
UNIT 3 LAND REFORMS DURING 1947-70

Structure

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be in a position to:

- explain the need for agrarian reforms;
- explain the land reform measures undertaken during 1950s and 1960s; and
- assess the impact of reforms in changing the unequal and exploitative agrarian structure.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous two Units we discussed the agrarian structure prevalent before Independence, particularly during the Mughal and British periods. The main characteristics of the agrarian structure which independent India inherited were

- a) absentee land ownership;
- b) exploitation of tenants through high rents and insecurity of tenure;
- c) unequal distribution of land;
- d) tiny and fragmented holdings; and
- e) lack of adequate institutional finance to agriculture.

On this agrarian structure was imposed a situation in which bulk of the cultivators were short of *fixed* as well as *working capital*. This resulted in low investments and thereby low yields in agriculture.

Agrarian structure, as you know, is a broad concept comprising land tenure system as well as credit, marketing, etc. Thus agrarian reforms would imply corrective measures in land tenure system, credit and marketing. On the other hand, the concept 'land reforms' is somewhat narrower than the above and relates to the corrective

measures in prevalent land tenure system. Credit and marketing are quite important for agricultural development. However, we will take up these two issues later in Block 5. In this Unit, and the next one, we will consider the land reforms measures undertaken after Independence. In the present Unit we will discuss the measures taken during 1947-70 while the reforms measures after 1970 will be taken up in Unit 4.

3.2 NEED FOR LAND REFORMS

As we noticed above, land ownership was highly unequal at the time of Independence. There was a parasitic class of intermediaries who played no role in production. On the other hand, the vast majority of actual cultivators were either tenants or sub-tenants, without any security of tenure. According to the National Commission on Agriculture (1976), this was the root cause of the state of chronic crisis in which Indian agricultural economy was enmeshed before the attainment of Independence.

Before Independence, there were three major systems of land tenure, namely Zamindari System, Mahalwari System and Ryotwari System. The Zamindari system was introduced by Lord Cornwallis in 1793 through permanent settlement that fixed the land rights of zamindars in perpetuity without any provision for fixed rents or occupancy rights for actual cultivators. Under the permanent settlement, zamindars were found to be more interested in higher rent than in agricultural improvement. During the early nineteenth century, efforts were made to undo the adverse effects of permanent settlement and to provide for temporary settlement as a matter of policy. Regulation VII of 1822 Act provided for temporary settlement with provision for periodic settlement in parts of the United Provinces. In the provinces of Madras and Bombay, ryotwari system was prevalent. Each ryot was recognised by law as the proprietor with the right to transfer or mortgage or sub-let his land. Moreover, in parts of United Provinces and Punjab, Regulation VII of 1822 Act and Regulation IX of 1833 Act provided for Mahalwari Settlement with the entire village community. This required each peasant of the village to contribute to total revenue demand of the village on the basis of the size of holding. In 1885, the Bengal Tenancy Act was passed with a view to conferring occupancy rights upon ryots who were in continuous possession of land for 12 years. The tenant could not be evicted by the landlord, except by a decree of court. Similarly, the Bihar Tenancy Act of 1885 and Orissa Tenancy Act of 1914 granted occupancy rights to tenants. Besides, the Madras Tenancy Act of 1908 provided for protection of ryots from eviction as long as they paid the rents. Nevertheless, since majority of actual cultivators were unrecorded *tenants-at-will*, these legal measures could not bring much relief to the tiller of the soil.

Although the adverse effect of landlordism on agricultural production was most profound in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa, other states that were under Ryotwari and Mahalwari Systems also witnessed the growth of a large number of intermediaries with all its adverse impact. The leased-in area constituted nearly 35 per cent of the total operated area in 1950-51. Most of the leases were unwritten and tenants did not have legal security of tenure. The rents varied from 50 per cent to 70 per cent of gross produce. In addition, tenants were often asked to provide free labour to landlords. After Independence therefore, it became necessary to undertake some land reforms measures for removing the feudal character of the agrarian economy and paving the way for rapid agricultural growth with social justice.

