

LAND REFORMS AND AGRARIAN STRUCTURE IN MAHARASHTRA

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Economic transformation of Maharashtra is more known by its progress of industrialisation in sugar, textile and such other industries, than its performance in the agricultural sector. The present State of Maharashtra came into existence under the Bombay Reorganisation Act of 1960. The territories of Gujarat State were separated from the erstwhile Bombay State and the regions of Marathwada (out of Hyderabad State) and Vidarbha (from Central Provinces and Berar) were amalgamated to form the State of Maharashtra. Interestingly, these regions had differential development of agrarian structure prior to independence.¹ Moreover, the peasant movements, other social movements (Satya Shodhak Samaj etc) in Maharashtra had their impact on the emergence of the agrarian structure in each of these regions. Predominantly, Rayatwari system prevailed in ~~the~~^a large part of the State but the settlement pattern and agrarian relations in Vidarbha, Marathwada, Konkan and Khandesh regions were quite different. In Rayatwari system each field was separately assessed and cultivators were asked to pay the revenue directly to the treasury. In some parts of Vidarbha region Malgujari system was prevalent. Under this system a Malgujar was made responsible to collect revenue from the assigned villages and he was recognised as a proprietor of the land. It was thus, ~~that~~^{that} in the natural course, the Malgujars became landlords and emerged as significant intermediaries. In Marathwada, the intermediaries had different nomenclature as well as ~~the~~ process of emergence. Marathawada region had a mixed system and it ranged from Rayatwari to Jagirdari depending on the landlord - Nizam relationship. Large number of Inam lands were distributed among the relatives and officers of Nizam and others for providing services (called Mashrat-ul-Mash and Mashrat-ul-Khidmat) and land records were such that many times the second and subsequent transactions of the Inam lands were not even properly recorded due to number of claimants. Konkan (western coastal) area on the other hand had Khoti system or a system of double tenure. The settlement in Konkan region was done during Adilshahi (prior to 1579) and the Khot was made responsible to collect and pay the village revenue. In return the

Khot acquired the rights of leasing out land and collect^{ing} the revenue. Thus in this system also the Khots emerged as significant intermediaries and usurious landlords. These systems changed over the years substantially across the regions and districts.

Thus the emergence of agrarian structure in the present State of Maharashtra varied significantly across the regions. Large number of historical reasons were responsible for the present agrarian structure [Rogers (1892), Kumar (1968) and Fukazawa (1965)]. The State showed a distinctive feature with an array of land relations from usurious capitalist exploitative landlords to the peasant proprietorship. The present ^{paper} ~~paper~~ is an attempt to understand the agrarian changes that have taken place after independence in the State of Maharashtra on the background of the historical trends and the land reform measures. In the immediately following section we have taken up a discussion about the historical emergence of the agrarian structure in the State. The history of land reforms and some brief comments on these measure are taken up in the next section. The following section on agrarian structure of Maharashtra takes ~~an~~ account of changing land ownership pattern across the districts of the State. Here, we have tried to analyse the impact of the land reform measures on the structure of land holding in Maharashtra.

HISTORICAL EMERGENCE OF THE AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

Agrarian structure of any region is an outcome of the process of social change that takes place over time. Clear understanding of the agrarian structure and the emerging patterns of agrarian reconstruction are important both from the stand point of policy and also to understand the growth imperatives. In most of the analyses of this issue, attempts are made to interpret contemporary agrarian structure as an emerging transition from feudalism - semi-feudalism to capitalism. The attempts of the Colonial rulers to introduce the Zamindari system of British type and the peasant proprietorship (Rayatwari) based on French system together created a new class of non productive usurious landlords under both systems. The superimposition of these exogenous systems on the existing land use/ownership patterns created a more refractory agrarian structure (Thomer, 1962).

Maharashtra State has a unique distinction of having been formed out of four distinct provinces of British India. The then Bombay presidency included the present western coastal region and the western Maharashtra region consisting of Pune, Ahmednagar, Nashik, Satara,

Sangli, Kolhapur and Solapur district(Guha, 1985). Of these, the districts of Sangli, Satara and Kolhapur were earlier under the rule of Chhatrapati of Satara and were characterised by small size of holdings under Rayatwari (Perlin, 1978). The coastal districts of Konkan region also had relatively smaller average size of holdings both due to the terrain, climate and tenurial arrangements.

Konkan region had a historically well entrenched system of double tenure namely Khoti system. A village Khot was contracted by AdilShahi dynasty (1489 to 1579) to collect land revenue from the cultivators and deposit it in the treasury. Thus the rights of management were vested with the designated Khot. The Khot in turn was allowed to sell or purchase such rights. But soon the system became hereditary and the right passed on from father to son. A village Khot(s) (some times even more than one) held land in ~~the~~^{his} own name called Khot Khasagi. Even within the span of four districts of Konkan region the system differed substantially i.e.,from Shilotri Maund (embankment to reclaim the costal land) payments in Thane, Izafatdars in north Konkan to Khoti proper in the remaining regions. One common feature emerged here that though the system differed across districts, the resultant was the creation of a land owning-absentee usurious landlord as a powerful intermediary . (Bhuskute 1996)

In Western Maharashtra, which came mainly under the Maratha Kingdom, the settlements were mainly from the decedents of Chhatrpati from Satara or Peshwas from Pune (Fukazawa 1965). The settlement pattern and Rayatwari revenue system established by Malik-Amber in some parts was emulated in the other regions also. In Rayatwari each field or holding was separately assessed and no holder was responsible for anything but his own land revenue payments. Sykes, who investigated the land tenurial systems in Deccan, writes that the lands under hereditary control in each village or thals came under the control of revenue collectors namely Patils (Sykes 1830). The collection system of revenue was administered by an array of officers appointed for specific purposes viz, Patils (Mali Patil and Police Patil), Deshmukhs (village head man or protectors of the village), Deshpandes (revenue collectors), Kulkarnis, (village accountants), Patwaris (village clerks) etc. Initially these officers were appointed by the ruler but the appointees soon assumed a hereditary status. Subsequently, these offices and the rights could be inherited or even sold (Guha, 1985). It took little time for these officers to establish themselves as landlords or intermediaries making use of the credit demand of the

Rayats (cultivators). In the events of crop failures or low productivity, the cultivator who was unable to pay the land revenue, mortgaged the land with either of the officers (Deshpande, Deshmukh, Kulkarni, Patil) at exorbitantly high rates of interest or with the Sowkar (money lender). These revenue officials lost no time or wit to usurp the land thus mortgaged, and we find that all these officers had large amount of land in the State thus ^bgrabbed under their control at the time of independence. It was observed that during 1869 to 1874 there was a considerable increase in the sales and mortgage of land in Poona and Ahmednagar districts (Guha, 1985). This was immediately after the drought of 1866-67 and during the following drought the process was repeated ^{giving} ~~this gave~~ rise to the infamous Deccan Riots, during 1875 (Government of Bombay, 1878). The post 1890 period was more favourable in arresting the land concentration trends in the Western Maharashtra districts. Possibly this was due to the strong social reformist movements during that phase (Brahme and Upadhyay, 1979).

Marathwada region consisting of seven south-eastern districts of Maharashtra was earlier under the Nizam's rule. The land settlement pattern in Marathwada was also established by Malik Amber, and land measurement surveys were taken up under Nizam's rule in the districts of Marathwada during 1930s and further extended to Vidarbha region. Nizam had benevolently distributed land to a large number of his confidants and these were known as Inams, Khalsa/Diwani, Jagirs or Sarf Khas lands. The land records were kept in precarious conditions both due to hereditary transfers in the face of number of claimants and Baraya Nam Pattedars². Jagirdars were also responsible for the land appropriation by operating the credit market. Thus inequality in ownership holding was much higher in Marathwada region as against ^{the} Konkan or Western Maharashtra region. Prior to reorganisation of the State, the Hyderabad State tenancy act of 1907, which recognised the tenancy of '12 years and above' as permanent tenants, ^{and} along with two earlier legislations of 1939 and 1944 were in vogue. The latter two legislations came more in response to the peasant uprising led by Prof. N.G. Ranga during 1930s but had little impact on the agrarian structure of Marathwada region.

