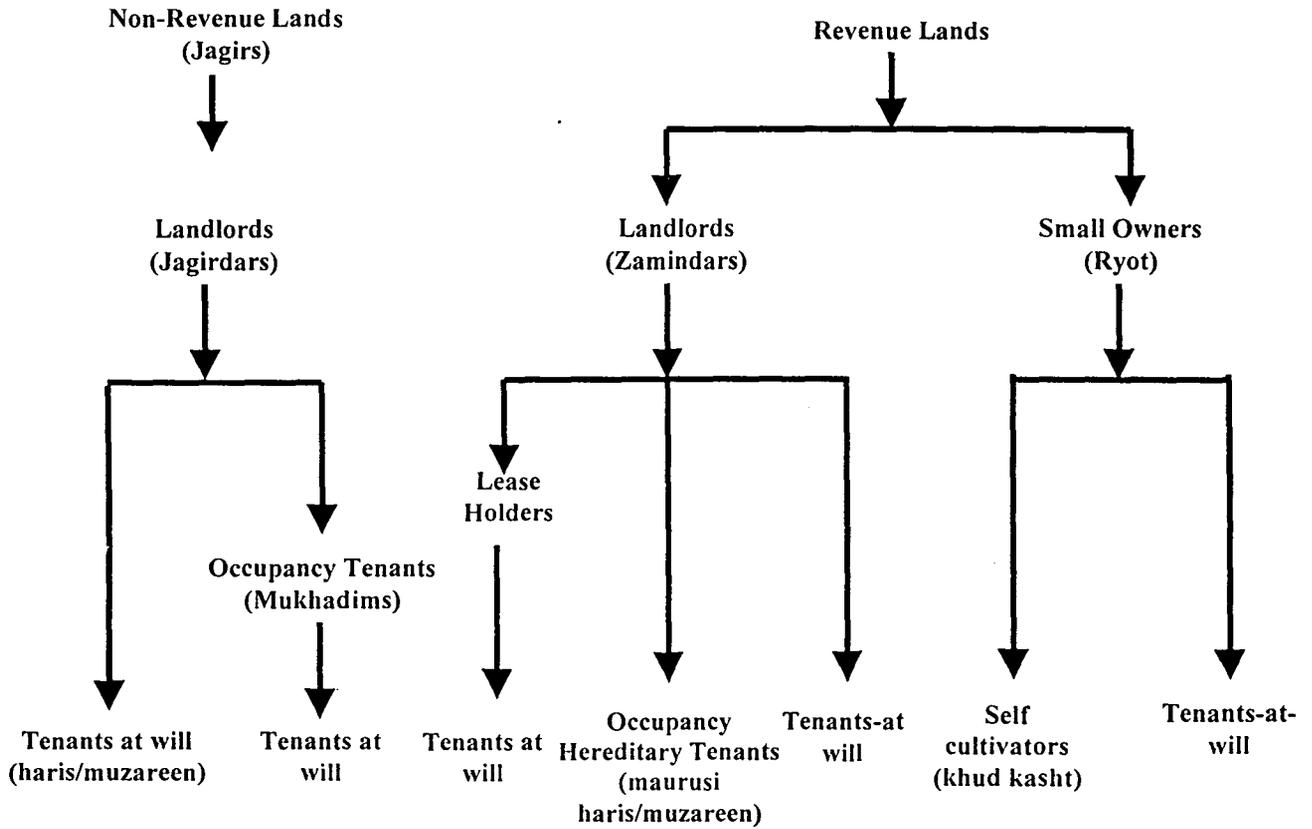
<sup>11</sup> The total land was divided into some *Mahals* - small land for the better and smooth governance of revenue.

<sup>12</sup> Op.cit., Grover n-10, p.241.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.241.

# CHART - 1

## THE LAND TENURE SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN (CIRCA 1947)



Source: Khan, M.H. – Underdevelopment and Agrarian Structure in Pakistan, p. 131. A Westview Replica Edition, USA, 1981, p. 131.

### **2.3. Punjab**

Punjab had a long history of nearly hundred years under British rule before it was bifurcated into East Punjab and West Punjab. West Punjab remained under Pakistan while East Punjab under that of India.

With the heroic death of *Ranjit Singh* in 1839, the independent state of Punjab began to set for ever and Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856) annexed Punjab with British India in 1848-49. Taking over the charge of the Punjab, British government put it under the Board of Administration. This Board was abolished in February 1853 and its powers were vested in the Chief Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner controlled the administration of the province with the help of a Judicial Commissioner and the Financial Commissioner as well. Matters relating to land revenue settlements were regulated in accordance with Mr. Thomason's Directions. Mr. Thomson was the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab from 1843 to 1848. The Directions said it was 'desirable that the Government should not demand more than two-thirds what may be expected to be the net produce'. By net produce is meant the surplus which the Estate may yield, after deducting

the expenses of cultivation, including the profits of stock and wages of labour.<sup>14</sup>

The rationale behind the land revenue settlements in the Punjab was to bring revenue to the scanty British treasury which became exhausted because of constant warfare. And also, Britishers were simultaneously looking for a rapid growth of the resources of British India for keeping a healthy economy.

A. Gosh and K. Dutt in 'Development of Capitalist Relations in Agriculture' state that:

"Permanent Settlement of Bengal deprived the Zamindars of the political and military powers. It (Permanent Settlement) stabilized the economic position of the Britishers. Freedom of getting rich was provided to the Zamindars provided that they satisfied the maximum demands of the East India Company."<sup>15</sup> A similar position more or less, prevailed in the Punjab.

Gradually, the Punjab agrarian structure began to change in terms of land concentration in the hands of Zamindars. Small farmer worked as tenants under the landholders but faced the problem of security of tenure and arbitrary enhancement of rent.

<sup>14</sup> Eric Stokes - The English Utilitarian and India, Oxford University Press (OUP), Delhi, 1982, p. 104.

<sup>15</sup> Gosh, A & Datt, K - Development of Capitalist Relations in Agriculture, Peoples Publishing House, July 1977, p.3.

TH-9154



The problem of entitlement to compensation in case of ejection, preparation of a reliable system of land records and prescribing safeguards to prevent landlords' abuse, were calling for immediate attention of the government.

As a proper solution to these problems, Lord Lawrence passed an Act in 1868, called the Punjab Tenancy Act- 1868 to protect the Punjabi tenants. But the Act was only a half hearted measure so far as the dissatisfaction of the tillers is concerned.

In order to remove the persisting problem and dissatisfaction of the peasants, the Punjab Tenancy Act – 1887 was passed to regulate and define the conditions under which a tenant could claim right of occupancy. It also incorporated right to compensation to the tenants in case of ejection. Further, the British government by enacting the Punjab Land Revenue Act – 1887, provided safeguards to prepare and maintain authentic land records pertaining to the agrarian structure of the Punjab. Still these were not, as argued by authorities like Metcalf,<sup>16</sup> considered to be in the best interest of the tillers.

Despite the Punjab Tenancy Act of 1887, the small proprietors have not been able to hold their own. In 1891 they

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<sup>16</sup> Metcalf – *Laizzez-Faire and the Tenant Right in Mid-nineteenth century*, *Indian Economic and Social History Review* – I, July-September, 1963, pp. 74-81.

tilled nearly 54 per cent of the cultivated area of the province; while in 1900 the proportion had fallen to 45 per cent.<sup>17</sup>

Rural indebtedness and large-scale alienation of agricultural land to non-cultivating classes started to aggravate the rural agrarian structure of Punjab in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Being unable to face such hurdle the peasants of Punjab agitated and threatened to revolt to prevent the rapid alienation of their lands to the urban moneylenders for failure to pay debts. The government of India did not want any revolt in that province which provided a large number of soldiers to the British army in India. In order to protect the peasants of the Punjab, the Punjab Land Alienation Act was passed in 1900 A.D.

The Act of 1900 A.D. divided the population of the Punjab into three categories, such as – the agriculture class, the statutory agriculturist class and the rest of the population including the moneylenders. Statutory agriculturists class chiefly depended on state for getting authority. This statute was passed by the Britishers toward a specific class. Here it denotes Zamindars. Restrictions were imposed on the sale and mortgage of land from the first category (agricultural class) to the other two (statutory

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<sup>17</sup> Dutt, R. C. – Economic History of India, Price Publications, Delhi, 1995.

agriculturist class and the rest of the population including the moneylenders) classes.<sup>18</sup>

In pursuance of the provisions of the Act (of 1900), 20 to 40 per cent of land was transferred to new owners.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the problem of land concentration in the Punjab, came to a halt on the introduction of the Punjab Land Alienation Act (1900).

Despite all these legal procedures, security of tenancy was a thing far from being achieved. The predominant tillers of land were *muzareen* and *haris* (tenants-at-will), whose rights to cultivate land were not recognized in law or practice. Their tenure on land was tenuous, dependent on the will of *zamindars* and *jagirdars*. There were also some occupancy tenants in the Punjab, called *maurusi muzareen* whose rights existed in law though not in practice.

#### **2.4 Sindh**

The agrarian structure of Sindh was mostly similar to that of Punjab. Like Punjab, Sindh featured the same problem of security of tenancy, debt-stricken peasantry, absentee landlordism and *Zamindari* system of land structure.

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<sup>18</sup> Punjab Land Alienation Act – XIII of 1900 National Archives of India, Index to Foreign Department, Frontier, July, 1900, 7-10, part B.

<sup>19</sup> Darling, M.L. – The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt, OUP London, 1947

Upon the introduction of civil administration in 1847, a seven years' settlement was made in Sindh. The settlement was on the basis of measurement of crops and commutation of the government share. Under the settlement, Britishers divided land into Raiyati and Zamindari. Raiyati lands were assigned to tenants and that of Zamindari land to Zamindars. The rate of rent was less in case of Raiyati land than that of Zamindari<sup>20</sup> The settlement was hazardous because prices subsequently fell and the assessments proved heavy, so that the settlement expired in 1853-54 amidst general demands for reversion to the old native system of dividing the crop and taking revenue in kind.

After the seven years' settlement which expired in 1853-54, the Britishers again made attempts to change land tenure system in Sindh. It resulted in a 'rough survey and settlement' on experimental basis. This went on till 1862. By that time about one third of the province had been surveyed for settlement purposes at a cost of 8½ lakhs; but no settlements had been made.<sup>21</sup>

However, such hurdle of land settlement came to an end in 1862 on assigning a Bombay settlement officer, who drew up a scheme of classification of soils and settlement. On his (Bombay settlement officer's) attempt the organisation of the settlement

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<sup>20</sup> Baden Powell, *The Land Systems of British India*, Vol. II, Oriental Publishers, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 321-343.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p.337.

department was completed by 1864-65, and a regular survey and settlement work had been going on ever since.

In spite of all these British efforts, the problem of cash demand by the Britishers precipitated land concentration in Sindh. While peasant proprietors in Sindh were small in number and owned a limited portion of private land, the introduction of cash demand by the Britishers, forced many small *ryots* into debt to moneylenders (mainly village merchants). These moneylenders became landowners by acquiring land through alienation from those who could not bear the perpetual burden of debt.