Broadly speaking, the objectives of agrarian reforms are as follows:

- i) To change the unequal and unproductive agrarian structure;
- ii) To remove exploitative agrarian relations, often known as patron-client relationship in agriculture,
- iii) To promote agriculture growth with social justice.

Check Your Progress 1

1) How do you define agrarian reforms?

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2) What were the main objectives of land reforms in India?

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3) Why was it necessary to change the pre-independence agrarian structure?

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3.3 LAND REFORMS MEASURES

After Independence, the Indian National Congress appointed the Agrarian Reforms Committee under the Chairmanship of J.C. Kumarappa, for making an in-depth study of the agrarian relations prevailing in the country. The committee submitted its report in 1949 which had a considerable impact on the evolution of agrarian reforms policy in the post-independence period. The committee recommended that all intermediaries between the state and the tiller should be eliminated and the land must belong to the tiller subject to certain conditions.

Let us now examine the various agrarian reform measures undertaken after independence. As already mentioned, the term ‘land reforms’ refers to reforms undertaken in the land tenure system. The steps include (i) abolition of intermediaries, (ii) fixation of ceilings on land holdings and (iii) redistribution of surplus land among landless or semi-landless peasants. Besides, any special measures adopted to prevent alienation of tribal land and consolidate fragmented holdings come within the broad definition of agrarian reforms.

3.3.1 Abolition of Intermediaries

Following the recommendation of Kumarappa Committee, all the states in India enacted legislation for the abolition of intermediary tenures in the 1950s, although the nature and effects of such legislation varied from state to state. In West Bengal and Jammu & Kashmir, legislation for abolishing intermediary tenures was accompanied by simultaneous imposition of ceilings on land holdings. In other states, intermediaries were allowed to retain possession of lands under their personal cultivation without limit being set, as the ceiling laws were passed only in the 1960s. As a result, there was enough time left for the intermediaries to make legal or illegal transfers of land. Besides, in some states, the law applied only to tenant interests like *sairati mahals* etc. and not to agricultural holdings. Therefore, many large intermediaries continued to exist even after formal abolition of zamindari. Nevertheless, it has been estimated that consequent upon the legal abolition of intermediaries between 1950 and 1960, nearly 20 million cultivators in the country were brought into direct contact with the Government.

3.3.2 Tenancy Reforms

The Agrarian Reforms Committee recommended against any system of cultivation by tenants and maintained that leasing of land should be prohibited except in the case of widows, minors and disabled persons. This viewpoint received further strength subsequently in various Five Year Plans. According to the Second Five Year Plan, abolition of intermediary tenures and bringing the tenants into direct relations with the state would give the tiller of the soil his rightful place in the agrarian system and provide him with full incentives for increasing agricultural production.

Immediately after Independence, although the major emphasis was on the abolition of intermediaries, certain amendments to the existing tenancy laws were made with a view to providing security to the tenants of ex-intermediaries. But these legal measures provoked the landlords to secure mass eviction of tenants, sub-tenants and share-croppers through various legal and extra-legal devices. The highly defective land records, the prevalence of oral leases, absence of rent receipts, non-recognition in law of share-croppers as tenants and various punitive provisions of the tenancy laws were utilized by the landlords to secure eviction of all types of tenants. To counteract such a tendency, therefore, it became necessary on the part of the State Governments to enact or amend the laws in the subsequent years and provide for adequate safeguards against illegal eviction and ensure security of tenure for the tenants-at-will.

Broadly speaking, tenancy reforms undertaken by various states followed four distinct patterns. First, the tenancy laws of several states including Andhra Pradesh (Telengana region), Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh banned leasing out of agricultural land except by certain disabled categories of landowners, so as to vest the ownership of land with the actual tillers. But concealed tenancy continued to exist in all these states.

Second, the state of Kerala banned agricultural tenancy altogether without having any exception. Third, States like Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat and Haryana did not ban tenancy as such. But tenants after continuous possession of land for certain specified years, acquired the right of purchase of the land they cultivated. However, in all these states, leasing out by both large and small farmers continued. In fact, a tendency towards reverse tenancy in which large farmers leased-in land from marginal farmers was set in since the advent of green revolution in the mid-sixties.