Vidarbha was a part of Central Provinces and Berar at the time of State reorganisation. Though Vidarbha region was an integral part of the Central Provinces and Berar Region, a part of its revenue was honourably passed on to the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nizam was given a title as Prince of Berar by the Colonial Government. Historically, the development of agrarian

structure in Vidarbha seem to be more or less similar to that of Marathwada. Even though Rayatwari system was prevalent in some parts of the region, Malguzari was the major land tenurial system existing in this area. Both the systems jointly created a large class of landlords and thus a region with higher inequality in land holdings.

LAND REFORMS IN MAHARASHTRA:

It is well known that land reforms and agrarian changes in the State were taken up in two phases as has been in other States of the country. The first phase constituting the reform measures taken up during the period before 1965 and the second phase incorporates the reform measures in the early seventies. Similarly, as regards the policy instruments under land reforms these measures focused on prevention of fragmentation (consolidation of holding), abolition of intermediaries and tenancy reforms. This was followed by the ceiling on the size of land holding and the second phase of consolidation of fragments of lands. The third step involved redistribution of land to the landless. The first two reform measures (abolition of intermediaries and tenancy reforms) acted mainly on eliminating the basic causes of the systemic distortions which resulted in a disproportionately skewed and uneconomic land distribution. In a natural, sequence the ceiling on the size of holding and redistribution of land came as the next logical step. The initial emphasis was on structural reorganisation of the agricultural sector and to create economically viable units. The need for ^{land} reform in the sense of reform was recognised to create a conducive structure of production as evinced from the Statements made in the First Five Year Plan but subsequently resulted into were a 'programme' of land reforms (Dandekar, 1964)

Abolition of intermediaries began much earlier in the Bombay presidency as well as in the Central Province and Berar, and the Princely Hyderabad State. In the year 1907, the Nizam of Hyderabad brought into force the Malguzari and Land Revenue Act thereby recognising 'tenants over 12 years' as permanent tenants. Apart from this there were initiatives in the other parts of the State towards reducing the exploitation of the tenants/peasants by the intermediaries but their impact was not perceptible. A large number of these intermediaries were nurtured by the then British Government to create a class of supporters even at times honouring them with titles like Rao saheb or Rao Bahadur. Interestingly, in Maharashtra, even in the rayatwari region the intermediaries in the form of designated revenue officials emerged very strongly.

Deshmukhs, Deshpandes, Kulkarnis and Patils (and also a few others) effectively manouvered their official position as revenue officers to enmass property as well as land. As mentioned earlier the cultivators who were unable to pay land revenue were given advances by these officials at exorbitant rates of interest against the security of land and finally when the cultivator was unable to pay, the land was privately acquired by these officers. This group was quite large and did not fall directly under the elimination of intermediary act because they were unrecorded intermediaries. [Among the large number of enactments passed for the elimination of intermediaries in the State the following were significantly important.

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- i. The Bombay Taluqdari Tenure abolition act, 1949.
- ii. The Bombay Khoti Abolition Act, 1949.
- iii. The Bombay pargana and Kulkarni Watan Abolition Act, 1950.
- iv. The Bombay Watwa Vazifdari Rights Abolition Act, 1950.
- v. The Bombay Personal Inams Abolition Act, 1952.
- vi. The Bombay Merged Territories (Boroda Watan Abolition) Act, 1953.
- vii. The Bombay Merged Territories (Matadari Tenure Abolition) Act, 1953.
- viii. The Bombay Merged Territories (Baroda Mulgiras Tenure Abolition) Act, 1953.
- ix. The Bombay Merged Territories Avas (Jagir Abolition) Act, 1953.
- x. The Bombay Merged Territories (Janjira and Bhor) Khoti Tenure Abolition Act, 1953.
- xi. The Bombay Kauli Kutuban Tenure Abolition Act, 1953.
- xii. The Bombay Services Inams Abolition Act, 1953.
- xiii. The Bombay Bhil Naik Inams Abolition Act, 1955.
- xiv. The Bombay Merged Territories (Miscellaneous Alienations) Abolition Act, 1955.
- xv. The Bombay Inams (Kutch Area) Abolition Act, 1958.
- xvi. The Bombay Inferior Village Watan Abolition Act, 1958.
- xvii. The Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Land (Vidarbha Region) Act, 1958.
- xviii. The Maharashtra Agricultural Lands Act, 1961.

All these acts had effectively eliminated all the recorded intermediaries but interestingly the sheer numeracy of acts (eventhough we have enlisted only the significantly important acts) shows the multitudinal aspect of the existence of intermediaries in the State at the time of

reorganisation. Therefore the impact of the reform measures in Maharashtra is also of mixed type.

In pursuance of article 31(c), 39(b) and (c) of the Constitution of India, land as means of agricultural production was taken up for the purpose of exercising ceiling on the size of holding. The necessity for limiting the size of land holding came on the background of the recommendations of the Second Five Year Plan and also ^{was} based on the recommendations of the All India Congress Committee (1948), Maharashtra Land Ceiling Act No. XXVII of 1961 and amended up to 1975. ^{This act of 1961} states as an object of the act that ~~the~~ land which is in excess of ceiling limit is to be distributed for the full and efficient use for agriculture. Cultivated land defined under this law is the land which is under tillage or crop husbandry for the purpose of raising or improving agricultural produce. Thus 'Pot Kharab' (waste) lands were excluded from the total land holdings. The lands exempted from the provision of the land ceiling act were: (i) land held by Government, (ii) land held by Corporations, (iii) land belonging to local authority or a University or Agricultural College or school or any institution doing research in agriculture, (iv) land held by regimental farms, (v) lands leased by Land Development Bank or the Central Co-operative Bank before 4th August 1959, (vi) lands held by a bank or a co-operative society as a security for recovery and (vii) land held by bonafide industrial undertaking, public trust. The State Government was empowered to constitute (i) Surplus Lands Determination Tribunal and (ii) Land Distribution Tribunals under the act. Tahsildar or the officers above the rank of Tahsildar was appointed as the Chairman of the Tribunal. The Collector was authorised to notify, in the prescribed form, in the Official Gazette the area delimited as surplus land. The State Government was to pay compensation for any land acquired as surplus at the price specified by the State Government. The State government was also directed to look into the claims of compensation submitted by the involved person. The surplus land thus acquired was distributed according to the procedure laid down in the law. ~~Thus~~ ^Under the first schedule ceiling limits were given in the table.

The above ceiling limits were applicable to a family or a person as the case may be. The family unit was defined as a person, his wife/wives, minor sons and daughters. It was provided that if the number of persons in any family exceeds five then in that case for each excess person the family was entitled to hold excess land equivalent to one-fifth of the ceiling

area but in no case the land held will be in excess or double the ceiling area. Any person of family holding land in excess of the ceiling limit before the date of commencement (October 2, 1975) but after September 26, 1970, was required to file ^areturn in the prescribed form and surrender the ^vexcess land at the compensation price (Rs. 80 per acre !)³ decided by the Collector. The landlord however, had the choice in deciding about which land should be surrendered. Out of the surplus land thus acquired the Collector was authorised to distribute 50 per cent land to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the remaining to the persons according to the priority list given in the law.

Sr. No.	Category of land	Ceiling Limit
1.	Land with an assured supply of water for irrigation and capable of yielding at least two crops	18 acres (7.28 hectare)
2.	Land which has an assured supply of water for only one crop in a year.	27 acres (10.93 hectares)
3.	Land irrigated seasonally by flow irrigation from any source constructed or maintained by the State Government or by any Zilla Parishad or from any other natural source of water with unassured water supply.	36 acres (14.57 hectares)
4.	Dry crop land, that is the land under paddy cultivation for a continuous period of three years immediately preceding the commencement date.	36 acres (14.57 hectares)
5.	Dry crop land, that is to say, land other than land falling under any of the above. (This clause was extended to land under horticultural crops excluding some specified crops)	54 acres (21.85 hectares)

Source : Government of Maharashtra, Maharashtra Act No. XXVII of 1961, amended up to 20.9.1975, pp 11-13 and page 105.