Land system of Sind like that of Punjab marked a middle layer of absentee landlordism in between landlords and peasant proprietors. It created in Sindh two serious problems of in-coordination between moneylenders and landlords on one hand and peasants on the other. Mahmood Hasan Khan who is a Prof. of Economics, states that 'there was transfer of a substantial portion of land to new owners owing to the process of land alienation.'<sup>22</sup>

Tenants-at-will (*haris*) were almost the only kind of sharecroppers in Sind. The only class of occupancy tenants in Sind were on *Jagir* lands. They were known as *mukhadims*. They enjoyed

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<sup>22</sup> Dr. Khan is a Prof. of Economics at Fraser University, Canada and on the board of editors of Pakistan Development Review.

the usufruct (use and profit but not the property) of these lands. Some of them accumulated large areas, which they in turn parcelled out of *haris* for cultivation. The landlords rented land to tenants on a sharecropping basis. The share of the landlord varied between 50 to 60 per cent of the gross produce and was paid in kind. And also the landlords exacted from their tenants *abwab* and *haboob* (levies and perquisites) and also *begar* (free labour). Thus, both Sind and Punjab inherited a *zamindari* type of land structure at the time of partition in 1947.

## **2.5 NWFP and Baluchistan**

The case of NWFP and that of Baluchistan is quite distinct from Sind and Punjab in terms of land tenure and agrarian set-up. It was distinct because both NWFP and Baluchistan feature a tribal system of land structure. The whole two provinces were left to local tribal customs of land set up. In some districts of the NWFP land was brought into the revenue settlement mainly after the region was made a province in the 1930s. Some of the salient features of the tribal system of NWFP and Baluchistan are:

- ❖ no eviction from land,
- ❖ law of pre-emption,
- ❖ individual distribution of land,
- ❖ self judgement in case of agrarian dispute etc.

The tribal chiefs of both provinces called *Tumandar* or the *Malik* were not in any sense landlords over the members of their own tribe; but they appear to have been allotted villages by the village councils and lands of their own, as private estates.<sup>23</sup> Tribal village councils of both NWFP and Baluchistan consisted of the heads of families. The tribal chiefs chosen by the councils were entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining village peace. Any dispute related to land were decided by the chiefs on the aid and advice of the councils.

There were also heterogeneous *Jats*, *Gujrans Rajputs* and *Mohammedan* tribes in several districts of NWFP. The martial superiority of the tribesmen made them feel immensely supreme over their land. This enabled the families in villages to keep their proprietary right alive. Now, they could claim it when the British land settlement gave them the opportunity (in the 1930s), under which every landlord was treated equal.

The entire settlement of the tribal people of NWFP and Baluchistan was generally known as *ilaqa* which compares to the word *taluk* during British period. Under this tribal system, the tribal *wand* or division was usually subdivided into smaller

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<sup>23</sup> M.H. Khan, Land Tenure System: 'Duality of countryside', 1st August 2000. Internet, website - [www.dawn.com](http://www.dawn.com)

sections called *tappa* and the *tappa* was divided into *khel* or villages.

The principles of *wand* or division are in general various: sometimes *khula-vesh* or mouth-partition.<sup>24</sup> By mouth-partition everyone – man, woman, and child, is counted in the land allotment. Father of a large family (in number) would have an area suitable to his wants while a single man, or a childless pair, would have a smaller area. This mouth-partition of land allotment shows that there was an individual land distribution rather than a land distribution on family basis.

In this tribal system of NWFP and Baluchistan we generally find the law of pre-emption in force. Whenever land was being sold off, right of pre-emption was provided (by the tribal chiefs) to the tenants cultivating such land. The management of affairs was conducted by councils of the heads of families, called *jirga*. These councils were disposing of doubtful cases of agrarian crime in NWFP and Baluchistan.<sup>25</sup> The system shows democratic value where no recognition to a particular chief was legalized and equal sharing was the rule in land allotment.

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<sup>24</sup> Op.cit., Baden Powell, n. 20 p. 152-153.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 152-153.

To sum up, from a historical perspective, Pakistan experienced a *Zamindari* system, (See chart 1) in which land grants were made mainly to those families who, in significant ways, helped the British rulers for sustaining their regime. The creation and institutionalization of the landlords known differently as *Zamindars*, *Jagirdars*, *Nawabs*, *Talukdars*, *Mansabdars*, *Waddedars*, *Malik* and so forth was an imperialist job done to perfection after the Permanent Settlement Act. The landlords owned hundred of acres of land and increased their holdings considerably after independence in 1947. There were thus two basic classes involved in the cultivation of land: a small minority of landlords (*Zamindars* and *jagirdars*) and a vast majority of cultivators who were either sharecropping tenants (*haris* or *muzaras* of landlords or owned small landholdings based on family labour.

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## CHAPTER -3

# LAND REFORMS UNDER Z.A BHUTTO

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### **3. Introduction**

On the discussion of a historical perspective of Pakistani land reforms in chapter one, we've already made a cognitive and analytical description of land structure which Pakistan inherited on its way to independence from British rule. It is ultimately found that there was a high land concentration in the hands of a few.

On the other side of the agrarian scenario, we see a lower strata of society which was replete with acute poverty and landlessness. Pakistan is an agricultural country because it chiefly depends on agriculture. Most of the families in Pakistan are dependants on lands, and thereby sustain their agrarian family lives.

On the termination of British rule, Pakistan at the very beginning had 'problem of land encroachment' by the big as well as powerful landlords. Consolidation of land in Pakistan was mainly induced by them (landlords) in post independence period. People who

were generally exempted from getting even a small piece of land felt vehemently insecure. It gradually became a national problem and thereby caught everyone's attention.

The problem of land concentration and landlessness of the peasants resulted in "three regimes of land reforms" under different heads at different periods. The first regime of land reforms which had its introduction in the post-independence period, was initially tackled by Muslim League [ML]. This land reforms programmes got momentum in Ayub's period (second phase) and was broadened further by Bhutto.

This study concentrates on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who is the architect of the third regime of land reforms in Pakistan. Before coming to Bhutto's land reforms Programmes' it is necessary to discuss land reforms in Pakistan under Muslim league (ML) and Ayub Khan, because land reforms in Pakistan comprises of three regimes. Bhutto introduced the third regime of land reforms. Both the previous land reforms of ML and Ayub are background to the land reforms introduced under Bhutto. In order of comprehend Bhutto's land reforms, both the previous land reforms need to be discussed.

### **3.1 Land Reforms under Muslim League**

At independence, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML) with Muslim landlords and large landowners, stressed the need for land tenure reform. It (PML) aimed at abolition of the *Jagirdari* estates, distribution of land and adjustment in the existing tenancy arrangement.

The Pakistan Muslim League Agrarian Reform Committee published its report in 1949, in which it identified several 'short-term' and 'long-term' measures to alter the land tenure system by:

- abolishing *Jagirs*,
- granting landownership rights to the occupancy tenant in Punjab,
- providing security to tenants-at-will (*haris*),
- adjusting crop shares of landlord and tenant, and
- redistributing land by establishing a ceiling on individual landholding (150 acres or 60 hectares<sup>1</sup> of irrigated and 450 acres

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<sup>1</sup> One hectare = 2.471 acres.

or 150 hectares of unirrigated lands) with compensation to former owners for the resumed area.<sup>2</sup>

Muslim League government in Pakistan appointed Hari Enquiry Committee in March 1947. The majority report of this committee was published in late 1948, about a year after the creation of Pakistan. The recommendations of the Hari Enquiry Committee were essentially to remove the non-statutory exactions (*haboob*) paid by tenants to landlords as crop share and exclusion of right of permanent tenancy to tenants-at-will (*haris*).

At the behest of the PML Agrarian Committee, the Punjab government appointed a Tenancy Law Enquiry Committee in 1949. The Committee recommended abolition of occupancy tenancy; transfer of ownership rights to occupancy tenants; abolition of nonstatutory exactions (*haboob*) paid by tenants to their landlords; and guarantee of secure tenancy to the *haris*. Of the above recommendations the government abolished only the payment of *haboob* by Tenants under the Punjab Tenancy Act of 1950.

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<sup>2</sup> Khan, M.H- Underdevelopment and Agrarian Structure, A West view Replica Edition, USA, 1981, p.131.

### 3.2 Land Reform Under Ayub Khan

In 1959 Pakistan had undergone an unprecedented administrative change as it, for the first time, came under the military ruler Ayub Khan. The first pressure on large landlords came with the Land Reform Act (Martial Law Regulation 64 or MLR-64)<sup>3</sup> in Feb 1959, enacted by the Martial Law government under Ayub in Pakistan.

The 1959 Act abolished Jagirs without compensation and imposed a ceiling of 500 acres or 200 hectares of irrigated and 1000 acres or 400 hectares of unirrigated land or 36,000 Produce Index Units (PIUs)<sup>4</sup> whichever is greater.<sup>5</sup>

However, MLR-64 did not significantly alter the concentration of landownership because ceiling on individual holding remained quite generous-expressed in terms of land area and the PIU. There were also substantial intra-family land transfers to avoid and evade the ceiling requirement on individual holdings.

Despite some Acts and their dealings with land and *haris*, the landless and near-landless peasants could receive only a little land.

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<sup>3</sup> For details see Appendix-1.

<sup>4</sup> It is a device based on revenue settlement conducted in the forties. It is estimated as measure of the gross value per acre of land by type of soil and was, therefore, seen as a measure of land productivity. One acre-40 PIUs.

<sup>5</sup> Inayatullah (ed.), *Land Reform: Some Asian Experiences*, vol, 4 (Kuala Lumpur: 1980) p. 163.

Even some of the authors like Ishrat Hussain has gone to the extent of saying these legislation as unfruitful and unsuccessful. To quote;

“These acts proved to be of only cosmetic significance and did not do much to alter the unjust and asymmetrical relationship between landlord and tenant”.<sup>6</sup>

Under MLR-64, about 2.5 million acres of land were resumed and 2.3 million acres distributed among about 185,000 tenants.<sup>7</sup> However, this Act of 1959 tends to be a ‘failure’ because its distribution of land accounts for 5 per cent of the total 57.16 million acres of landholding in Pakistan.<sup>8</sup>

Now we can switch over to the third phase of land reforms which Bhutto introduced in 1972 and 1977. However, some questions arise here as to what was the reaction of the peasantry after the introduction of MLR-64 and how far did Bhutto succeed in his ideology of ‘land to the tiller’ and socialism’ as his aim. In order to grasp such complexity, a background of Bhutto’s accession to power is essential.

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<sup>6</sup> Ishrat Hussain, *Pakistan: The Economy of an Elitist State*, OUP, Karachi- 1999, p.61.

<sup>7</sup> Khan, Naqvi & Chaudhury – *Land Reforms in Pakistan. A Historical Perspective*, PIDE- 1987.

<sup>8</sup> *Op.cit*, Inayatullah, n.32, p.61.