Fourth, states like West Bengal, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Andhra area of Andhra Pradesh did not ban leasing-out of agricultural land. But share-croppers were not recognised as tenants. The State of West Bengal recognised share-croppers as tenants only with effect from 1979, with the launching of 'Operation Barga'.

Almost all State Governments provided for the regulation of rent, excepting Kerala where leasing out was completely prohibited. The regulated or fair rent ranged between 1/4th to 1/6th of the produce. But actual rent remained always higher than the regulated or fair rent. In many places where small and marginal farmers leased-in land from large or absentee landowners, the situation continued to be exploitative, thereby discouraging the actual tillers to cultivate the land efficiently.

3.3.3 Ceilings on Land Holding

The term ‘ceiling on land holdings’ refers to the legally stipulated maximum size beyond which no individual farmer or farm household can hold any land. Like all other land reforms measures, the objective of such ceiling is to promote economic growth with social justice. It has been duly recognised by India’s planners and policy makers that beyond a point any large scale farming in Indian situation becomes not only uneconomic, but also unjust. Small farms tend to increase economic efficiency of resource use and improve social equity through employment creation and more equitable income distribution. According to C.H. Hunumantha Rao, small farms offer more opportunities for employment compared to large farms. Hence, even if large farms produce relatively more output per unit of area, they cannot be considered more efficient in a situation of widespread unemployment and under-employment prevalent in this country.

Table 3.1
Ceilings on landholdings as imposed during 1960-1970

State	Level of ceiling (hectare)
Andhra Pradesh	10.93 to 131.13
Assam	20.23
Bihar	9.71 to 29.14
Gujarat	4.05 to 53.14
Haryana	12.14 to 24.38
Jammu and Kashmir	9.21
Kerala	6.07 to 15.18
Madhya Pradesh	10.12
Orissa	8.09 to 32.37
Punjab	12.14 to 24.28
Rajasthan	8.90 to 135.97
Tamil Nadu	12.14 to 48.56
Uttar Pradesh	16.19 to 32.37
West Bengal	10.12

In 1959, Indian National Congress (Nagpur Resolution) resolved that agrarian legislation to cover restrictions on the size of land holdings must be implemented in all states by the end of 1959. Accordingly, all the State Governments excepting north-eastern region imposed ceilings on land holdings in the 1960s. The states of West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir had already imposed ceilings on land holdings along with the laws for abolition of intermediaries in the early 1950s. However, the Nagpur Resolution of 1959 had significant impact as various State Governments immediately took to the ratification of ceiling legislation. The Gujarat Agricultural Land Ceiling Act, 1960; The Madhya Pradesh Ceiling on Agricultural Holdings Act, 1960; The Orissa Land Reforms Act, 1969, The Uttar Pradesh Imposition of Ceilings on Land Holdings Act, 1960; The Bihar Land Reforms (Fixation of Ceiling Area and Acquisition of Surplus

Land Act, 1961; The Karnataka Land Reforms Act 1961; The Maharashtra Agricultural Lands (Ceiling on Holdings) Act, 1960; The Tamil Nadu Land Reforms (Fixation of Ceiling Land) Act, 1961 and The Kerala Land Reforms Act, 1963 were some of the results of the Nagpur Resolution on Land Reform. However, as the ceiling laws were not ratified simultaneously with abolition of zamindari, except in West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir as stated before, several nami and benami transfer of land took place. This reduced the potential ceiling surplus land that could be available for redistribution. Besides, several states including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Orissa, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal followed individuals as the unit of application for ceiling, while family as the unit of application was adopted in Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. We present the ceiling limits fixed by various states in Table 3.1.