Prevention of fragmentation and consolidation of holding is the least discussed subject in the literature on land reforms in the State. Dr. Ambedkar had brought forth the problem of uneconomic size of holding and the ills of fragmentation ⁴. The Bombay Prevention of Fragmentation and Consolidation of Holding Act of 1947 was among the first under land legislations after independence in the State. A fragment less than half an acre of irrigated land and up to 2 acres of dry land was considered as uneconomic fragment amenable for consolidation. Each village was taken as a unit for the purpose of consolidation and a scheme was prepared for ^athe village, declared in ^{that}the villages as well as published in the Government

Gazette by the settlement Commissioner. The Consolidation Officer (appointed under the Office of Commissioner of Land Records) was to issue the transference certificates. It is interesting to note that the officers from the Commissioner of Land Records were to organise the implementation of the consolidation scheme whereas, other reform measures were routed through the officers of the revenue department. Thus, largely due to the lack of co-ordination, the consolidation of holdings could not be effectively implemented.

The Indian National Congress in its annual session held at Faizpur in Maharashtra, in December 1936, deliberated on the deepening of the crisis due to the burden of loan on the peasantry and suggested quite a few measures. Prominent among these were the reduction of rent, land revenue, irrigation cess, exemption of un-economic holding from payment of revenue, abolition of feudal levies, forced labour and fixing of tenure with inheritable rights. This was on the background of the peasant up-rising in Andhra Pradesh led by Prof N.G.Ranga and Communist Party of India. The Congress sub-committee on land policy presented its interim report in June 1940 and there the questions of abolition of intermediaries (between the State and cultivators), peasant proprietorship and land revenue fixation were mainly deliberated. The Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri J.C. Kumarappa was appointed and a basic consensus about 'land to the tiller' emerged. The line of thinking was almost similar across the political groups. During this phase the Congress party won the elections to Provincial Assembly of Bombay Province and from 1946 to 1948 the then Bombay Government passed four important land legislations, namely (i) Bombay Money Lenders Licensing Act, 1946, (ii) The Bombay Agricultural Debtors Act, 1947, (iii) The Bombay Prevention of Fragmentation and Consolidation of Holding Act, 1947 and (iv) The Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1948. These four legislations seem to have made the necessary impact on the exploitation by money lenders but caused no significant change in the agrarian structure. The land fragmentation was considered as the major drawback and thus the enactment to prevent fragmentation was also felt necessary. Among these four enactments significant step was taken through the Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1948 with exclusive protection to the tenant cultivators³. The act and the subsequent amendments of 1956 ensured land to the tiller, protection to the tenant, regularisation of the rent and record of tenancy as well as laid down the procedure for transfer of land to the tenants. The act provided

that on the tillers day (1st April, 1957) the tenant shall be deemed to have purchased the land. The agricultural land tribunal was to determine the purchase price and the tenant was required to pay the price of land decided according to the guidelines in not more than twelve equal instalments. Apart from this the following specific sections were of importance:

- i. The landlord's claim for retaining land for personal cultivation and for non-agricultural purposes was considered for termination of tenancy of the tenant.
- ii. The land owner's claim to terminate the tenancy of the tenant; if the tenant-fails to pay the rent, causes destruction or damage to the land, has sub-let the land, fails to cultivate personally and uses the land for purpose other than agriculture, was also considered.
- iii. A person who is not an agriculturist was barred from purchasing the agricultural land (section 63).
- iv. If any land was kept fallow for more than a specified time period, the same was liable to be taken over by the Government.
- v. The exempted lands under the act were land leased out to Government, local authorities, reserved lands, estates under Government management, Bhoodan land and lands of Universities and Trusts.

As mentioned earlier the Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, No. XXI of 1948 was amended to make it more specific as well as to incorporate the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1950 and the Vidarbha region act of 1958. Apart from the Hyderabad and Vidarbha specific acts the tenancy legislations applicable then in other regions of the present day Maharashtra, were also applicable in the State specifically the following legislations:

- i. The Bhagdari and Navadari Tenures Abolition Act, 1949.
- ii. The Panchamahals Mohwasi Tenure Abolition Act, 1949.
- iii. The Bombay Maleki Tenure Abolition Act, 1949.
- iv. The Saurashtra Barkhali Abolition Act, 1951.
- v. The Bombay Merged Territories (Ankadia Tenure Abolition) Act, 1953.

- vi. The Bombay Merged Territories (Janjira and Bhor) Khot Tenure Abolition Act, 1953.
- vii. The Bombay (Saurashtra Area) Aghat Tenure and Ijars Abolition Act, 1959.
- viii. The Gujarat Land Tenure Abolition Act, 1961.

The implementation of the tenancy acts resulted in conferring ownership on about 15 lakh tenants, in the State of Maharashtra. A large number of them were small and marginal land holders. However, analysts have remarked about the mixed success of tenancy reforms in Maharashtra when compared with the ex-ante presumptions (Dandekar & Khudanpur, Dantwala & Shah, 1971).

BOTTLENECKS IN IMPLEMENTATION

Most of the analyses dealing with land reforms have brought forth the bottlenecks in the process of its implementation. As we have noted earlier, the abolition of intermediaries was among the first steps taken in the State. The historical emergence of a mosaic agrarian structure in the State also find its image reflected among the difficulties in the process of implementation of the legislation. In Maharashtra State a large number of nomenclatures of intermediaries existed and thus the number of legislations encompassing these was quite big. First and the foremost difficulty encountered in the process of implementation of the reform process for abolition of intermediaries was the non-existence of the record about the status of large number of intermediaries and these unrecorded intermediaries completely evaded the initial thrust of the reform measures. Secondly, one of the provisions of the law for abolition of the intermediaries allowed exemption to those intermediaries who preferred to self cultivate their lands (read instead were actually cultivating their lands) called Khud Kasht. This made the writing on the wall very clear to the intermediaries and absentee landlords and signalled the sight of the oncoming changes. Initially, the tenants who were hitherto cultivating the lands of Jagirdars / Zamindars were terminated (at least the recorded tenancy was nullified) and the lands were taken under self cultivation. It is very clear from the various analysts that the act had so many soft spots and making use of them was neither difficult nor out of reach for a large number of

intermediaries. The irony of the situation is that even some of them were the members of the committees for drafting the act itself (Dhar, 1990). Joshi (1987) articulately sums the inconsistency between the ideology of the power elites and the programmes. He writes "These classes (power elites) try to rally the entire peasantry behind them under the slogan of 'land to the tiller' in order to oust the old landed class from its dominant position in the land and power structure, and then, having broken the land and power monopoly of the old landed class, they try to dilute the 'land to the tiller' policy into an agrarian programme suited to their own limited class aims" (Joshi, 1987 p. 231).

The Bombay Tenancy Act, 1939 gave some level of protection to the tenants by fixing tenure, rent, house sites etc. But the difficulties in its implementation brought forth the necessity for another legislation and thus came the Bombay Tenancy Act, 1948 with further amendments over years. Dandekar and Khudanpur (1957) clearly brought forth the difficulties in the working of the Bombay Tenancy Act, 1948 in Maharashtra. Among the major difficulties in implementation were: (i) the law was restricted only to protected tenants, (ii) the exclusion clauses for landlords were quite sweeping, (iii) absence of concession in purchase price (market price) and (iv) absence of compulsion on tenants to buy land (Dandekar & Khudanpur, 1957 and (Dantwala & Shah, 197¹/₀). Even after the subsequent amendments the tenancy reforms in Maharashtra were only a partial success for four important reasons. Firstly, following the clue from the 1939 and 1948 tenancy legislations the practice of recorded tenancy was drastically reduced and what was earlier available in the form of Batai Patra, Thoke Patra or Kabulayat Nama were replaced by oral tenancy agreement or Nokar Nama (service agreement). Planning Commission puts the estimate of concealed tenancy in the country to about 33 percent (Planning Commission, 1989). In Maharashtra, Sawant (1991) estimated about 44.6 percent of total tenancy area under concealed tenancy during 1981-82. Thus, there was a substantial change in the conditions of tenancy than the conditions of tenants. Secondly, the type of exemptions allowed included exclusion of the landlord who is minor, widow, serving in armed forces or mentally/physically disabled. In addition to these, exemption was also given to the landlord who preferred to retain the land for self cultivation (to the extent of one family holding) in case the landlord does not have any other means of livelihood. Thirdly, the clause of voluntary surrender by the tenant of his claim on the land has also caused the legislation

ineffective in many cases. This was also supplemented by the clause of "ineffective purchases" and "retention of at least 54 acres of land by the landlord". Lastly, it must be noted that the tenant - landlord relationship at the time of the 'tillers day' (1st April 1957) were mostly economically inter-locked through credit/market. In such case, a large number of tenants did not consider to enforce their claims on to the landlord. Further, the claims by tenants were considered only if his name is recorded in the 'other rights' column of the village form No. VII-XII, which was often not done⁶. Thus, thereafter to obtain a Nokar Nama from the tenant became a regular practice in the State. Quite a few sections pertaining to compulsory transfer of land to the tenants were also not implemented strictly (especially sections 38 (H), 52, 53 (c), (a) and (E) of Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1950 revised up to 1984)⁷.