### **3.3 Bhutto's Accession to Power**

Ayub's grip on power started slipping after the inconclusive war with India, historically known as Indo-Pak war of 1965. The problems of political integration reached crisis proportions under Ayub. Political institutions introduced in the eastern sector under him failed to give the general elite a feeling of participation in the political system.<sup>9</sup>

Small farmers were not satisfied with Ayub's land reforms because Ayub could not be able to break land concentration. As he allowed concession to landlords to retain land above ceiling, problem of land concentration again appeared. Land area upto 150 acres above ceiling were allowed to landlords if the land has been under orchard since winter of 1956-57. Land above ceiling (150 acres of irrigated or 450 acres of unirrigated) may be transferred to heirs (UP to 18,000 PIUs), provided such land transfers must have been made since Aug 1947. Also land above ceiling could be transferred to owners' female dependants, who are entitled to a share of the ancestral property up to a maximum of 6,000 PIUs each. Thus, the gap of land holding between the landlords and peasants increased.

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<sup>9</sup> . B.J. Eposito: The Politics of Agrarian Reforms in Pakistan, Asian Survey, 1974, 5: p-429-38.

Land provisions of MLR-64 of 1959 under Ayub, failed to benefit a majority of population.

This overall unbalanced growth and its inter-sectoral, inter-regional, and inter-personal manifestations led to a phase of political developments that forced a change in the political set-up. Hence, more and more, people were politically frustrated. The regime's (Ayub's) emphasis on economic growth, without the simultaneous development of political instruction, evolved a crisis in political management.

President Yahya Khan who spearheaded the government for a short span of time, 1969-70, was also unable to ameliorate significantly the general political chaos in the west nor could he reduce the hostility in the eastern sector.

However, in the decaying stage of Ayub's rule, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) established itself firmly in Pakistan's politics by fanning the catchy slogan of 'Islam is our faith,' 'Democracy is our policy', 'Socialism is our economy', 'All power to the people'.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Election Manifesto of the Pakistan People's Party, 1980, Third Edition, p.3.

By breaking the political nexus with Ayub in the wake of latter's (Ayub's) coup d'etat in 1958, Bhutto engaged himself in preparing a unique political base in order to pluck the situational profit in the coming future, And suprisingly, his dream came to a reality when his PPP, established in 1967, emerged as the single most influential political group in general elections of 1970

Bhutto indulged in radical rhetoric to gain the support of the disenchanted masses and made promises of a new society and the abolition of feudalism. This gave him (Bhutto) and the PPP a certain image of faith in governance and a political base. It was strengthened further by the large number of leftists who had joined the ranks of the PPP and subsequently helped to organize the party from grass root level. The leftists lent their support because they were pledged by Bhutto the assurance of socialism as a prescription for the ills of the country's poor masses. Although they could not have expected Bhutto and the PPP to bring about socialism, they felt that supporting him and the party was a step in the right direction, because the leftists had lost faith in Ayub's regime due to one reason or the other.

Amid increasing governmental chaos, deepening economic problems, a crescendo of student protests and even disillusionment,

President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the Pakistan People's Party came to power in December 1971. Coming to power, Bhutto immediately began to consolidate his position and develop a firm economic base for the remaining half of the century.<sup>11</sup>

### **3.4 Bhutto's Land Reforms and Martial Law Regulation-115, 1972**

Breaking away from Ayub's nexus, Bhutto formed Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in 1967. He (Bhutto) being a man of high profile, could realise the unhealthy outcome and the ripples of people's discontent swaying over the country. During such political gloom, Pakistan was in need of a stable government which could bring about peace and tranquility.

As a fellow-up of his radical rhetoric at the hustings, Bhutto announced land reforms in 1972, soon after he headed the government. This land reforms which Bhutto introduced is generally known as Martial Law Regulation-115 and was the third phase of land reforms in Pakistan.

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<sup>11</sup> Robert La Porte, Jr- Pakistan in 1972: Picking up the Pieces- Asian Survey, XIII; 2 (Feb 1973), pp. 187-198.

Bhutto announced the outline of his land reforms in a national broadcast on March 1, 1972. In order to achieve the desired impact of his programme, he declared a public holiday on March 3 "to commemorate the infinite blessing of this day, the beauty and splendour of its promise"<sup>12</sup>. He also launched a scathing attack on Ayub's 1959 reforms terming it "a subterfuge", designed "to fool the people in the name of reform" with "all manners of concessions to buttress and pamper the landed aristocracy and fatten the favoured few".<sup>13</sup> He, however, characterized his own reform programme in the following manner:

"The reforms I am introducing are basic, affecting the life and fortunes of the common man more than any other measure that we may introduce in the future...".<sup>14</sup> and promised to effect "the eradication of the curse of feudalism and man's unjust overlordship of the good earth"<sup>15</sup>

We have mentioned earlier that Bhutto promulgated the Land Reform Regulation in 1972. The officially enunciated objectives employed by Bhutto were:

1. To achieve social justice which is the vital tissue of the ideology of Pakistan.

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<sup>12</sup> Op. Cit, M.H. Khan, n.2 p. 197.

<sup>13</sup> Ronald J. Herring "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Eradication of Feudalism in Pakistan", Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, Mar 22, 1980, p-602.

<sup>14</sup> Op.cit, H.H. Khan, n.2, p.180.

<sup>15</sup> OP.cit, Ronald J. Herring, n. 13 p. 602.

2. To change the oppressive and iniquitous agrarian system.
3. To ensure that agriculture should continue to be an attractive and profitable vocation.
4. To increase production and truly lay down the foundations of a relationship of honour and mutual benefits between the landowners and tenants.<sup>16</sup>

The proposed reforms were to include,

- new and lower ceiling on individual holdings,
- resumption by the state of excess land without compensation,
- free redistribution of resumed land to landless tenants and small peasant owners,
- exemption from future payment on land bought by tenants and small owners under the 1959 land reforms,
- right of preemption for tenants on the land being sold by owners,
- introduction of a flat rate land revenue system,

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<sup>16</sup> Op.cit, Inayatullah, n.5, p.67.

- new restrictions on the eviction of tenants, changes in the responsibilities on payment of water rates, land revenue and seed costs, and
- introduction of a works programme to create employment for agricultural labourers.<sup>17</sup>

The ceiling on the ownership of land per individual was fixed at 150 acres of irrigated and 300 acres of unirrigated land, instead the previous ceiling of 500 acres and 1000 acres of irrigated and unirrigated land, respectively. Similarly, the earlier limit of 36,000 PIUs was brought down to 15,000 PIU<sup>18</sup>. The concessions given by the Ayub regime, were withdrawn and no allowance or exemption was made for stud farms or orchards. However, an additional 20 percent of the ceiling, or 3,000 PIUs was to be granted to owners of tractors or tubewells. Earlier gifts and transfers upto the ceiling limit could be transferred to heirs and dependents, provided that this had been done between 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1967 and 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1971. The landowner could also decide which of the lands he wished to surrender.<sup>19</sup> Concessions to landowners were also given under Act II of 1977.

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<sup>17</sup> Op.cit, M.H. Khan, n.2, p.181.

<sup>18</sup> Naseem, S.M- Poverty and Landlessness in rural Asia, Geneva, ILO, 1977, p.51.

<sup>19</sup> For details see appendix- III.

Under Act II of 77, it was provided that land above the ceiling may be transferred to heirs or gifted, provided such transfers have been made before December, 1976.

### **3.5 Land Reforms of 1977**

Bhutto had undertaken land reforms to follow up his past promises to the masses when he was canvassing for mass support to win the election, so that he could handle the rein of administration. It is a political phenomenon to sort out the vast differences between the pre and post electoral situation in terms of the assurances the politicians give and unable to materialize later on. Bhutto also faced the same situation when the dominant interests (landlord) did not allow the implementation of these measures and the people grew discontented.

At this critical period, in order to pacify the already disgruntled masses and also for a sustainable administration, Bhutto came up with a second set of land reforms in 1977, barely two months before the General Elections.

The land reforms of 1977 stipulated a further reduction in the ceiling of ownership per individual. The new ceiling was fixed at 100

acres of irrigated land and 200 acres in case of unirrigated land.<sup>20</sup> Also the previous limit of 15,000 PIUs was brought down to 8,000 PIUs.<sup>21</sup> Notably, the payment of compensation, was reinforced. Such compensation was to be paid at the rate of Rs. 30 per PIU in bonds redeemable after ten years, with interest one per cent above the bank rate.<sup>22</sup> Under the Act of 1977, a substantial area of land could not be resumed because of Bhutto's overthrow by a military coup by Zia-ul-Haq in July 4, 1977.

The table below highlights the changes in land ceilings enacted since independence.

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<sup>20</sup> Fore details see Appendix – IV.

<sup>21</sup> Op.cit, Ronald J. Herring, n-13, p.602.

<sup>22</sup> Dawn, Karachi, 13, Octo. 1977- Internet, Website- [www.dawn.com](http://www.dawn.com).

**Table 3. I**

**Land Ceiling in Pakistan Under Various Regulations**

(land ceiling in acres)

	<b>Irrigated</b>	<b>Unirrigated</b>	<b>PIUs</b>
Muslim League	150	450	*
M L R-64	500	1000	36,000
M L R-115	150	300	15,000
Act of 77	100	200	8,000

\* data not available.

**Source:** compiled by the author.

We have already mentioned that under Bhutto land reforms were introduced in two heads. One in 1972 known as MLR-115 and the other under Act II of 1977. The total resumed area under MLR-115 is 512, 886 hectares of land out of which 296, 133 hectares were disposed of, leaving a balance of 216, 753 hectares. The total number of persons benefited was 73, 947. Similarly Act of 1977 resumed 68, 185 hectares of land out of which area disposed of was 12,938

hectares with a balance of 55,257 hectares. The total number of beneficiaries was 168,517.<sup>23</sup>

Statistical calculation shows that total area resumed under Bhutto was 31.76 per cent of the total land resumed in Pakistan under various land reforms in different stages. Likewise, land disposed of under Bhutto was about 24 per cent, balance 52.43 per cent and per cent of beneficiaries was 41.18.<sup>24</sup>

However, these two sets of land reforms could not favourably break land concentration. On one hand pressure of landlords and on the other, technological advent made the peasants more vulnerable to landlessness and near-landlessness. It is elaborately discussed in chapter 4 and 5 when we go into discussion of the impact of land reforms.

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<sup>23</sup> Federal Land Commission. Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan – 1979, p.64.

<sup>24</sup> Own Calculation.

CHAPTER - 4

IMPACT OF LAND  
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BHUTTO

## CHAPTER - 4

# IMPACT OF LAND REFORMS UNDER BHUTTO

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### **3.1 Impact of Land Reforms under Bhutto**

Land reforms under Bhutto have been motivated mainly by socio-political considerations and to a lesser extent by requirements of economic development. Evaluation of results at government level has been conspicuous; and alternatives to fixing of ceiling do not appear to have been explored either to maximise production or to ameliorate the conditions of the tenants and the landless rural poor. Some advantages in economic terms have obviously been achieved. Percentage of tenants becoming owners, increased though not to an expected level.

A multi-pronged and multi-dimensional spectrum such as bureaucratic hurdle, a faulty machinery for implementation of land programmes, new technological percolation and landlord-biased legislative formalities ultimately led to the concentration of land in a fewer hands. It is noted that because of HYV (High Yielding Varieties)

technology, agriculture gradually became competitive and showed a capitalist tendency. It extended the existing gap between landlords and peasants and also led to polarization of peasant as such. The society thus became pregnant with the increasing trend of unemployment, leading towards social tension and eventually brought an end to Bhutto's seven years' political base.