It may be seen from Table 3.1 that ceilings were quite high in several states. In addition, the following categories of land were exempted from the ceiling laws:

- 1) Land under Tea, Coffee, Rubber, Coco and Cardamum Plantations
- 2) Land used for cultivation of Palm, Kesra, Bela, Chameli or rose when such land holders have no land for any other cultivation (U.P.)
- 3) Sugarcane Farms
- 4) Co-operative Gardens, Colonies
- 5) Tank Fisheries
- 6) Area under orchard up to 4 hectares (Punjab and Haryana)
- 7) Land held by co-operative farming and other co-operative societies, including land mortgage bank
- 8) Land held by religious, charitable and educational institutions
- 9) Land awarded for gallantry
- 10) Land held by sugarcane factories
- 11) Land held by state or Central Government
- 12) Land held by a public sector or industrial or commercial undertaking
- 13) Land vested in Gram Sabha, Bhoodan or Gramdan Committee
- 14) Land situated in any area which is specified as being reserved for non-agricultural or industrial development under the relevant tenancy law (Gujarat)
- 15) Specified farms engaged in cattle breeding, dairying or wool raising
- 16) Several categories of other land including those held by public sector or commercial undertakings, research farms, etc. or even private forests.

These exemptions as provided in the ceiling laws gave rise to problems of law evasion by manipulating the classification of land. Also the size of the ceiling surplus land available for redistribution was consequently reduced.

3.3.4 Bhoodan and Gramdan

The Bhoodan movement was launched in 1951, immediately after the peasant uprising in Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh, and after some years, another movement known as Gramdan came into being in 1957. The objective was to persuade landowners and leaseholders in each concerned village to renounce their land rights, after which all the lands would become the property of a village association for the egalitarian redistribution and for purpose of joint cultivation. Vinoba Bhave hoped to eliminate private ownership of land through Bhoodan and Gramdan and maintained that the

movement would go a long way to ensure the just redistribution of land, the consolidation of holding and their joint cultivation.

However, the movement failed to achieve its targetted objectives and the degree of success in respect of both land acquisition and land distribution was very limited.

Of the total land of about 42.6 lakh acres, received through Bhoodan, more than 17.3 lakh acres were rejected as they were found unfit for cultivation. About 11.9 lakh acres were distributed and 13.4 lakh acres remained to be distributed. In most cases, the village landlords donated only those pieces of land which were either unfit for cultivation or were in dispute with tenants or government. In fact, the landlords preferred to part away with their disputed lands as a compromise formula for there was little hope under the existing law, of being able to keep this land with them. Besides, in return for such land donation, the landlords also received input subsidies and other facilities, which was no less an inducement to part away with the land unfit for cultivation. Furthermore, while it was provided under the Gramdan movement that private ownership in land is to cease, only the landholders right to sell land was restricted (though not banned), leaving intact the right of inheritance on such lands by the children.

3.3.5 Protection of Tribal Land

All the concerned states ratified laws for prevention of alienation of the tribals from land. In all the scheduled areas, land transfer from tribal to non-tribal population was prohibited by law. But due to various legal loopholes and administrative lapses, alienation of the tribals from their land continued on a large scale. In fact, mortgaging of land to moneylenders due to indebtedness, poverty and acquisition of tribal land for irrigation, dams and other public purposes were largely responsible for alienation of tribal land. Since land is the main source of livelihood for the tribal people and they do not have much upward mobility, indiscriminate acquisition of tribal land for public purposes should be avoided.

3.3.6 Consolidation of Holdings

The term 'Consolidation of holdings' refers to amalgamation and redistribution of the fragmented land with a view to bringing together all plots of land of a cultivator in one compact block. Due to growing pressure of population on land and the limited opportunities for work in the non-agricultural sector, there is an increasing trend towards sub-division and fragmentation of land holdings. This makes the task of irrigation management, land improvement and personal supervision of different plots very difficult.

After independence, almost all states excepting Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura and parts of Andhra Pradesh enacted laws for consolidation of holdings. But the nature of legislation and the degree of success achieved varied widely. While in Punjab (including Haryana) it was made compulsory, in other states law provided for consolidation on voluntary basis, if majority of the land owners agreed.