In addition to the above, certain other point regarding ineffectiveness of the 1948 tenancy legislation were noted by Dandekar and Khudanpur (1957). Firstly, it was noted that the protection given to the tenants was ineffective due to the village socio-political set up. Secondly, the land market was not ready for such transfer of land to the tenant and finally almost no signs of any alternative to the existing tenancy practices were noticed. Shah and Sawant (1973) reported that by 30th September 1970, the total number of tenancy cases reported in Maharashtra were 20,40,142, of which in 14.6 per cent cases the tenant-landlord relationship did not exist, 12.7 per cent cases the purchase was declared ineffective, 1.4 per cent cases tenants had lawfully (!) surrendered the leased land, 30 per cent cases the tenants surrendered land without any legal procedure for surrender, 0.7 per cent cases tenants were unlawfully evicted and 14.7 per cent cases the proceedings were dropped for various reasons. Thus, they reported^{the} in only about 28.7 per cent cases only purchase price could be fixed. In effect this shows that the tenancy reforms can claim only mixed success and the fallout were of greater significance. Apart from converting Batai Nama (Tenancy contract) into Nokar Nama (Service contract) the tenancy reforms also created a class of 'large holder dominant tenants'. Nadkarni (1976) observed this significant change of reverse tenancy in the parts of Marathwada region.

It is evident from the earlier discussion that the historical emergence of the agrarian structure, institutional set-up governing the process, inter-action of interest groups with the

process of implementation and the socio-political contents have finally culminated into the mixed impact of land reforms and especially the tenancy reforms in the State.

Ceiling on the size of holding also had a mixed success in the State. According to the sixteenth NSS round covering period from July 1960 to June 1961, about 2.01 per cent of the holdings, with size of holding above 30 acres (20.24 hectares) held about 19.84 per cent of the total land, whereas, about 38.18 per cent holdings, with size of holding less than 0.50 acres (0.20 hectares) held only 0.14 per cent of the land. If this is compared with the distribution of land given in the 48th NSS round (December 1991 to January 1992), we find that 0.41 per cent of holding, with size of holding above 20 hectares, operate about 5.13 per cent of the total operated area whereas, 19.86 per cent with size of operational holdings less than 0.20 hectares, operate 0.25 per cent of land. This along with table 1 bring to the fore three important aspects. Firstly, the distribution of land has been changing very fast reducing the concentration of land in the highest size class of operational holding. ←

This substantial reduction in area under higher size classes of holding has resulted in increase in the area under lower size classes. Secondly, the area under the uneconomic holding had increased substantially. About 20 per cent of the operational holdings have operated area less than even 0.20 hectare (half an acre). This indicates a significant trend towards marginalisation of peasantry. Finally, we observe that on the one end of the distribution marginalisation of peasantry is increasing at an unabated speed whereas, on the other side we still have about 0.4 per cent of the holdings with operated area above 20.00 hectares holding about 5.1 per cent of the total area (NSS, 48th round, 1991-92 page A-6). Similar trend is also confirmed by the data from 1990-91 agricultural census of the State. The above data suggests a mixed response to the reform measure of ceiling on agricultural holding.

Some major implementation problems of the Ceiling on Agricultural Holding Act can be listed here. Firstly, the definition of the family, unit, which included minor children, caused a serious problem in the process of implementation. The unborn-children were also recorded as minor children or even major daughters were included as minor children by falsifying the birth certificates. Such minor children were entitled to their share of holding under the law. Secondly, the partition of land was undertaken immediately, so as to create separate family units under the name of the major son.

Table 1: Changes in the per cent distribution of Area under ownership holding in Maharashtra.

Sr. No.	Size class of Ownership/ Operational Holding.	1960-61 (17th NSS Round) % of Owned Area	1980-81 (26th NSS Round) % of Owned Area	1991-92 (48th NSS Round) % of Owned Area
1.	Upto 1 hectare	2.29	3.69	6.81
2.	1.0 to 2.0 hectares	5.45	8.55	12.13
3.	2.0 to 4.0 hectares	12.91	18.19	25.40
4.	4.0 to 10.0 hectares	33.24	35.12	36.54
5.	Above 10.0 hectares	46.11	34.46	19.12
6.	All Sizes	100.00	100.00	100.00

Note: 17th NSS round gives size classes of ownership holding and area owned but 48th round gives area owned by size classes of operational holding and hence these are not strictly comparable.

Source: 1) NSS (1970), Tables with Notes on Some Aspects of Land Holding in Rural India, 17th round, NSS New Delhi.
 2) Govt. of India, (1975) Table on land holding, of 26th round Maharashtra, National Sample Survey (NSS (1980) New Delhi.
 3) NSS (1997), Operational Land Holdings in India 1991-92 - Salient Features, 48th round, NSS New Delhi.

landlords
 This has helped to retain larger land and reduce the amount of land to be surrendered. Though by law September 26, 1970 was decided as a cut - off date (date of implementation) and the partition of land before which only were considered legal, the implementing authorities however allowed notional partitions as well as partitions taken place beyond this date because of the socio-political ^{factors} reasons in the village society. Thirdly, the emergence of Benami transactions (transferring the land in the name of non-existing entities) can be credited only to the process of implementation of land reforms. Such transactions were quite common in the rural areas of Maharashtra where lands ^{were} shown in the name of persons not existing. Fourthly, the law provided that if a portion of land is leased out to a tenant then such land should be excluded from the total size of holding of the family. Taking clue from this a number of landholders created temporary false tenancy records in the name of the permanent servants and avoided the land surrender. Fifthly, the categorisation of land (as per Schedule I) was grossly mis-appropriated

to retain larger amount of land. It is not out of place in the State to come across irrigated land above 30 acres in the name of a single holder. Lastly, lack of proper land records and the ease with which such records ~~can~~^{could} be manipulated also caused a greater hurdle in the process of implementation⁸. In many cases the surplus land distributed in the village was transferred back to the same family or a member of the family from whom such surplus land was acquired earlier. In addition to all this the writing on the wall about the ceiling well before the act came into being was so clear right from the beginning, that the influential and well informed landlords lost no time in partitioning, making gift deeds and transfers of land to avoid any surrender of surplus land. While commenting on the process of implementation Dantwala and Shah (1971) remark that "The dominant impression left on the mind is that unless this type of legislation is considerably simplified, conniving at, if necessary, the niceties of equity, and recognising that there would inevitably be some unjustifiable penalties and preferences, implementation would never be quick and effective. The trouble is that meticulousness in framing legislation also does not help because the complexity of the legislation combined with administrative inadequacies, produces the same amount of injustice - but uncalculated - through overt and covert evasions, but spread over a longer time with all the disadvantages of gnawing uncertainties" (p. 158).

Consolidation of holding also had its implementation level problems. The scheme was operated by the Land Consolidation Officer from the department of Land Records. The main bottleneck was regarding the decision about the major fragments and minor fragments and always the village elites held their sway by transferring and attaching fertile fragments to their holdings. Similarly, the tenants who were cultivating fragments were deprived of fertile lands for cultivation. Unlike the land tribunals constituted at taluka and district level the appellate body for consolidation was located only at Pune and many cultivators from weaker sections could not afford the expenditure even to lodge a protest against the decision of the Land Consolidation Officer.