As regards the machinery provided for the implementation of the provisions of MLR-115, a Federal Land Commission (FLC) was created. FLC, the parental body, acted as the highest institutional functionary, responsible for the implementation of land reforms and was vested with extraordinary powers. It was extraordinary because there was no right of appeal against the decisions of the Commission. It was also to some extent coercive. The element of coercion lies in the fact that Federal Land Commission, in some cases, took away land from tenants and gave such land to *Zamnindars*.<sup>1</sup>

Here, a comparison can be made between the Federal Land Commission and that of Provincial Land Commissions. Under the 1959 reforms, the entire process of policy making and implementation was entrusted to a statutory Land Commission composed of

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<sup>1</sup> Khan, Mumtaz Ali-Land Reforms Flop, Pakistan Economic Review December 1979, p. 9.

permanent civil servants and experts invested with judicial powers. In the case of FLC we see the entire structure different, as the systemic procedure was politicized.<sup>2</sup> The provincial Land Commissions were placed under the Chief Ministers of the provinces. The commissions were given, in the law itself, total power to appoint all other members of the commissions. It is true, one of the members in each Commission was a career civil servant, designated as Chief Land Commissioner and was given powers and responsibility for implementation of the provisions of land reforms. Despite this, there were ministers appointed as members of Provincial Land Commissions in all the provinces. Even the Chairman of the FLC, it was provided, shall be a Federal Minister who was given the unusual power to function as a court. Most of the legislative members (above 60 per cent) of the Punjab and Sindh were landlords. Thus, in most cases, landlords appointed as ministers, became members of the provincial land Commissions. Land reforms, which primarily aims at 'elimination of landlords', thus suffered most in the hands of the landlords. The landlords made legislation in their favour to get rid of agrarian complexities. Such authoritative powers of the landlords and the Federal Land Commission was not similar during Ayub's regime.

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<sup>2</sup> Op.cit, Inayatullah, ref. no. 5 from cha-3, p.77.

The system thus permitted favouritism towards landlords; and due to political interference of the feudal lords, implementation of land reforms suffered.<sup>3</sup> It is apparent that in order to make land reforms a success Bhutto should have put maximum emphasis on landlords being detrimental to the implementation process. Instead, Bhutto could not be able to block the increasing pressure of the landlords on the agrarian set-up in Pakistan. Mahmood Hasan Khan<sup>4</sup> estimated that, land owners in the Punjab could hold as many as 932 acres of land by way of intra-family transfers of land over and above the fixed ceiling.

When in December 1976, a Peasants' week was organised promising that the government could distribute 25 million acres of land among 25,00,000 families, many landlords however had preempted the reforms by transferring land to their immediate relatives without risk of loss. One estimate says that only one percent of cultivated land was distributed among 1,30,000 tenants under MLR-115.<sup>5</sup> The actual area resumed by the government was only about 0.6 million acres, which was even less than the area resumed

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Inayatullah, p.77.

<sup>4</sup> Prof. of Economics at Simon Fraser University, Canada and a member on the board of editors of Pakistan Development Review (PDR), a journal published from Islamabad.

<sup>5</sup> Malik Iftikhar H- State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity, Macmillan Press, London, 1997, p-92.

under the 1959 land reforms (1.9 million acres). The resumed area constituted only 0.01 per cent of total farm area in the country<sup>6</sup>. It is thus clear that in spite of radical rhetoric, the area resumed in 1972 reforms was much smaller than 1959 reforms. Table 4.I highlights the process of implementation of various land reforms Acts enacted since independence.

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<sup>6</sup> Akmal Hussain-Strategic issues in Pakistan Economic Policy, Progressive Publishers, Lahore, 1990, p. 182.

**TABLE 4.I**  
**Progress of Implementation of Land Reforms up to 30-6-1979**

Province	Areas resumed (hectares)	Area of disposed of (hectares)	Balance (in hectares)	No. of persons benefited
<b>MLR-64</b>				
Punjab	503,150	433,217	69,933	109,889
Sindh	377,347	313,096	64,251	42,842
N.W.F.P	97,287	97,287	--	24,314
Baluchistan	53,268	53,196	72	6,221
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,031,052</b>	<b>896,796</b>	<b>134,256</b>	<b>183,266</b>
<b>MLR-115</b>				
Punjab	119,094	102,247	16,847	36,287
Sindh	129,384	60,780	68,604	16,119
N.W.F.P	57,382	53,600	3,782	12,468
Baluchistan	207,026	79,506	127,520	9,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>512,886</b>	<b>296,133</b>	<b>216,753</b>	<b>73,974</b>
<b>Act 11 of 1977</b>				
Punjab	36,778	3,465	33,313	90,882
Sindh	11,751	4,837	6,914	29,038
N.W.F.P	9,451	853	8,598	23,335
Baluchistan	10,215	3,783	6,432	25,242
<b>Total</b>	<b>68,195</b>	<b>12,938</b>	<b>55,257</b>	<b>168,517</b>
<b>MLR-117</b>				
Baluchistan	217,244	104,794	112,450	17,349
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,829,377</b>	<b>1,310,661</b>	<b>518,716</b>	<b>443,106</b>

Source: Federal Land Commission. Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan-

1979, p. 64.

### **3.2 Resumption of Excess Land and its Redistribution**

Bhutto government in pursuance of its objective of land distribution under MLR-115 established the following priorities for the redistribution of the resumed land.

- The landless tenants cultivating resumed land for at least one season during 1971-72 were to be given without charge an area not exceeding a subsistence holding (12.5 acres in the Punjab and 16 acres in Sind).
- On the untenanted resumed land, where no tenant was cultivating it during 1971-72, resumed land was to be redistributed without charge to those small owners/tenants who possessed an area of less than a subsistence holding, so that they could upgrade their holdings to the size of a subsistence holding.
- The resumed lands of orchards, livestock and stud farms, (*Shikargahs*) and trusts of charitable or religious institutions were to be used by the government at its discretion. In case these lands were to be leased, the former owners would have the first option on the lease.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> . Op.cit, M.H. Khan, ref. no. 2 of cha. 3, p. 174.

With these promises, the Bhutto government started resumption of excess land in the four provinces of Pakistan. The area resumed in Punjab was 119,094 hectares which was redistributed to 36, 287 peasants. In Sind the resumed area was 129,384 hectares having been redistributed to 16,119 peasants and in N.W.F.P. it was 57, 382 hectares of land distributed to 12,468 beneficiaries. Similarly in case of Baluchistan it was 207,026 hectares of land out of which 9,100 persons benefited.<sup>8</sup> The Act of 1977 provided provisions of land resumption and distribution on the lines similar to that of MLR-115. The only difference between MLR-115 and Act II of 1977 was that there was no compensation to landlords in case of resumption of land under MLR-115, but Act II of 1977 provided compensation to the landowners at the rate of Rs. 30 per acre in bonds redeemable after ten years, with interest one per cent above the bank rate. Under this Act, Punjab resumed a total of 36,778 hectares of land out of such resumed land persons benefited was 29,038. The resumed land in NWFP was 9, 451 hectares which was distributed to 23,355 persons and Baluchistan resumed 10,215 hectares of land and number of beneficiaries was 25,242.<sup>9</sup> On the report furnished by the Punjab Land Commission, it is found that the total area resumed under MLR-

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<sup>8</sup>. Federal Land Commission, Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan, 1979, p. 64.

<sup>9</sup>. Ibid.

115 was 273,109 acres of land. Of the resumed land, 183,365 acres were distributed to 34,673 persons. The average of area allotted to each beneficiary is 5.3 acres in the Punjab. The resumed area was 42 per cent of the declared area in the Punjab. <sup>10</sup>

In Sindh, total area resumed under MLR-115 was 316, 390 acres of land. It (Sindh) allotted 125,025 acres of land to 15,875 beneficiaries. The average of area allotted to each beneficiary was 7.9 acres. The resumed area was 59 per cent of the declared area in Sindh.<sup>11</sup>

Table 4. II highlights the resumption and redistribution of land in the Punjab and Sindh under Land Reforms Regulation of 1972.

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<sup>10</sup> Punjab Land Commission, *op.cit*, M.H. Khan, n.7, p. 178.

<sup>11</sup> Sindh Land Commission, *ibid*.

**Table. 4 II**  
**Resumption and Redistribution of Land in Sindh and**  
**Punjab under MLR-115**

(area in acres)

Province	Resumed area	Area allotted	Number of beneficiaries	Average area to each beneficiary	Percentage of Resumed Area
Punjab	273,109	183,365	34,673	5.3	42
Sindh	316,390	125,025	15,875	7.9	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>589,499</b>	<b>308,390</b>	<b>50,548</b>		

Source: Govt. of Punjab, Punjab Land Commission,  
Govt. of Sindh, Sindh Land Commission,  
M.H. Khan, Underdevelopment and Agrarian Structure in Pakistan,  
Westview Replica Edition - 1981, p. 178.

Coming to the features of consolidation of holdings, statistics shows that during 1960-1965 a total of 3,356,000 hectares of land was consolidated under Ayub. The consolidation of holdings during five year from 1960-1970 was 2,032,000 hectares of land. There was a decrease in such consolidation of holdings during Bhutto's period. From 1970-71 to 1974-1975, the number of holdings was 1,086,000

hectares of land and 1,282,000 hectares during next four years from 1975-76 to 1978-79.<sup>12</sup>

### **3.3 Tenancy Regulation and Security of Tenure**

The security of tenancy for the landless tenants was among the major objectives of the measures taken by PPP under 1972 and 1977 land reforms. However, the handicaps of landless tenants were more numerous than that of the recipients of resumed land, because the former were still entirely dependent on their landlords. The landlessness among tenants, and case of evictions because of expansion of self-cultivated areas by landlords due to technological advent, made them (the tenants) more vulnerable to oppression and poverty. Bhutto who fanned the slogan of '*roti, kapara aur makhan*'- bread, cloth and shelter, during his election campaign in 1970-71, introduced land reforms to eliminate such hurdle of oppression caused by the landlords. In pursuance of his rhetoric, he one way or the other amended the tenancy regulation existing earlier.

The earliest efforts in land reforms under Muslim League and Ayub in Pakistan, dealt mainly with the regulation of tenancy conditions. The Muslim League Agrarian Reforms Committee – 1949

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<sup>12</sup> Board of Revenue, Govt. of Pakistan, Ministry of Food Agriculture and Co-operatives, Islamabad, p. 57.

suggested to make occupancy tenants full fledged owners providing security of tenure to tenants-at-will, reducing rents payable by tenants, and abolishing illegal exactions imposed on tenants by landlords. In the land reforms programme of 1959, so far as tenancy rights were concerned, provisions were made to bring about uniformity in tenancy rights. All occupancy tenants were made owners of land they possessed. Ejectment of tenants was allowed only if a tenant failed to pay rent, or if the cultivation of the land was such, as to render it unfit for further cultivation, or if a tenant refused to cultivate or to sub-let.<sup>13</sup>

Under 1972 land reforms, further legal provisions were made for the protection of the rights of tenants and for improving their share of income from the land. It was tenants-supporting so far as it restricted the cause of eviction of tenants to only one factor, viz.; failure to pay rent. The tenants to some extent sighed sense of relief as the burden of imposing water rate and the cost of seeds were to be borne entirely by the landlords. Another feature under Bhutto as to security of tenure was that in case of cost of fertilizers and pesticides, it was to be shared equally by the parties. And regulation under MLR-

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<sup>13</sup> . Ahmed V and Amjad R- The Management of Pakistan's Economy-1947-82, OUP, Karachi-1984, p.121.