Generally speaking, the consolidation acts provided for (i) prohibition of fragmentation below standard area, (ii) fixation of minimum standard area for regulating transfers, (iii) schemes of Consolidation by exchange of holdings, (iv) reservation of land for common areas, (v) procedure for payment of compensation to persons allotted holdings of less market value in exchange, (vi) administrative machinery for carrying consolidation schemes, and (viii) filing of objections, appeals and penalties.

However, due to lack of adequate political and administrative support, the progress made in terms of consolidation of holding was not very satisfactory, excepting in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh where the task of consolidation was

accomplished. But in these states, there is a need for reconsolidation again due to subsequent fragmentation of holdings under the population pressure.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) What was the impact of abolition of zamindari in the 1950s?
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- 2) What do you mean by ceiling on land holdings? What was its objective? To what extent, the objective of ceiling on holdings was achieved? What led to its failure?
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- 3) Why did the scheme of consolidation of holdings fail?
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3.4 CHOICE OF APPROPRIATE FORM OF FARM ORGANISATION

After Independence there was also a debate on the choice of farm organisation. The Kumarappa Committee (1949) expressed the view that *peasant farming* would be the most suitable form of cultivation although small farmers should be pooled under a scheme of cooperative or joint farming. Besides, collective farming and state farming was for the development of reclaimed wasteland where landless agricultural workers could be settled. According to the First Five Year Plan, the formation of co-operative farming associations by small holders would ensure efficient cultivation. The Second Five Year Plan asserted that a step should be taken for the development of co-operative farming, so that a substantial proportion of land is cultivated on co-operative lines. The Third Five Year Plan agreed to this proposal, but maintained that with the implementation of the programme of land reforms, the majority of cultivators in India would consist of peasant proprietorship. They should be encouraged and assisted in organizing themselves on voluntary basis for credit, marketing, processing, distribution and also for production.

3.5 CHANGES IN AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

After Independence, a number of land reform measures were undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s which were quite revolutionary in nature and impact. As a result of abolition of zamindari, the feudal mode of production came to an end. Also the proportion of area under tenancy declined.

However, tenancy reforms failed to yield much positive impact, as a large number of tenants-at-will were evicted from land. Also the benefits of consolidation of holdings remained confined to Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh.

Thus, the first phase of post-independence land reforms in the 1950s and 1960s yielded a mixed result. It could be termed successful in the sense that all intermediaries were abolished which provided the basis for improvement in agricultural productivity. Nevertheless, the unequal agrarian structure remained in place. In 1953-54 nearly 8 per cent of the ownership holdings accounted for about 51 per cent of the total area, while in 1971, about 10 per cent of the holdings accounted for 54 per cent of the total land. While at the all India level, the Gini coefficient of concentration ratio marginally declined during the 1960s, in several states including Bihar, Punjab and Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, it increased. In other words, there was an increasing tendency towards unequal power structure in terms of land ownership (Table 3.2). Although the average size of holdings declined from 2.39 hectares in 1953-54 to 2.21 hectares in 1971, in several states, the average size of large farms increased.

Table 3.2
Concentration Ratio of Ownership Holdings by State

State	1961	1971
Andhra Pradesh	0.764	0.732
Bihar	0.701	0.712
Gujarat	0.683	0.683
Kerala	0.756	0.702
Madhya Pradesh	0.632	0.621
Maharashtra	0.707	0.682
Karnataka	0.663	0.663
Orissa	0.684	0.645
Punjab and Haryana	0.749	0.776
Rajasthan	0.654	0.607
Tamil Nadu	0.749	0.751
Uttar Pradesh	0.621	0.631
West Bengal	0.666	0.672
All India	0.720	0.710

Source: T. Haque and A.S. Sirohi (1986).

3.6 PATTERN OF LANDHOLDINGS

The earliest comprehensive picture of the distribution of total owned area by size classes of ownership holdings has been presented by the National Sample Survey (8th Round) pertaining to the year 1953-54.