The above discussion brought forth the fact that the land reform measures had partial success mainly due to the lack of support from below and the political will to implement it. In the occasional papers of the Ministry of Agriculture, the lack of political will is clearly accepted as the cause of poor implementation of land reforms (Govt. of India, 1988). Present Maharashtra State has an agrarian history emanating from different socio-economic conditions

and land always dominated as an asset representing social prestige and political power more than its economic value. Another important feature of the State is the level and process of politicisation. In Maharashtra the political leadership emerged to a larger extent from rural elite, whose interests could be closely identified with land as an indicator of social prestige. It is remarked that the experience of land reforms in India was mostly frustrating because the government had neither the political will nor the administrative capacity for successful implementation (Asian Development Bank, 1977). This is further fuelled by the nexus between polity and bureaucracy which is emerging for over a long time but realised and discussed in the recent past. P. C. Joshi summarised the situation more precisely "It should be noted that politicians, administrators and planners have seldom a full appreciation of the psychological, economic, social and political implications of land reforms. In land-based and, to be more precise land obsessed, Asian countries property in land is tied up with powerful interests, passions, sentiments, prejudices and values. These possess a great psychological force and an explosive potential capable of rousing millions of people into a State of ferment" (Joshi, 1987, p. 202).

IMPACT OF LAND REFORMS AND CHANGING AGRARIAN STRUCTURE

Land has always been the central resource around which the rural power groups are formed. The relationship of rural elites towards land is a tool as well as an expression of power nexus between classes. This total system is referred to as agrarian structure and its emergence is a product of historical trends, socio-economic interventions, typology of power elites and the process of overall economic development. It is more an organic emergence and hence decomposition into individual causal patterns is difficult. Distribution of land by ownership/operational status along with the means of production, patterns of land tenure, production relations, labour relations, production process and the scale of farm operations together decide the agrarian structure (Paulini, 1979). The structure undergoes an embodied change due to demographic pressures, market forces etc. Similarly, some changes occur due to the policy interventions. Joshi (1975) puts this more clearly as “ To the first category belong those changes which occur in an indirect manner in response to the spontaneous operations of socio-economic processes... The second type of changes are those which are brought about as a result of direct intervention in the agrarian structure.” (Joshi, 1975, p.87). The role of State as well as that of social forces (agrarian movements in response to the State action and also due to social movements) together decide the magnitude and direction of the agrarian changes. As mentioned above the segregation of the individual impact is difficult but the end result given by the existing structure of land ownership over the last five decades gives us fairly good idea about the changes. In the present section we have tried to look into the changes in agrarian structure (mainly through the distribution of land) in the State across districts as well documenting the impact of land reform measures.

Two approaches are undertaken here to analyze the impact of land reforms and changes in agrarian structure. In the first approach, we have taken most of the broad indicators of changes due to land reforms and tried to document the changes in the impact parameters across regions in the State. These changes are based on field insights (obtained from revenue officials who have a long working experience in these regions) and broad generalizations in the absence of field studies. The results are presented in table 2. Apart from the four important land reform measures, we have also taken into account five other structural characteristics which have marked changes in response to land reforms and other factors.

Table 2 : Impact of Land Reforms in Maharashtra : A Field View

Sr. No.	Impact Parameters	Region			
		Konkan	Western Maharashtra*	Vidarbha*	Marathwada
1	Abolition of Intermediaries	Significant	Moderate to Significant	Significant	Moderate to Significant
2	Tenancy Reforms	Moderate	Moderate to Significant	Significant	Significant
3	Acquisition of Surplus Land and redistribution	Moderate	Moderate	Significant	Significant
4	Consolidation of Holding	Moderate	Moderate	Significant	Moderate
5	Reduction in the Inequalities of Land Distribution	Significant	Moderate	Significant	Significant
6	Adoption of New Technology	Low	Significant to High	Moderate	Moderate
7	Increase in Production and Productivity growth	Low	Significant	Moderate	Moderate
8	Commercialisation of Agriculture	Moderate	Significant to High	Significant	Moderate
9.	Politicization and Emergence of Rural Elites	Low	Significant to High	Moderate	Significant

Notes: (1) Table is based on Field experience of the author and as depicted from other studies. Broad generalizations are given excluding specific examples. Discussions with retired senior revenue officers also helped in formulating the table

(2) * In Vidarbha region the behaviour of Yavatmal, Chandrapur, Gadchiroli and to a large extent Bhandara is different from the rest of the region. Similarly, clubbing Dhule, Jalgaon, Nashik and Kolhapur with the other districts of Western Maharashtra created some difficulty in generalization.

Among the land reform measures abolition of intermediaries seem to have made significant impact in Vidarbha region (abolition of Malgujars and Jagirdars), followed by Konkan (Khoti system) to Marathwada and the Western Maharashtra. Dhule and Jalgaon districts also felt the impact of this legislation. But largely the lands belonging to intermediaries in Marathwada region could not be brought under the legislation due to two reasons. Firstly, the land records were not in proper condition to locate the current status of land and secondly due to Mohmmedan law of inheritance for inam lands (Suls-e-Suls under Sher-e-Sharif) the allocated lands were bifurcated into several fractions and even undergone changes in ownership status.⁹

Legislations pertaining to tenancy reforms had significant impact in the State especially in Vidarbha, Marathwada and Western Maharashtra regions. In parts of Konkan, Khandesh region (Dhule and Jalgaon districts), parts of Kolhapur and Satara districts as well as some talukas from Marathwada region the tenants were forced to surrender the lands to the land owners under social and political pressures. It is interesting to note that the data reported by the National Sample Survey (48th round) pertaining to the period January 1991 to December 1992 shows about 8 lakh hectares as 'leased in' area over varying periods of tenancy in Maharashtra.

It may be noted from the table 3 that there are about 21 per cent tenants who have land leased in above 5 years and at least 10 per cent who have leased in for more than 12 years. Large number of operational holdings leasing in land are from the two highest size classes of operational holdings. These two classes (operational holdings above 4 hectares) together account for 73 per cent of the total leased in area. More interestingly 98 per cent of the area leased in for more than 12 years also happens to be a part of the operational holdings above 4 hectares. This sufficiently underscores the initial findings of Nadkarni (1976) about reverse tenancy though we do not have any confirmation about the classes leasing out these lands.¹⁰

Table 3 : Percentage Distribution of Area leased in by period of lease.

Size Classes of Operational Holding	% Distribution of Area Leased in by period of Lease				
	Less than 1 year	1 to 5 years	5 to 12 years	Above 12 years	Not Reported
Up to 1 hectares	31.4	21.9	20.1	0.3	26.3
1 to 2 hectares	14.5	59.2	16.3	2.0	8.0
2 to 4 hectares	30.4	44.4	19.9	-	5.3
4 to 10 hectares	32.3	28.6	5.0	18.6	15.5
Above 10 hectares	-	67.4	11.8	7.5	13.3
All sizes	20.9	44.8	10.9	10.3	13.1

Note : Derived from table 7 (R) by clubbing size classes and reworking the shares.

Source : NSS (1997), Operational Land Holdings in India, 1991-92, Salient Features, National Sample Survey Organization, 48th round, New Delhi p. 4.76

Land ceiling act was moderately successful in Maharashtra and even here the implementation was more effective in Vidarbha, Western Maharashtra and Marathwada region in that order. It has to be accepted that implementation of the ceiling limit was difficult in Maharashtra due to the grass root level politicisation, ill maintenance of land records, nexus between bureaucracy and rural elites and the exemptions as well as the span of time given for 'land adjustments'. A successful land reform, therefore, has to be tested on the counts of land

acquisition and redistribution of land. But this may exclude all those who evaded reforms under different covers. In a recent study conducted at Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics by Rajasekaran some interesting data on land acquisition and distribution is given. Based on the data given in this study we have presented the estimates of surplus land acquired and distributed.

Table 4: Regionwise Surplus Land Acquired and Distributed in Maharashtra by December 1995.

Region	Land Declared Surplus	Land Taken Possession	Per cent of Land Taken Under Possession to Surplus land	Land Distributed (In hectares)	Percent of Land Distributed out of land taken Possession)
	(In hectares)	(In hectares)	(%)		(%)
Konkan	28652	26340	91.93	22950	87.13
Western Maharashtra	66037	56116	84.98	54777	97.60
Marathwada	50923	45333*	89.02	45355	100.00
Vidarbha	112748	103513	91.81	101378	97.94
Total	258360	231056	89.43	224460	97.15

Notes : (1) * - The area estimated here is on the basis of the percentages reported hence it does not tally with land distributed.