115 went on the same provision of land revenue and other charges to be paid by the landlord as they were earlier required to pay. Levy of any cess and begar was banned and the most important concession to the tenant was his right to pre-emption in case the land under his cultivation was being sold by the owner.<sup>14</sup>

The features relating to security of tenure to peasants did not end here, rather it was further liberalised under Bhutto in 1976 when all occupancy tenants on state land were made owners.<sup>15</sup> As regards the ejection future, it was provided that if any case related to such ejection of land arose, the tenants could appeal to the revenue court. On hearing such ejection suit against the landlords by the ejected tenants, the court of revenue could issue 'revision' of the disputed land between the tenants and the landlords. The 'revision' was open only to tenants, not to the landlords.

Despite the above facts, landlessness among the peasants was an ongoing problem in Pakistan. Data on "landlessness" in Pakistan are particularly non-existent. This is a serious lacuna in the agrarian data base. Inderjit Singh who has done a comprehensive study on

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<sup>14</sup> . Ibid, p. 122.

<sup>15</sup> . Ibid, p-122.

'Land and Labour in South Asia' provides some statistical data on landlessness in Pakistan. He has derived such data on landlessness in Pakistan by subtracting the number of "farm householders" (in the agricultural resources) from that of the number of rural households.

This exercise is clearly approximate and imprecise. On the basis of Singh's study, it is found that in 1960-61 out of a total of some 6.5 million rural households, 4.9 million were 'farm households'. The remaining 1.6 million (24.6 per cent) of all rural households were 'non-operating' or 'non-farming' households. By 1972, there were some 8.2 million rural households, of which only 4.0 million were 'farm-households'. This shows that over 51 per cent (4.2 million) of all rural households were in the 'non-farming' category.<sup>16</sup>

It is very difficult to draw conclusions about the magnitude or trends in 'landlessness' with any degree of certainty from the available data. Despite the unavailability of data, we can rely on the study of Naseem (1977). Naseem being supported by some village surveys, states that the number of landless workers was increasing as in the past.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Inderjit Singh – Land and Labour in South Asia, World Bank Discussion Papers (33), Washington, D.C. – 1998, p. 53.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.55.

Similarly, the number of agricultural labourers was appreciably increasing. Data show that the number of agricultural labourers in Pakistan was 7.6 million in 1961, which was 17.7 per cent of the total population of 42.9 million. The number (of labourers) increased up to 9.7 million (14.8 per cent) in 1971 and reached at 27.6 million in 1977-78. It was more than 50 per cent of the total population of Pakistan in 1977-78.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the provision of security of tenure provided under MLR-115, landlessness and problem related to agricultural labourers was ongoing and peasants were growing discontent day by day. Peasants' resentment finally took shape of an 'Agrarian Riot' in NWFP in April 1974. There were serious clashes between the landlords and peasants of NWFP. Peasants of NWFP formed "Ittehad Party" (alliance Party) to pressurize the landlords to quit some land for them (the peasants), but were unable to do so due to police intervention. Witness of any such 'riot' or 'peasants' strike' from the other provinces such as the Punjab, Sindh and Pakistan were hardly found.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 71.

### **3.4 Showing Capitalist Tendency**

The High Yielding Varieties (HYV) factor can't be ignored so far as it changed the shape of agricultural production; and shape of the society in terms of broadening the gap between the landlords and peasants.<sup>19</sup> The gap between the landlords and peasants, showed a tilt towards a semi-feudal structure. Studies on the semi-feudal structure (of Pakistan) show that Pakistan was gradually changing its shape towards a 'capitalist structure within a feudal mode'. There is debate on the capitalist structure of Pakistan. Some of the authors state British colonialism initiated capitalism in agriculture of Pakistan. But authors like Imran Ali, who examine the impact of the British on the Punjab, especially with reference to the canal colonies of the province, argue that Pakistan did not experience such capitalist tendency in pre-independence era. To quote:

"There was an absence of an agricultural revolution in the region. There was great economic growth in the canal colonies, but agriculture did not mark any major transition from traditional modes. Quantitative increase was not accompanied by qualitative change."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Discussed in detail in the 'concluding' chapter.

<sup>20</sup> Ali Imran- The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885-1947, OUP, Delhi, 1989, p.17.

M.H.Khan, the great doyen of agricultural economists in Pakistan, shares views somewhat similar to that of Ali's writing. He states:

*"With the recognition of absentee landlordism, emerged an agrarian system which could not have led to economic development. The economic surplus which peasants created was appropriated by those in the society who failed to invest in industrial growth. The British settlements gave birth to an economic and political system which could not get the Indian society (Pakistan was a part of India at that time) in general and peasantry in particular out of the morass of backwardness. This system reinforced feudal relations on land which, albeit asymmetrical, provided a measure of stability for the colonial power to rule India."*<sup>21</sup>

Akbar Zaidi who is a strong supporter of capitalist thinking, states that capitalism entered into Pakistan economy under British Colonialism.

To quote Zaidi:

*"The British pattern of private ownership of land, making it marketable and alienable, introduction of legal system protecting owners and the market, guaranteeing the protection of bourgeois property and personal rights, the emergence of a land market in the 1860s, the imposition of a land tax (in cash not in kind), the establishment of official sources of credit (even long-term), the hugely expanded quantity of crops grown, (much of them being exported), with cash crops taking an increasing share in production, the increasing polarization between landlords and the growing landless, the advent of small-scale manufacturing, set up near agricultural zones for triggering off agricultural output- all point to a conclusive shift from a pre-capitalist type of agriculture."*<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Op.cit, M.H. Khan, n-7, p.130.

<sup>22</sup> Zaidi, Akbar- Issues in Pakistan's Economy, OUP, Karachi, 1999, p.18.

Now we can discuss the much debated capitalist spectrum of Pakistani economy and can throw light on as to what extent Bhutto and his land reforms accentuated the capitalist tendency of Pakistani agriculture.

Capitalism may be defined as the organisation of business on a large scale by an employer or company of employers possessing an accumulated stock of wealth. The stock of wealth is to acquire raw materials and tools and hire labour, so as to produce an increased quantity of wealth, and it will constitute profit. G.D.H. Cole has defined capitalism as a “system of production for profit under which instruments and materials of production are privately owned and the work is done mainly by hired labour, the product belonging to the capitalist owners.”<sup>23</sup>

Marx goes to the extent of saying that

“capitalism is a particular mode of organisation of production in which workers do not own the necessary means of production. These are concentrated in the hands of a small class of people in the society. The labourers sell their labour power to the owners of means of production, as a commodity and earn wages. They don't have any right over the goods they produce. The capitalists sell the produced goods in the market at a price higher than the labour cost”.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Sen, K.K.- Comparative Economic Systems, Sultan Chand and Sons Ltd. New Delhi- 1990, p.24.

<sup>24</sup> Maurice Dobb- Studies in the Development of Capitalism, George Routledge & Sons Ltd., London, 1947, p.17.

It is now clear that the slow but steady capitalist tendency which originated in the pre-Bhutto period, was further extended by the 1972 land reforms legislation enacted again under martial law but by a populist elected government led by Bhutto. It is mentioned in chapter-3 that Bhutto's regime reduced the ceiling of land retained by the former owner to 150 acres of irrigated and 300 acres of unirrigated land. Bhutto under Martial Law Regulations-115 of 1972, like the preceding land reforms of 1959, permitted various exemption clauses to the landlords. As a result, the landlords could be able to retain land above the fixed ceiling. Owners with tubewells or tractors could be able to retain an additional 20 per cent area of the ceiling or 2,000 PIUs. And also, owners could be able to transfer land above the fixed ceiling to heirs provided that such land transfers must have been made between 1 March, 1967 and 20 December, 1971. One estimate reckons that these exemptions in effect raised the ceiling for irrigated land upto 932/1,120 acres.<sup>25</sup>

This worse agrarian situation in Pakistan was to some extent compared to ML and Ayub's regime. Compensation above the ceiling was given to landowners under ML and MLR-64. As a result, landowners under ML and Ayub's regime could be able to retain land

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<sup>25</sup> . Op.cit, M.H. Khan, n-7, p.170.

above the fixed ceiling. Agriculture became capital intensive and showed capitalist tendency which was accelerated during Bhutto's period when cultivation of the retained holdings became more capital-intensive on the advent of HYV technology.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike both India and Bangladesh, *Zamindars* in Pakistan enjoyed influence both over the common people, especially on tenants and over the government as well. This zamindari influence was to a great extent cemented by Bhutto who provided both legislative and electoral support to them. It is evident in the fact that during the 1977 election Bhutto gave party tickets to many of the most powerful *zamindar* families of the Punjab to contest the elections. Thus, after two land reforms over some thirty years, the landlord class which dominated the socio-political life of the Punjab and Sind in the pre-1959 land reforms period, are still politically powerful.<sup>27</sup> The case for the transition to capitalism in Pakistan has been most persuasively argued by Khan who cites supporting evidence to indicate that:

“these changes in the renting or leasing of land between various sizes of farms indicate that poor peasants are increasingly renting out their lands to rich peasants. Secondly, landlords are renting out less land to share-croppers. Thirdly, capitalist farms are increasing in the Punjab and Sind at the expense of poor and even middle-class

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<sup>26</sup> . Sobhan Rehman- Agrarian Reforms and Social Transformation: Pre-conditions for Development, Dhaka University Press, 1993. P.61.

<sup>27</sup> . Ibid, p.61.

peasants in the former and against landlords and their share-croppers in the latter province".<sup>28</sup>

### 3.5 Changing Landlord-Tenant Relationship

One of such consequences emerging in the field of land reforms is the changing contour of landlord-tenant relationship. The new reforms under Bhutto substantially changed the landlord-tenant relationship. The burden of revenue, cost of seed and water and half the cost of fertilizers and pesticides were shifted on to the landlords.<sup>29</sup> However, the *batai* system for payment of rent was retained in spite of demands for introducing a system of cash payments. Landlords were prohibited from levying any *cess* (charge) or *abwab* (haboob), and from using free labour (*begar*), of their tenants.<sup>30</sup> The shift of expenses of seed, water, fertilizers and pesticides to the landlord was mostly circumvented by forcing the tenants to pay a higher share of the produce as rent. The 'absence of compensation' for lands resumed by the government led to the surrender land of poor quality which was unfit for any meaningful cultivation. Shanaz J. Rouse who studied the land relations in the Sargodha district of Punjab is of the opinion that:

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<sup>28</sup> . Op.cit, M.H. Khan, n.7, p.183.

<sup>29</sup> . Op.cit, Inayatullah, n.2, p.69.

<sup>30</sup> . Op.cit, M.H. Khan, n.7, p. 184.

“while begar was abolished, a close parallel in a system of *Vangar*, began to prevail”.<sup>31</sup>

*Vangar* is such a system whereby a landlord can ask his tenants to work on a particular project in return for a meal. The work may be a community project or simply a personal task of the landlord. The tenants very often left their work to do this service of the landlord.