In a discussion of the pattern of landholdings we include here the size distributions of ownership holdings as well as of cultivation or operational holdings (farms). By ownership holding is meant the area owned by a single household. And by cultivation or operational holding is meant the area cultivated or operated by a single household. (Operational Holding = Ownership Holding — Land Leased out + Land Leased in) Ownership holdings as well as cultivation holdings may be held either as a single plot of land or as several plots scattered at different places. When a holding is held in several scattered plots, it is called a 'fragmented holding' and the process creating such holdings is termed 'fragmentation'. An attempt also has been made here to give a picture of the extent of fragmentation in the agricultural holdings in India.

Our purpose is to focus attention on the distribution of holdings in the Indian agricultural sector at one or more points of time between 1947-48 and 1961-62, for such a distribution is not only an important aspect of the structure of Indian agricultural economy but may also explain the structure of other inputs, in so far as the use of other inputs is itself influenced by the pattern of landholdings.

3.6.1 Pattern of Ownership Holdings

Concentrating now on the pattern of ownership holdings, it may be noticed that nearly 310 million acres of land were estimated to be owned by rural households in 1953-54. This was nearly 38.4 per cent of the total geographical area and 61 per cent of the topographically usable land. A certain proportion of land in the rural areas, no doubt, was owned by urban households. The owned area of 310 million acres was held by 66 million households.

The average size of ownership holdings in the rural areas was thus only 4.72 acres. But when we look at the size-distribution of holdings, the situation is found to be far worse.

Nearly 22 per cent of the households in the rural areas did not hold any land. These households would be largely of agricultural labourers who did not own any land, and particularly of cultivating small tenants. The next 24.9 per cent of the households together held only 1.4 per cent of the land and each of these held an area less than 1 acre in size. Thus, nearly 47 per cent of the households either held no land or held land of area less than one acre. At the other extreme, less than 1 per cent of the households owned among themselves nearly 16 per cent of the owned area, and the size of each of these holdings was 50 acres and above. If we add the immediate lower groups also, then nearly 3.4 per cent of the households held among themselves 34 per cent of the total area. In the lowest size group (0.01 to 0.99 acres) the average size per holding was only about 0.26 acre, while in the size-group over 50 acres the average was about 87.4 acres. It indicates that the disparity in ownership of landholdings was very high.

The disparity in the distribution of ownership holdings seems to have been the highest in South India, where the concentration ratio was 0.74 and the lowest in North India and West India, where the concentration ratios were 0.64. The average size of holding was the lowest in South India (about 3.42 acres), while it was the highest in Central India (about 8.29 acres).

How far does such extreme inequality in the distribution of ownership holdings affect the agricultural economy is a question that naturally follows. It may be pointed out

that, the efficiency of cultivation which depends on appropriate combination of other factors of production with land could, at least in theory, be free from the pattern of ownership.

3.6.2 Pattern of Operational Holdings

The concept more appropriate to efficiency of agricultural operation is the concept of “operational” or “cultivation” holding. This will be considered in this section. Theoretically, even with a very adverse distribution of ownership, through a process of leasing in and leasing out, it is possible to have a pattern of operational holdings, less inconsistent with the dictates of efficient technology, or with the requirements of the laws of returns, or of returns to scale. As a matter of fact, if there was a very little of leasing out of land by large owners and very little leasing in by small owners, the pattern of operational holdings would look much the same as that of ownership; and if that were the pattern of operational holdings, there would be too many tiny farms (operational holdings) and some farms too large for efficient cultivation.

Table 3.3 shows that, although a small decline in concentration of land took place after land reform legislation, land distribution remained highly skewed. In 1953-54, the bottom 60 per cent of holdings operated 15.5 per cent of area while in 1960-61 the bottom 62 per cent of holdings operated 19 per cent of area. At the other end, in 1953-54 the top 5.8 per cent of holdings operated 36.6 per cent of area while in 1960-61 the top 4.5 per cent operated 29 per cent of area.