(2) Districts of Khandesh are included in Western Maharashtra.

Source: Rajasekaran, N, (1996). Trends in Operational Holdings in Maharashtra ; An Analysis of Determinants, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune., Page 37.

It can be seen from the table that the total surplus land declared in Maharashtra State was more than 2.58 lakh hectares out of which about 89.4 per cent was acquired. The largest amount share of land acquired is from Vidarbha region followed by Western Maharashtra. It may be recalled that the size of holding in Vidarbha was quite large and the existence of unrecorded intermediaries was also dominant in this region of the State. But the distribution of acquired land has been relatively better in Marathwada and Vidarbha region

Ministry of labour, Government of India had appointed a sub-committee to examine the problems of unorganized rural labour. The committee in its report examined the implementation of the Act on Ceiling on Land Holding from the point of view of redistribution of land as on 30th July 1987. It can be seen from the reported data by the committee that about 4 acres land per beneficiary was distributed to about 1.26 lakh beneficiaries in Maharashtra.¹¹ As mentioned above and in the paragraphs analyzing the implementation bottlenecks of land ceiling act the land declared surplus in the State constituted mostly the area which could not be 'adjusted' by the landlords. This fact is borne out by 1990-91 Agricultural Census which reports about 17

thousand holdings with operated area of more than 20 hectares and average size of holding of 34.77 hectares. Out of this about 14 thousand operational holdings are individual holdings.

In this context it will also be interesting to look into the changing pattern of land distribution from the data available over the two decades given by Agricultural Census. Table 5 presents broad changes in number of operational holdings and area under operational holdings across the six size classes of operational holdings. It can be seen from the table that the number as well as area under the higher size classes of operational holdings has been declining significantly and this decline is reflected in the increase in the lowest three size classes of holding. Consequently the average size of holding is declining at a faster rate. During the last two decades it has reduced to half. Two disturbing observations from the table need to be noted here firstly eventhough the operated area under marginal (less than 1 hectare) and ultra-marginal holdings (less than 0.50 ha.) is increasing, the number of operational holding is increasing almost at the same rate keeping the size of holding almost unaltered. Secondly, the 1990-91 Agricultural census first time recorded decline in the total area operated, this should not be brushed aside as an inconsequential observation. Our field observations in Maharashtra suggest an unabated ingress of urban elites in the rural land market especially in the urban hinterlands and converting (or utilizing unlawfully) the area for non-agricultural purposes. It can not be ruled out totally that land under cultivation (in net terms) in the near future may go down. This will be accompanied by sub-marginalisation of the size of holding thereby increasing pressure on relaxing the upper limit of land ceiling.

Another way of looking at the changing structure of land holding as a component of the overall agrarian structure is to consider the changes in shares of land holders across size classes of holding over time. Table 6 presents the movements of the shares under size classes and number of holdings. Here also the ultra-marginal holdings are seen to be increasing at a higher rate than the area under them. Similar is the trend in the immediately next size class of holding. At the other extreme, in the highest size class of operational holding, the number of holdings are declining at a slower rate than the area under them. Demographic pressure, reforms, adoption of new technology, commercialization of agriculture and increased irrigation facilities are some of the important determinants causing such changes. But the writing on the wall is clear that we are moving towards sub-marginalisation of peasantry from the erstwhile infudation trends. Neither of the trends are desirable or healthy for agricultural development in the State.

Table 5 : Number of holdings, area and average size of holding by size classes of operational holdings in Maharashtra.

Sr. No.	Size Class of Operational Holding	Number of Holdings			Area under Operational Holding			Average Size of Holding		
		(In lakh nos.)			(In lakh ha.)			(In ha.)		
		1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91
1	Less than 0.5 ha	6.8	9.9	16.7	1.6	2.6	4.1	0.24	0.27	0.25
2	Up to 1 ha.	12.4	19.3	32.7	5.8	9.7	16.1	0.47	0.51	0.49
3	1 to 2.00 ha.	8.8	15.4	27.3	12.8	23.3	39.8	1.46	1.51	1.46
4	2 to 4.00 ha.	10.9	16.9	21.3	31.3	48.2	58.8	2.88	2.86	2.77
5	4 to 10.00 ha.	12.3	13.9	11.7	77.2	84.5	68.6	6.28	6.07	5.86
6	Above 10.0 ha.	5.1	3.2	1.7	84.7	47.9	25.9	16.47	15.05	15.17
	All	49.5	68.6	94.7	211.8	213.6	209.3	4.28	3.11	2.21

Source : Economic Survey of Maharashtra 1996-97, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Mumbai Page 143.

Table 6 : Distribution of operational holdings in Maharashtra (Proportion Share to total)

Sr. No.	Size Class of Operational Holdings		1970-71	1976-77	1980-81	1985-86	1990-91
1	Less than 0.5 hectares	No	13.8	14.1	14.4	15.7	17.6
		Area	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.5	2.0
2	Less than 1.00 hectares	No	25.1	26.1	28.1	30.7	34.6
		Area	2.7	3.4	4.6	5.8	7.7
3	1.00 hectares to 2.00 hectares	No	17.8	19.8	22.4	26.0	28.8
		Area	6.1	7.9	10.9	14.7	19.0
4	2.00 hectares to 4.00 hectares	No	22.0	23.2	24.6	24.1	22.4
		Area	14.8	18.2	22.6	25.8	28.1
5	4.00 hectares to 10.00 hectares.	No	24.7	23.5	20.3	16.3	12.4
		Area	36.4	39.5	39.5	36.8	32.8
6	Above 10.00 hectares	No	10.4	7.4	4.6	2.9	1.8
		Area	40.0	31.0	22.4	16.9	12.4

Note : Percentages represent share of the size class in the State totals.

Source: Government of Maharashtra (1997). Economic Survey of Maharashtra 1996-97, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Bombay, p.143 and Report of the Agricultural Census of Maharashtra, 1976-77.

The State level generalizations indicate the basic regional trends in the changing agrarian structure. We have discussed earlier the historical emergence of agrarian structure in different regions of the State. We have presented in tables 7, 8 and 9 the proportion shares of number of operational holdings and area under them at three points of time viz. 1970-71, 1980-81 and 1990-91 as reflected from the Agricultural Census data. The analysis of these tables suggest quite a few interesting observations regarding the agrarian structure of the State. It is quite obvious from the land holding pattern that the agro-climatic situations mainly dictate the pattern of land distribution. Western coastal districts and eastern districts of Bhandara, Gadchiroli and

Chandrapur show tendency towards increasing small size of holding, whereas, the districts falling in the deccan plains have larger holdings. But apart from agro-climatic considerations the production relations broadly prevailing in the region are responsible for the changes. Vidarbha region had strong informal credit markets and the money lenders had amassed large holdings in the process. Yavatmal, Akola, Buldhana and Wardha districts of Vidarbha showed relatively higher size of holding.¹² Similarly, Solapur, Osmanabad, Ahmednagar, Beed and Aurangabad districts also have large farms compared to the other districts of the State. Parts of Vidarbha had larger size of holding due to the existence of unrecorded intermediaries; it is reported that largest size of holding from Yavatmal district was in the family of a leader from Nomadic Tribes. Vidarbha region in general (excluding Chandrapur, Bhandara and Gadchiroli) showed a declining share in area under large holdings. This was ranging between 39.3 per cent in Amravati and 52.2 per cent in Yavatmal during 1970-71 but has gone down to a lower range of 10.9 (Nagpur) to 15.0 per cent (Yavatmal) ^{in 1990-91}. One important observation needs to be noted from Table 9¹³ that Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts showed highest proportion of area under large holding in the State in the year 1990-91. This fact is significant because these two are coastal districts and there is a recent trend of purchasing land for non-agricultural purposes in these two districts.