With scientific developments, emerged a competitive agriculture which virtually made Pakistan peasantry more dependent on landlords than before. The increasing capitalist farming in Pakistan consequently resulted in the emerging market. This emerging market was mediated by the social and political power of the landlords. The local institutions for the distribution of agricultural inputs and credit and of sale of output were heavily influenced by the big landlords. The net result was that the poor peasant in order to acquire the inputs, credit and facilities for transport of output to the market, had to depend on help from the landlord. In many cases, the poor peasant in the absence of collateral, was unable to get credit from the official agencies. They had to depend mostly on the landlords for lands. Further, a peasant often had to purchase the tubewell water from the

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<sup>31</sup> Gardezi, H.N and Rashid J (eds.): Pakistan; The Roots of Dictatorship, The Political Economy of a Praetorian State, OUP, New Delhi, 1983, p. 323.

landlord and used his transport for taking his output for sale to the market.

In such an agrarian situation, agricultural capitalism accompanied by an increased social and economic dependence of the poor peasantry on the landowners, made agricultural production monetized. There was also an intensification of poor peasants' dependence on the landlord. This dependence of the peasants on the landlords was accelerated further through the process of capitalism in agriculture.

### **3.6 Land Reforms causing Intra-regional and Trans-national Migration**

Population growth in the 70s, was re-emerging as a matter of public concern in Pakistan. The growing trend of population growth profile escalated the public concern in the seventies following a decade in which development issues and activities were overshadowed by war with India, secession of East Pakistan (Bangladesh), the rise and fall of the Bhutto government, and subsequent political turmoil and tension.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> . Burki, Shahid Javed-Ayub's Fall: A Socio-Economic Explanation, Asian Survey, vol. 12, no. 3, March 1972, p. 202.

From the Pakistani Census Report it is evident that Pakistan at the time of independence had a low growth of population. By the time Pakistan entered seriously into the field of economic planning, the rate of population growth was 1.4 per cent. It had a gradual increase; and produced concern in the sixties when it struck a 2.2 per cent growth rate.<sup>33</sup> However, the growth of population became a cause of concern in the seventies to Bhutto government when it touched the point of 3 per cent growth.<sup>34</sup>

Most of the peasants in Pakistan did not have a minimum support of land and faced the '*disguised unemployment*' (more labour for a less work) and sometimes '*frictional unemployment*' (labour changing to a work seasonally). In 1960-61, 1.6 million people of Pakistan were 'non-operating' or 'non-farming' households. By 1972 the number of 'non-operating' or 'non-farming' households reached at 4.2 million.<sup>35</sup> With the growing number of 'non-farming' households emerged in Pakistan an intensive subsistence farming which is termed as high density of population with low technology. Density of population in the Punjab was 321 persons per sq. mile in 1961 and it increased to 475 in 1972. In Sindh, the density of population was 157

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<sup>33</sup> . Census Report in Krotki, K.J. and Parveen, K.- Population Size and Growth in Pakistan, based on Early Reports of 1972 Census, PDR, 15, 1976, pp.290-318.

<sup>34</sup> . Ibid, p.294-95.

<sup>35</sup> op.cit., Inderjit Singh, n. 16, p. 53.

persons per sq. mile in 1961 which reached at 250 in 1972. Similarly, in case of NWFP, it was 199 persons per sq. mile in 1961 and 290 in 1972. And also Baluchistan has an increase from 10 persons per sq. mile in 1961 to 18 in 1972. Thus, the overall density of Pakistan in 1961 was 140 persons per sq. mile and it increased to 212 in 1972.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, new technology was not accessible to all people in Pakistan. The large owners had better chance to such new technological breakthrough, because they could avail of the benefits of HYV technology by applying new varieties of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. They could afford the price of the new agricultural incentives. On the other hand, small farmers with burden of debt, could not be able to take advantages of the new technological advent. Thus, agriculture became uncompetitive between landlords and peasants. The latter owing to less degree of HYV technology, could not compete with the landlords. So the peasants better preferred migration both intra-regional and trans-national to Middle East, particularly to those oil exporting countries such as Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia etc. Along with Middle East, World Bank study says that North-Africa was also a major labour-importing country.

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<sup>36</sup> Population Census of Pakistan, 1972 Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan 1979, p. 154.

*Housing, Economic and Demographic Survey* finds that many of the migrants to Karachi are temporary, leaving their families behind in the villages and returning only periodically. Studies on migration confirm the high degree of migration from rural areas to urban areas. Eckert (1977) finds that 17.2 per cent of households in the Punjab report at least one migrating family member. And two-third of the migrating workers from NWFP and Punjab are heads of households.<sup>37</sup>

The rapid acceleration in international migration was a joint product of push and pull factor. The push came from Pakistan's perennial struggle to create an adequate number of jobs for its even expanding labour force. With population growth above three per cent, more than 600,000 new entrants joined the labour force every year.<sup>38</sup>

Workers who were seeking Middle East employment were proceeding through various channels. Thus there is complexity for getting data about their (workers') maximum limit of migration. However, officials agencies such as Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) and the Overseas Employment Corp (OEC) are two major governmental sources of information regarding workers' transnational migration.

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<sup>37</sup> . Burki, S.J- *Pakistan's Development Priorities*, OUP, Karachi, 1986, p.202.

<sup>38</sup> . *Ibid*, p. 203.

On the basis of the data furnished by BEOE and OEC it is found that the scale of migration from Pakistan to oil surplus economies of the Middle East has risen dramatically since the mid-seventies, in response to the lucrative opportunities offered by these rapidly expanding economies. Since 1975, employment in these economies has been rising at about 5 to 6 per cent per annum and is projected to maintain this high level until 1985 and possibly beyond.<sup>39</sup>

Overpopulation, in fact, led to increasing pressure on land. The people of Pakistan were in need of land to sustain their livelihood. They were expecting of getting land under MLR-115. But, most of the tenants could not get land due to land evasion by the landlords. Concession of owners of tubewells and tractors for retaining land upto 20 per cent of the fixed ceiling of 150 acres of irrigated or 300 acres of unirrigated land under MLR-115, provided them advantages of retaining additional land of 2000 PIUs.<sup>40</sup> Large owners could be able to transfer land above the fixed ceiling to heirs, provided such land transfers must have been made between 1 March, 1967 and 20 December, 1971.<sup>41</sup> Under MLR-115, it was provided that 'no-

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<sup>39</sup> . Ibid, p.223.

<sup>40</sup> Op.cit. M.H. Khan, n.7, p.170.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

compensation' would be given to owners who were supposed to surrender excess land they possessed.

On the other hand, Pakistan was suffering from labour problem. The number of agricultural labourers in Pakistan was increasing. In 1961, the number of agricultural labourers was 7.6 million which increased to 9.7 million in 1972. There was a high increase of such agricultural labourers in Pakistan since 1972. The number of agricultural labourers reached at 27.3 million in 1977-78.<sup>42</sup> Had Bhutto put maximum emphasis on the landlords to surrender excess land above ceiling, and distribute such land to each landless peasant, there might not appear labour problem. If labour problem could have been eradicated by giving land to the labourers, they might not prefer to migrate to urban cities of Pakistan or to foreign countries. On getting land, the labourers could be able to sustain themselves by cultivating the land provided to them.

Land reform did not contribute to population growth, labour force expansion and migration. Rather these factors made it more difficult to implement the reforms. Similarly, farm mechanization following the advent of new technology would have led to displacement of labourers. Even though while the ceilings were

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<sup>42</sup> Op.cit, Inderjit Singh, n. 16, p.71.

brought down substantially by Bhutto, the redistribution effects were in fact lower than under Ayub who allowed much higher ceilings.

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*CHAPTER - 5*  
*CONCLUSION*

## CHAPTER – 5

### CONCLUSION

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It has been mentioned earlier in chapter three that despite the introduction of two sets of land reforms under Bhutto, the persistent problem of land concentration still continued in the post-Bhutto period. Bhutto was overthrown from power through a coup d'etat by military ruler Zia-ul-Haq in July 1977. Coming to power Zia-ul-Haq made attempts to introduce land reforms. And as such, introduced Martial Law Regulation (MLR) 117 in 1977. However, Zia's land reforms were limited to only Baluchistan. In subsequent years, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif went further in the field of land reforms. Nawaz Sharif, in his address to the nation on June 11, 1998, announced to take over possession of land from the feudal lords. He took over possession of 1.25 million acres of land from illegal occupants, identified as being the land in excess of the ceilings of land holdings fixed by the Land Reforms Regulations of 1972 and Act II of 1977. He distributed the same

among landless peasants<sup>1</sup> All this shows how land reforms in Pakistan was a long problem.

The features relating to security of tenure under Bhutto has been discussed in chapter four. Bhutto made provisions that the burden of water rate and the cost of seeds were to be borne entirely by landlords. In case of cost of fertilizers and pesticides, it was to be shared equally by peasants and landlords. Land revenue and other charges were to be paid by the landlords. Levy of any cess or begar was banned. Tenants were given right to pre-emption in case the land under his cultivation was being sold by the owner. All occupancy tenants on state land were made owners in 1976.<sup>2</sup>

On the basis of data furnished in the earlier chapters, we can presume that the problem of landlessness in Pakistan is long as well as persistent. Here, question arises as to why such land problem still continues despite the attempts of land reforms in Pakistan. It is evident that attempts of land reforms were made in Pakistan under different leaders at various stages. So far as our discussion is confined to Bhutto's land reforms, we shall discuss as to what extent Bhutto was successful in his attempt of land reforms. Three factors can be attributed in this regard, such as

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<sup>1</sup> Tanzilur-Rahman, Justice (Rt.), Federal Shariat Court of Pakistan, Land Reforms and Absentee Landlordism, Internet, Website – [www.dawn.com](http://www.dawn.com).

<sup>2</sup> op.cit., Ahmed and Amjad, ref. from chapter 4, n. 13, p.122.

lack of efficiency and consciousness among the peasants of Pakistan, advent of High Yielding Varieties (HYV) technology and growth of population. They are discussed below.

### **5.1. Lack of Efficiency and Consciousness among the Peasants of Pakistan.**

On the data and facts furnished <sup>in</sup> chapter four, it is found that there was a considerable pressure of landlessness among the peasants of Pakistan under Bhutto. There was also pressure on the agricultural labourers as their (agricultural labourers') number was considerably increasing. Peasants were unsatisfied with the existing government and their (Peasants') discontent ultimately resulted in the articulation of 'peasants' frustration' and showed sign of utmost dissatisfaction with the Bhutto government. It is found that peasants' resentment in North-West Frontier Provinces (NWFP) took shape of an 'Agrarian Riot' against the exploitative *Zamindars*. Towards the end of April 1974, NWFP witnessed serious clashes between landlords and tenants. A large number of casualties and a considerable loss of property was reported from the rural areas of Mardan, Suat, and Malakand Agency.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Satish Kumar, *The New Pakistan*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi – 1978, p. 143.

The origin of the trouble of the NWFP in 1974 was not accidental. Rather, it was a perpetual growing discontent among the peasants of NWFP since the time of Bhutto's electoral campaign. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) assured the peasants of Pakistan during its electoral rhetoric 'land for the peasants' and 'mills for the labourers'.<sup>4</sup> Despite Bhutto's electoral rhetoric, it is found that Bhutto could not be able to fulfil such assured promise due to one reason or the other.