Table 3.3

Size Distribution of Operational Agricultural Holdings, 1953-54 and 1960-61

Size (acres)	1953-54		1960-61	
	Percentage of total holding	Percentage of area operated	Percentage of total holding	Percentage of area operated
Very small (up to 0.99)	19.7	1.1	17.1	1.3
Small (1.00-4.99)	40.3	14.4	44.6	17.9
Medium (15.00-24.99)	6.7	16.8	6.0	17.0
Large (25.00-49.99)	4.3	19.6	3.5	17.4
Very Large (50.00 & above)	1.5	17.0	1.0	11.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Which form of farm organisation was considered suitable for India after Independence?

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2) What do you mean by co-operative farming?

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3) What was the impact of agrarian reforms on agrarian structure?

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4) Distinguish between ownership holdings and operational holdings.

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5) State the reasons for the decline in leased-in area in 1961-62 over 1953-54.

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3.7 LET US SUM UP

Despite large efforts made in the direction of agrarian reforms in the 1950s and 1960s, the situation relating to the agrarian structure remained highly unsatisfactory. According to the Planning Commission's Task Force on Agrarian Relations, although the laws for the abolition of intermediary tenures were implemented fairly efficiently, the tenancy reforms and tenancy legislation fell short of proclaimed policy. Highly exploitative tenancy in the form of crop sharing still prevailed in large parts of the country. Such tenancy arrangements not only perpetuated the social and economic injustice, but also acted as a constraint to agricultural modernisation. Besides, in the wake of the green revolution, while the rich farmers' condition improved, those of the

agricultural labourers and the poor tenants remained more or less unchanged. In fact these failures led to land related conflicts including naxalite movement in several places.

3.8 KEY WORDS

- Bhoodan and Gramdan** : These refer to the land management launched by late shri Vinoba Bhave in 1951. This was to persuade land owners in each village to renounce their land rights after which all the lands would become the property of a village organisation for either equal redistribution or joint cultivation.
- Ceilings on Land Holdings** : It relates to the fixation of maximum limit beyond which nobody can hold any land.
- Consolidation of Holdings** : It refers to bringing together all plots of land of a cultivator in one compact block.
- Land to the Tiller** : It refers to the system of land tenure in which actual tillers or cultivators also have the ownership or occupancy right.
- Mahalwari System** : Relates to the system of land tenure in which land rights were settled with the entire village under Regulation IX of 1833 Act. This required each peasant of the village to contribute to total revenue demand of the village on the basis of the size of the land he cultivated. This was prevalent in Punjab and parts of United Provinces.
- Patron-Client Relationship** : It refers to exploitative agrarian relations in which landlords exploit the tenants or workers and yet there is so much dependence on landlords that the tenants or actual workers cannot sever the relationship.
- Ryotwari System** : It refers to the system of land tenure in which each ryot was recognised by law as the proprietor with the right to transfer or mortgage or sublet the land. This was provided under Regulation VII of 1822 Act mainly in the provinces of Bombay and Madras.
- Zamindari System** : Refers to the system of land tenure in which land rights of intermediaries were confirmed through permanent settlement in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis and continued subsequently even under temporary settlement scheme.

3.9 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Haque, T and A.S. Sirohi, 1986, *Agrarian Reforms and Institutional Changes in India*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.

National Commission on Agriculture, 1976, *Report on Agrarian Reforms. No. XV*, Government of India, New Delhi.

Planning Commission, 1973, *Task Force on Agrarian Relations*, Government of India.

3.10 ANSWERS/HINTS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See Sections 3.1 and 3.2 and Answer.
- 2) The objectives of land reforms are given at the end of Section 3.2.
- 3) Go through Section 3.2 and answer.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See Sub-section 3.3.1 and answer.
- 2) See Sub-section 3.3.3 and answer.
- 3) Go through Sub-section 3.3.6 for the reasons.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Peasant farming was considered to be most suitable for cultivation in India.
- 2) In this case small holdings of farmers are pooled together and cultivated jointly.
- 3) See Section 3.5 and answer.
- 4) The difference is given in the second paragraph of Section 3.6.
- 5) Go through Sub-section 3.6.2 and answer.