Marathwada region in general depicted a tendency of shrinking size of operational holding. In fact, in the entire State the districts of Marathwada, especially Aurangabad, Parbhani and Osmanabad, showed a substantial decline in the share of area under large holdings. In Aurangabad district the share of area under large holdings was 45.7 per cent in 1970-71 which went down to 20.8 per cent in 1980-81 and further to 7.7 per cent by 1990-91. Osmanabad district also showed a similar decline in the share of area. During 1970-71 the share of area under large holdings in Osmanabad district was one of the highest and stood at 50.8 per cent, which declined to 32.3 per cent during 1980-81 and further slid down to 15.4 per cent moving closure to the State average. The experience of Parbhani district is also worth noting. Parbhani district also had a history of money lending like that of Yavatmal but most significant change in the district is the availability of irrigation and sizable amount of cases of partitions.¹³ In Parbhani district the share of area under large holding during 1970-71 stood at 48.0 per cent which has gone down to 6.4 per cent during the two decades.

In Western Maharashtra, the districts of Kolhapur and Satara depict distinct behaviour as compared to Solapur, Ahmednagar, Pune or to some extent Sangli. Kolhapur as well as Satara have traditionally small size of holdings because of the peasant proprietorship and this

distinction was maintained during the two decades. Kolhapur and Raigad are the two districts having more than 60 percent of the total number of holdings below one hectare. Apart from the historical reasons the availability of irrigation, cropping pattern and the terrain of the region is also responsible for the pattern of holdings. Most interesting case emerging in this region is that of Ahmednagar district. This district is known for its drought-prone character as well as sugar factories. The proportion of holdings in Ahmednagar district, which stood at 17 per cent during 1970-71, doubled during the last two decades to reach at 35 per cent during 1990-91. This change is unparalleled and not noted in any of the districts in the neighbourhood. This is a good example of cropping pattern led agrarian change and it is clear that sugarcane cultivation is responsible for the fragmented size of holding in this district located on deccan plains.

Table 7 : Distribution of operational holding as reflected through the Agricultural Census of the State : 1970-71.
(Per cent to the total of the districts)

Districts	Number of Holdings (%)				Area under Holdings (%)			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Thane	45.5	18.0	30.8	5.7	6.6	9.2	47.8	36.4
Raigad	51.7	20.6	24.9	2.8	10.8	14.0	47.9	27.3
Ratnagiri	48.4	15.8	30.5	5.3	6.0	8.3	49.7	36.0
Nashik	17.9	16.5	54.6	11.0	1.9	5.2	55.9	37.0
Dhule	12.3	16.1	60.1	11.5	1.4	4.9	61.8	31.9
Jalgaon	18.4	24.0	50.8	6.8	2.8	9.4	59.8	28.0
Ahmednagar	17.0	16.3	53.1	13.6	1.7	4.6	49.6	44.1
Pune	27.8	17.8	44.9	9.5	3.2	6.4	51.6	38.8
Solapur	11.0	14.4	56.4	18.2	1.1	3.5	45.7	49.7
Satara	39.9	20.0	35.8	4.3	6.4	10.8	56.7	26.1
Sangli	34.2	19.8	39.1	6.9	4.7	8.7	51.6	35.0
Kolhapur	50.2	19.6	27.9	2.3	10.2	14.0	56.5	19.3
Aurangabad	8.9	13.2	60.1	17.8	0.8	3.3	50.2	45.7
Parbhani	7.7	12.2	60.3	19.8	0.7	2.9	48.4	48.0
Beed	10.6	14.0	57.1	18.3	1.0	3.4	46.8	48.7
Nanded	12.1	15.3	61.4	11.2	1.4	4.6	61.1	32.9
Osmanabad	7.0	11.9	60.1	21.0	0.6	2.6	46.0	50.8
Buldhana	15.5	21.8	49.8	12.9	2.0	6.4	46.4	45.2
Akola	14.9	20.9	50.7	13.5	1.9	6.1	46.8	45.2
Amaravati	19.5	24.1	46.7	9.7	3.1	8.3	49.2	39.3
Yavatmal	3.5	11.9	63.9	20.7	0.3	2.4	44.9	52.2
Wardha	8.3	17.3	59.4	15.0	0.9	4.5	49.6	45.0
Nagpur	12.2	17.5	58.4	11.9	1.4	5.1	54.0	39.5
Bhandara	43.5	23.3	30.6	2.6	9.7	15.4	56.0	18.9
Chandrapur	24.3	20.1	48.5	7.1	3.4	7.9	58.2	30.5
State	25.0	17.8	46.8	10.4	2.7	6.1	51.2	40.0

Note : Size classes are : I - up to 1 ha ; II - 1.0 to 2.0 ha ; III - 2 to 10 ha and IV - above 10 ha.

Source : Government of Maharashtra, Report of Agricultural Census 1970-71, Department of Agriculture, Pune.

Table 8 : Distribution of operational holdings as reflected through Agricultural Census of the State : 1980-81.
(Per cent to total of the district)

Districts	Number of Holdings (%)				Area under Holdings (%)			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Thane	47.0	20.8	28.7	3.5	15.1	12.6	48.5	23.8
Raigad	56.1	20.3	21.8	1.8	14.7	17.2	49.7	18.4
Ratnagiri	43.7	17.3	34.6	4.4	6.3	9.7	55.7	28.3
Sindhudurg	56.7	14.6	24.9	3.8	8.7	9.5	46.8	35.0
Nashik	21.3	19.3	53.7	5.7	3.0	8.3	65.9	22.8
Dhule	15.2	24.1	56.9	3.8	2.6	9.8	71.6	16.0
Jalgaon	20.2	26.3	50.0	3.5	3.8	12.7	67.9	15.6
Ahmednagar	24.6	21.8	48.7	4.9	4.1	10.6	61.8	23.5
Pune	30.9	21.3	42.4	5.4	4.9	9.8	57.9	27.4
Solapur	15.6	17.7	56.3	10.4	1.8	5.9	57.0	35.3
Satara	47.2	22.3	28.7	1.8	10.3	17.0	57.0	15.7
Sangli	39.3	22.0	35.0	3.7	7.2	12.7	57.1	23.0
Kolhapur	56.9	20.2	21.8	1.1	15.9	19.0	52.7	12.4
Aurangabad	15.6	21.2	57.4	5.8	2.7	9.0	67.5	20.8
Jalna	12.3	20.9	59.4	7.4	1.9	8.5	66.0	23.6
Parbhani	12.6	21.7	60.9	4.8	2.2	8.9	70.8	18.1
Beed	17.5	21.6	55.1	5.8	2.7	8.9	66.2	22.2
Nanded	18.0	23.3	55.0	3.7	3.3	10.4	70.4	15.9
Osmanabad	11.9	19.5	58.2	10.4	1.5	6.8	59.4	32.3
Latur	10.1	20.7	60.2	9.0	1.5	7.0	63.2	28.3
Buldhana	20.8	26.8	47.7	4.7	4.4	12.6	61.9	21.1
Akola	16.1	28.6	49.7	5.6	3.2	13.1	60.6	23.1
Amaravati	21.6	30.3	44.3	3.8	5.0	15.5	61.2	18.3
Yavatmal	6.7	24.4	61.7	7.2	1.3	9.1	64.9	24.7
Wardha	9.8	28.2	56.4	5.6	1.9	10.7	66.0	21.4
Nagpur	15.4	26.0	53.7	4.9	2.7	11.1	65.9	20.3
Bhandara	49.8	25.2	23.9	1.1	14.4	22.1	54.0	9.5
Chandrapur	28.6	22.1	45.4	3.9	5.7	10.8	64.7	18.8
Gadchiroli	30.5	27.5	39.8	2.2	6.7	16.7	63.3	13.3
State	28.1	22.5	44.8	4.6	4.7	10.9	62.0	22.4

Note : As in table 7

Source : Government of Maharashtra Report of the Agricultural Census 1980-81, Department of Agriculture, Pune.