The discontent of the peasants of NWFP finally took shape of a 'riot' against the landlords of NWFP. The aim of the riot was to put landlords under pressure to quit some land in favour of the peasants. And in order to fulfil their (the peasants') aim, they formed 'Ittehad Party' (Alliance Party). Notwithstanding the formation of the 'Ittehad Party', persistent rallies and clarion calls, the peasants of NWFP could not be able to succeed in their attempts of pressuring the landlords to quit land. The riot of NWFP ultimately failed because NWFP police intervened and maintained law and order by dispersing the discontented peasants.

Apparently, the cause behind the failure of the peasants of NWFP lies in the fact that the peasants were of 'short-term' programme. The peasants whimsically expressed their anger

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<sup>4</sup> For details see chapter 3.

without a proper way of articulating the grievances. They lacked any long-term agenda of legitimizing their demands. An illustration, in this context, can be shown in that after such event of NWFP in 1974, no sign of second riot has been found so far. This concludes that the peasants demonstrated their resentment for a temporary period. And ultimately the riot of NWFP could not have any effect on the landlords of NWFP.

Signs of 'riot' or 'peasants' strike' from the Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan were scarcely found. The causes of peasants' failure can be ascribed to their economic weakness, educational backwardness and lack of leadership. They also lacked support from any organisations like 'trade unions' or 'peasants associations'. Even whatever little support they might have enjoyed, disappeared with the disintegration of an organization like the Sind Hari Committee in the early seventies.

The peasants of Pakistan were not efficient and conscious about the happening related to land. Even when sparks of discontent had already erupted among the peasant of NWFP, the peasants of the Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan did not raise their slogan either against the Bhutto government or against the landlords. Due to 'lack of efficiency and consciousness,' the

peasants of Pakistan eventually failed to compete with the changing agrarian trend.

As a result, when a feudal element started swaying over the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in the mid-seventies, there was no anti-feudal element among the Pakistani peasants to block such increasing progress. The peasants only showed a less degree of their strength in case of the riot of NWFP. Thus, Pakistan People's Party enjoyed some absolute power as no threat from the peasants had been posed so far. Mohammed Hasan Khan thus states,

“in rural areas, the problem for Pakistan People's Party was less serious because of the fact that peasants were not an organised force”.<sup>5</sup>

Unlike Pakistani peasants, there was greater sense of organised tendency and co-ordination among the peasants of countries like Japan and Taiwan. Japan and Taiwan introduced 'land reforms' in the post World War – II era (post – 1945). Land reforms in these countries (Japan and Taiwan) were 'success'. One of the factors behind the success of land reforms in Japan and Taiwan can be attributed to the 'efficiency, consciousness and organised tendency' of the Japanese and Taiwanese peasants. They formed 'tenants-unions' similar to that of 'peasants' political

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<sup>5</sup> M.H. Khan, Ref. from Chapter Four, n. 7, p.183.

parties' of Eastern Europe. The Japanese and Taiwanese peasants exerted pressure on the political parties and government to introduce legislation in their (peasants') favour. Wolf Ladejinsky who has worked on land reforms in Japan and Taiwan states that:

“The peasants of Pakistan themselves while discontented have not developed a movement, whether in the form of tenants – unions like those of Japan, or peasant political parties like those of Eastern Europe after the First World War ... For the most part of the peasants behaved as if any change in their condition depended upon somebody else.”<sup>6</sup>

Mass strike as propounded by the ‘Theories of Syndicalism’ was not visible among the peasants of Pakistan. ‘Theories of Syndicalism’ puts emphasis on strike and passive resistance<sup>7</sup> by the peasants for controlling their (the peasants’) demand.

In the process, the peasants of Pakistan could not check the landlords in case of land eviction or land concentration (discussed later). They also could not exert pressure on Bhutto government for accelerating the process of land reforms.

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<sup>6</sup> Wolf Ladejinsk in P.C. Joshi’s Land Reforms and Agrarian Change in India and Pakistan since 1947:1, *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1974, p. 172.

<sup>7</sup> Passive resistance means any resistance by the discontented people through non-violent methods such as non-cooperation, hartal, picketing, peaceful strike etc.

## **5.2. Technological Factor as Impediment to the Process of Bhutto's Land Reforms Programme**

The High Yielding Varieties (HYV) technology in the shape of 'Green Revolution' entered into the Pakistani society in late 1960s. Green Revolution in Pakistan introduced new technological inputs such as tubewells, fertilizers and varieties of seeds in agriculture. It is found that agricultural fields which had access to such new technological incentives of fertilizers, seeds, tubewells etc. could produce more crops than the other fields. Farmers with traditional equipments, harvested less crops in comparison with the farmers who introduced new technology in their fields.

The inputs of tubewells, fertilizers and seeds required a considerable amount of investment on the part of the farmers. The ability to reap the benefits of the new technological breakthrough thus depended on the ability to mobilize enough funds, either through savings or borrowings. Though loans were advanced by Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan (ADBP) and other commercial banks, the small farmers could not be able to take loans, because there was high rate of interest (12 per cent).<sup>8</sup> So due to such lack of fund, the small farmers could not introduce

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<sup>8</sup> Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan, Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan, 1979, p. 92..

new technology in their fields and continued cultivation with the conventional method.

On the other hand, large landowners had money to buy fertilizers and seeds. They (large owners) had tractors and tubewells. By applying such new instruments in agriculture the large farmers could produce more crops. There was a considerable increase in most of the crops like wheat, rice, maize, bajra, jowar etc. Table 5.1 highlights the productions of such crops in Pakistan.

**Table 5.1**  
**Production of Major Crops in Pakistan (1970-1978)**  
(Yield per hectare in Kgs.)

<b>Crops</b>	<b>1970-71</b>	<b>1977-78</b>
Wheat	1079	1316
Rice	1466	1565
Maize	1125	1251
Bajra	470	497
Jute	562	793

Source: Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan, Islamabad, 1979.

Such type of small farmers vs. large farmers competition in terms of production of crops was intensified further by the 'tractor

mechanization'. Western type of tractors, mainly of large four-wheeled of 35-43 horse power, increased the average production of the large farmers. Number of imported tractors was 4,411 in 1968-69 with cumulative number of 21,534. The number of such imported tractors reached at 15,178 in 1977-78 having the cumulative strength of 103,023. This shows that there was a 'rapid tractorization' in Pakistan in the 1970s.

On the introduction of tractorization in Pakistan, more areas of land were being cultivated in less time. On the other hand, small farmers with the traditional pattern of using ox and wooden plough could hardly compete with the farmers of tractorized cultivation.

Gradually, agriculture became competitive in terms of quantity of products and their selling. While large owners sold their products in cheap rate, the small farmers could not be able to sell their products in such (cheap) rate. It is because the small farmers had to bear 'loss' due to less production of crops. The large farmers did not suffer from loss, because they sold more quantities of crops.

In the competitive agriculture in Pakistan, large farmers exceeded small farmers in terms of production of crops. The small farmers, on the other hand, could not be able to compete with the

large farmers. In such agricultural competition the small farmers, states Akber Zaidi,<sup>9</sup> had lagged a year or so behind the large farmers in adopting the new techniques. Further Zaidi states that small farmers' application of fertilizer per acre has been lower than that of larger farmers. The fact that the technological backwardness of the small farmers of Pakistan can be attributed to two factors, viz., lack of capital and burden of debt.

As it has been discussed earlier in this chapter that despite the availability of domestic loans by Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan (ADBP) and other commercial banks, small farmers could not be able to get such loans. It was because the loans were available at high interest rate (12 per cent). The interest was not generally affordable by the small farmers. Thus, the small farmers of Pakistan lacked capital.

There was also burden of debt on the small farmers. Though data on the debt of small farmers in Pakistan is not available, it is generally found that on the advent of new technology, large farmers sold their products in cheap rate. Smaller farmers were also to sell their crops in the same market price. Otherwise nobody was to buy crops of the small farmers whilst such crops were available at cheap rate by the large farmers. As a result, small farmers bore

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<sup>9</sup> Akber Zaidi was formerly Associate Professor at the Applied Economics Research Centre, University of Karachi, Pakistan.

loss. Selling price of crops were nearly equal to that of yielding price. In order to maintain such imbalance in production of crops, the small farmers were in need of money for buying seeds, fertilizers and such new technological incentives. Since the small farmers were lack of capital, they had to go to the moneylenders for financial help as debt.

The moneylenders were rich people and economically well off. They were primarily landlords or large holders of land. They lent money to the needy small farmers. However, the magnitude of the lent money and its interest rate is not available due to paucity of data. Inderjit Singh's papers show that the amount of borrowed money by the small farmers from the moneylenders, was gradually increasing. The small farmers were unable to pay off the debt. As a result, they (small farmers) preferred to sell off their lands to the moneylenders in exchange of their debt.<sup>10</sup>

As commercialization proceeded, the control of essential resources, including land, became concentrated. Applying new varieties of seed and scientific agricultural machinery, the landlords could produce more crops and had profit by selling the crops in the market. Thus, landlords with enormous land benefited on the advent of new technology. In the World Bank Discussion

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<sup>10</sup> Op.cit., Inderjit Singh, ref. no. 16 of cha. 4.

Papers (33), Inderjit Singh finds out that most of the landlords gradually increased their farm size by resuming land they had rented out earlier to small peasants.<sup>11</sup>

The overall picture of Pakistan's agrarian structure has been such that the large landowners had rented out most of their land to small and medium sized farmers. As late as 1972, 46 per cent of the total farm area in Pakistan was tenant operated. Of this tenanted area, 50 per cent had been rented out by large landowners (owing 150 acres and above).<sup>12</sup>

In such situation when HYV technology became available in the late 1960's, the large landowners found it profitable to resume some of the land they had rented out earlier. And as such, the large land holders resumed the earlier rented out land and started cultivating these resumed land, by using hired labourers and capital investment. This cultivation, as has been discussed earlier in the present chapter, was precipitated further by tractorization. The small farmers, on the other hand, conceded it better to sell off some of their land to the moneylenders in exchange of their growing debt.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Akmal Husain's Study refers it as 75 per cent.

This is how the problem of land concentration continued in Pakistan. Bhutto could not be able to break such land concentration because of the dominant role played by the landlords in shaping the political structure of Pakistan nor could he exert pressure on the increasing dominance of the landlords. According to Meraj Mohammed Khan, a rebel Pakistani People's Party (PPP) leader of Bhutto period, when his (M.M. Khan's) group wanted to place primary emphasis on the liquidation of feudalism, Bhutto was opposed to this. Rather, Bhutto felt that Imperialism depended upon capitalism and not on feudalism.<sup>13</sup>

This clearly exposes Bhutto's double speak of breaking land concentration and facilitating feudalism. It also shows Bhutto's lack of conviction about the primary economic objective of his government. On the one hand, Bhutto carried out land reforms with the stated purpose of 'elimination of feudalism', on the other he (Bhutto) accentuated the 'Prusian Junker Capitalist' model of development. Prusian Junker model is such a model of development in the society where modernization takes place while retaining feudal estates. In this context, Bhutto preserved the economic power of the exploiting classes.

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<sup>13</sup> Pandav Nayak (ed.) – Pakistan: Society and Politics, Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1984, p. 51.

### **5.3. Growth of Population as Obstacle to the Process of Bhutto's Land Reforms.**

Population in Pakistan showed an upward increase since 1947. From 1947 to 1970, the percentage of growth of population in Pakistan was 1.5. It was 3 per cent during Bhutto's period. The following table (5-II) highlights the growth of population in Pakistan.

**Table 5.II**  
**Population in Pakistan - 1972-1978**  
**(Population in million)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>
1971-72	63.34	1975-76	71.29
1972-73	65.24	1976-77	73.43
1973-74	67.20	1977-78	75.63
1974-75	69.21		

Source: Pakistan Economic Survey in Agricultural Statistics, 1979, Islamabad, Pakistan, p. 147.

The up-growing rural population and a limited land base, reduced the average size of owned holdings. The average growth of population (3 per cent) was the same among large and small holders in Pakistan. As a result, the wealthier families having more surviving members, were in need of more land for their maintenance in terms of fooding, clothing, luxury etc. The large

holders of land in Pakistan also wanted to maintain the per capita income as before. In the process, they (the large owners) were in need of more land.

On the contrary, the small farmers being debt stricken sold off their land to the large owners who are supposed to be the moneylenders. Further, on the advent of HYV technology, the large owners intensified their cultivation by using technological equipments such as tractors, tubewells etc. Introduction of new varieties of seeds and pesticides accelerated the growth of agricultural development.<sup>14</sup> For such extensive cultivation, landlords were in need of manual labourers. And the need of manual labourers, opened up frequent wage opportunities in Pakistan.

Pakistan also suffered from oversupply of labour in relation to available land. Number of growing labourers was seen in the 1970s. With the three per cent growth rate and lack of sufficient land reduced the per capita availability of land. Most of the labourers preferred to migrate to foreign countries, especially to Saudi Arab and Middle East. This has been discussed in Chapter 4. In such an opportunistic climate in terms of availability of adequate manual employment, small land owners (peasants)

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<sup>14</sup> Discussed earlier, under Technological head of the present chapter.

thought better to work as daily wage earners. Malthusian<sup>15</sup> Theory of Population, better suits the imbalance between the large and small farmers in Pakistan. This theory postulates a balancing view of population growth in geometrical progression<sup>16</sup> in a specified period. At the same time, agricultural production achieves, states Malthus, the same growth in an arithmetical progression.<sup>17</sup> Malthus concedes that if the average rate of population increase is the same among large and small landholders, families with large holdings will be better off than others. It is because wealthier families with larger holdings would have more surviving sons due to growth of population. That's why they (the large families) will need more land. As a result, the larger families in order to sustain themselves would buy more land from the small farmers. The small farmers, on the other hand, would sell land due to their debt stricken situation. Thus, there will be land concentration.

To sum up, land concentration in Pakistan was ongoing and rampant. The problem of land concentration was rampant more in Sindh and Punjab than NWFP and Baluchistan. Sindh and Punjab

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) is an English economist. He belongs to the classical school and was the first to direct attention to the danger of overpopulation in the modern world.

<sup>16</sup> Geometrical progression refers to the growth of population in terms of expansion of area. More population will require more area.

<sup>17</sup> Arithmetic progression connotes development in terms of quantity. That is to say more production in terms of numerical quantity each year.

at the time of partition inherited a *Zamindari* system whereas NWFP and Baluchistan had tribal system (Chapter Two). That's why, Sindh and Punjab suffered more the problem of land concentration than the latter in terms of duration and continuity of the land problem. Pakistan since its partition (1947), has been suffering from such land problem till present day. It is evident that after Bhutto, Zia-ul-Haq, Banazir and Nawaz Sharif made attempts in the agrarian field. Despite all these attempts, agrarian inequity still prevails in Pakistan.

Politicians of Pakistan used land related issues as 'political weapon' to canvass for votes. The politicians made highlights to eradicate such land problem through their electoral meetings, campaign etc. And as such they moulded the voters (peasants) to cast vote in their favour, so that they (the politicians) could enter into both national and provincial politics. Bhutto was no exception to it. His (Bhutto's) rhetoric of 'land to the tiller' at the time of electoral campaign was not 'up to mark', because the task of land reforms remained unfulfilled.

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## **APPENDIX - I**

### **LAND REFORMS ACTS IN PAKISTAN**

#### **MLR-64 (1959)**

Martial Law Regulation or MLR-64 pertains to Ayub Khan. It was introduced in 1959. It relates to land Reforms in Pakistan

#### **MLR-115 (1972)**

Martial Law Regulation or MLR-115 pertains to Bhutto. It was introduced in 1972. It also relates to land Reforms in Pakistan.

#### **ACT OF-77 (1977)**

Act of 1977 was introduced by Bhutto. It is the second set of reforms under Bhutto.

#### **MLR-117 (1977)**

Martial Law Regulation or MLR-117 pertains to Zia-ul-Haq. It was introduced in 1977. It relates to land Reforms in Pakistan, but was only confined to Baluchistan. The benefit of these reforms went to 17,349 people only.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **1. Essential features of the Land Reform Regulations of 1959**

#### **(i) Maximum size of landholdings:**

The ceiling is placed at 500 irrigated or 1000 unirrigated acres, but additional land is allowed so that the holding will amount to the equivalent of 36,000 Produce Index Units (PIU).

#### **Exception:**

- a. Larger farms belonging to some institutions are allowed.
- b. An orchard area of up to 150 acres above the ceiling is allowed if it is in blocks of at least 10 acres and has been orchard since the winter of 1956-1957.
- c. Land-above the ceiling may be transferred to heirs up to a total of 18,000 PIUs, including such transfers made since August 1947.
- d. Land above the ceiling may be transferred to the owner's female dependents, who are entitled to a share of the ancestral property up to a maximum of 6,000 PIUs each.

Landowners may select the area they wish to retain; they will be compensated for land taken from them in bonds at a sliding scale - a higher price for the first 18,000 PIUs and less for subsequent PIUs, if any.

**(ii) Prevention of excessive subdivision of holdings:**

Landholdings may not be divided into holdings of a size less than that of a "subsistence holding", nor less than that of a larger "economic holding" if the holding is now above the size of the latter. Landholdings already smaller than a "subsistence holding" may not be further subdivided.

- a. A "subsistence holding" is defined as one of 16 acres in the former Sind and 12.5 acres in the former Punjab.
- b. An "economic holding" is defined as one of 64 acres in Sind and 50 acres in Punjab.

**(iii) Other regulations:**

- a. Jagirs shall be abolished without payment of any compensation. A few institutions holding jagirs are excepted.
- b. Tenants already considered occupancy tenants (having considerable security through specified rights, mainly in the Punjab) shall become owners.
- c. Other tenants are guaranteed greater security. Rules are established spelling out the only allowable reasons for evictions.
- d. Landlords are prohibited from requiring free labour or from levying taxes in excess of the rent.
- e. The land in excess of the stipulated ceiling is to be compulsorily acquired by the State and sold to cultivating tenants. This can be purchased by the latter in installments recoverable over a period of twenty-five years.
- f. Consolidation of fragmented holdings is to be encouraged.

- g. Owners of land not cultivated for two years will be given notice to do so or become subject to the loss of such land.
- h. Institutions from which new owners may receive help in the form of credit, improved seed, fertilizers, and implements are to be strengthened.

**Source:** Saghir Ahmad, Class and Power in a Punjabi Village (New York, 1977).

## **APPENDIX III**

### **II Essential features of the Land Reform Regulations of 1972:**

#### **(1) Maximum size of landholdings :**

The ceiling is placed at 150 acres of irrigated or 300 acres of unirrigated land, but additional land is allowed so that the holding will amount to the equivalent of 12,000 Produce Index Units (PIU).

#### **Exception:**

- a. Owners of tubewells or tractors are eligible to retain an additional 20 per cent of the ceiling limit or 2,000 PIUs.
- b. Land above the ceiling may be transferred to heirs or gifted, provided such transfers have been made between 1 March, 1967 and 20 December, 1971.

#### **(ii) Other regulations:**

- a. Landowners may select the area they wish to retain. However, they will not be paid any compensation.
- b. All excess land above the ceiling will be confiscated by the State and distributed free of cost to tenants and landless.
- c. All tenants who have still to pay instalments towards land acquired as a result of the 1959 land reform regulations, shall be exempted from paying the balance.
- d. All land in excess of 100 acres belonging to civil servants, shall be confiscated. No compensation shall be paid.

- e. All land acquired, except through inheritance, by military officers in the defence belt of the border area, is to be cancelled.
- f. Security of tenure is provided to tenants. They shall not be evicted unless they have failed to pay the rent, misused the land or sub-let it.
- g. The landowner has to pay all taxes, water rates and cost of seeds, while expenses for fertilizers and pesticides shall be shared. Extra levies and "begar" or free services from the tenant are not allowed.
- h. A system of cooperative farming on a voluntary basis, is envisaged. In this system, irrigation water and agricultural machinery are to be provided by a cooperative. Such facilities shall also be available to tenants and owner-cultivators.
- i. "Agrovilles" linking the rural areas are to be developed. Hereby, facilities like a library, school and hospital are to be provided. These "agrovilles" shall also serve as a market place for agricultural produce.
- j. Consolidation of fragmented holdings is to be encouraged.

**Source :** Compiled by the author.

## APPENDIX B - IV

### **III. Essential features of the Land Reform Regulations of 1977 (including the Financial Supplement):**

#### **(i) Maximum size of holdings :**

The ceiling is placed at 100 acres of irrigated or 200 acres of unirrigated land, but additional land if allowed so that the holding will amount to the equivalent of 8,000 Produce Index Units (PIU).

#### **Exception:**

- a. Land above the ceiling may be transferred to heirs or gifted, provided such transfers have been made before December, 1976.
- b. Landowners may select the area they wish to retain. All excess land above the ceiling shall be confiscated by the State for distribution to tenants and landless. Compensation shall be paid at the rate of Rs'30 per acre in bonds redeemable after 10 years, with interest one per cent above the bank rate.

#### **(ii) Other Regulations:**

- a. The prevalent system of land revenue is to be abolished and an agricultural income-tax is introduced in its place.
- b. All those in possession of 25 acres of irrigated or 50 acres of unirrigated land, and those possessing less than this, shall be exempted from paying the agricultural income-tax, including all other cesses. Only "abiana" shall be required to be paid as service charges.

- c. Existing revenue rates are to be increased by 50 per cent in the case of those owning 25 acres or 50 acres. In the case of persons owning more than 50 acres of irrigated or 100 acres of unirrigated land, the rate shall be increased by 100 per cent.
- d. Investments in machinery, inputs and tubewells and the expenses involved therein, are to be deducted against profits of the year in which these are used for the first time.
- e. The maximum taxable rate for the highest slab of income to an individual, is decreased from 60 per cent to 50 per cent . Also, super-tax in respect of companies other than banking, is reduced by 10 per cent of the current rate.
- f. Land not granted to tenants in cultivating possession, is to be granted to other tenants or persons owning less than twelve acres.
- g. Security of tenure of tenure is provided to tenants. They shall not be evicted unless, they failed to pay the rent, misused or sub-let the land.

**Source:** compiled by the author.

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