Table 9 : Distribution of Operational Holdings as Reflected through Agricultural Census of the State : 1990-91.
(Per cent to total of the district)

Districts	Number of Holdings (%)				Area under Holdings (%)			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Thane	53.3	21.6	23.1	2.0	12.1	17.5	51.9	18.5
Raigad	63.8	18.5	16.6	1.1	19.0	19.3	47.4	14.3
Ratnagiri	47.2	17.5	31.5	3.8	7.1	10.6	56.6	25.7
Sindhudurg	34.5	8.3	55.9	1.3	10.8	12.3	50.6	26.3
Nashik	28.9	29.1	39.6	2.4	6.1	17.1	61.7	15.1
Dhule	21.5	35.0	42.1	1.4	7.5	28.6	52.5	11.4
Jalgaon	26.2	34.9	37.7	1.2	6.8	22.1	62.7	8.4
Ahmednagar	35.1	31.4	32.3	1.2	9.4	23.0	57.9	9.7
Pune	34.1	21.9	41.9	2.1	8.1	16.1	58.6	17.2
Solapur	21.1	27.1	47.6	4.2	3.9	12.9	62.8	20.4
Satara	57.3	23.6	18.4	0.7	17.2	24.4	48.2	10.2
Sangli	48.6	23.5	26.4	1.5	12.1	19.0	56.2	12.7
Kolhapur	66.3	18.9	14.3	0.5	23.0	24.2	45.2	7.6
Aurangabad	24.4	34.7	39.6	1.3	6.3	22.3	63.7	7.7
Jalna	24.3	35.6	38.9	1.2	6.4	22.7	64.0	6.9
Parbhani	23.0	32.3	43.6	1.1	5.7	19.5	68.4	6.4
Beed	30.4	31.7	36.6	1.3	7.8	21.1	62.6	8.5
Nanded	26.5	35.0	37.8	0.7	7.6	24.3	63.8	4.3
Osmanabad	17.7	30.1	49.0	3.2	3.6	14.6	66.4	15.4
Latur	17.2	32.6	48.0	2.2	4.2	17.0	68.4	10.4
Buldhana	22.7	33.9	41.2	2.2	5.7	19.2	63.3	11.8
Akola	19.3	33.6	44.0	3.1	4.7	17.4	62.9	15.0
Amaravati	22.8	36.5	38.5	2.2	6.4	21.1	60.2	12.3
Yavatmal	4.2	35.6	56.6	3.6	0.9	15.9	68.2	15.0
Wardha	13.4	32.9	50.9	2.8	3.3	15.8	67.8	13.1
Nagpur	19.5	33.5	44.9	2.1	4.7	18.3	66.1	10.9
Bhandara	55.7	26.4	17.5	0.4	20.5	28.5	46.6	4.4
Chandrapur	28.7	27.0	42.1	2.2	6.2	17.1	64.4	12.3
Gadchiroli	34.5	31.3	32.7	1.5	8.7	21.1	60.5	9.7
State	33.7	28.1	36.4	1.8	7.8	19.2	60.5	12.5

Note : As in table 7

Source : Government of Maharashtra Report of the Agricultural Census 1980-81, Department of Agriculture, Pune.

AGRO-CLIMATIC REGIONWISE CHANGES IN AGRARIAN STRUCTURE OF MAHARASHTRA :

The agro-climatic parameters have no direct influence on the agrarian structure of an economy. However, the climatic factors decide the economic capability of land. This capability indirectly represents a proxy for the optimum size of holding. It is always expected that in the humid and sub-humid region the size of holding is smaller in both because of the forest cover as well as the undulating terrain. Similarly, in a scar city zone the size of holding is usually large because the sustenance is difficult on a smaller size of a land. This also acts as a stimulator as well as constraint on development of resources.

We have presented in tables 10 the proportion of area and number of holdings under different size classes of holdings for 1970-71, 1980-81, 1990-91. This is attempted agro-climatic zonewise. It can be seen that the zone 7(1) and 12(1) which are agro-climatically humid and sub-humid zones representing large concentration of number of small and marginal holdings. Whereas, the large holdings are dominant in sub-zone nos. 9(4), 9(3) and 9(2). It is also interesting that sub-zone 9(1) consisting of districts of western maharashtra (Agriculturally well developed region) also show concentration of large no. of marginal and small holdings.

Over the years the composition is undergoing change. We have presented the data for two decades starting from 1970-71 and ending at 1990-91. It can be seen that during this two decades the marginal and small holdings have increased at a faster rate in sub-zones 7(1) and 12(1). The increase in small and marginal holding is not so prominent in sub-zone 9(3) and 9(4). As we have observed above zone 9(1), has again shown a distinct characteristics across time. Similarly, the large holdings have been on decline in all the sub-zones. It is interesting to note that some districts (referred in the earlier analysis) have shown typical behaviour in this respect.

As a policy perspective, it is essential to note four important points here. Firstly, it is essential to arrest the fragmentation of holdings in sub-zones 7(1) and sub-zone 12(1). The uneconomic holding in these sub-zones need to be supported with required capital. Secondly, the sub-zones 9(3) and 9(4) require better implementation of tenancy legislations. In fact it is essential that the land market operates more freely in this region. Thirdly, in order to insure incentives to cultivators of commercial crops on large scale it may be considered to relax the ceiling on holding act in the sub-zones 9(1) and 9(2). Lastly it is essential to operate on two fronts namely relaxing the land market operations on one side as protecting the weaker tenant/land lords on the other.

Table 10 : Proportion of Area and Number of Holdings Under Different Size Classes of Holding :
1970-71, 1980-81, 1990-91.

Agro- Climatic Region	Marginal (Below 1 H.A.)		Small (1-1.99 H.A.)		Medium (2-9.99 H.A.)		Large (10 H.A. & Above)	
	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area
7(1)	33.8	5.7	21.7	10.6	39.6	57.5	4.9	26.3
9(1)	34.6	4.6	18.6	8.2	40.2	54.7	6.6	32.5
9(2)	19.6	2.0	16.5	5.0	51.4	50.8	12.4	42.1
9(3)	12.8	1.4	17.8	4.9	54.6	49.1	14.8	44.6
9(4)	9.3	1.0	15.3	4.0	61.0	52.3	14.5	42.7
12(1)	48.6	7.1	17.4	9.7	29.2	48.9	4.8	34.3
Maharashtra	25.1	2.7	17.7	6.1	46.8	51.2	10.4	40.0

Year: 1980-81

Agro- Climatic Region	Marginal (Below 1 H.A.)		Small (1-1.99 H.A.)		Medium (2-9.99 H.A.)		Large (10 H.A. & above)	
	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area
7(1)	39.4	9.1	24.5	16.0	33.8	60.5	2.2	14.4
9(1)	39.8	7.2	20.9	12.3	35.9	59.4	3.4	21.2
9(2)	24.4	3.6	21.3	9.3	48.6	61.4	5.7	25.6
9(3)	16.5	2.9	24.3	10.4	53.5	61.2	5.6	22.0
9(4)	12.7	2.3	25.0	10.2	56.9	66.9	5.4	20.7
12(1)	50.3	10.5	18.2	11.9	28.1	51.9	3.4	27.2
Maharashtra	28.1	4.6	22.5	10.9	44.8	62.1	4.6	22.4

Year : 1990-91

Agro- Climatic Region	Marginal (Below 1 H.A.)		Small (1-1.99 H.A.)		Medium (2-9.99 H.A.)		Large (10 H.A. & Above)	
	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area
7(1)	43.0	11.7	27.3	21.8	28.6	57.5	1.2	9.0
9(1)	48.8	11.8	24.0	19.5	25.8	55.2	1.4	13.5
9(2)	32.8	7.5	29.2	18.8	35.9	60.5	2.0	13.2
9(3)	23.4	5.8	33.6	19.8	41.1	64.3	1.8	10.1
9(4)	17.2	4.1	34.5	18.9	46.2	66.4	2.1	10.6
12(1)	56.1	11.2	18.1	14.1	23.5	52.5	2.4	22.1
Maharashtra	34.6	7.7	28.8	19.0	34.8	60.9	1.8	12.4

Source : Government of Maharashtra, Agricultural Census 1970-71, 1980-81, 1990-91,

Department of Agriculture, Pune.

LAND REFORMS, AGRARIAN STRUCTURE AND LIBERALISATION.

The structural reforms introduced in response to the fiscal crisis have put the agrarian questions in a new perspective. It is well recognised that the growth and fluctuations in agricultural sector largely explain the overall growth and fluctuations in the Indian economy. The process of liberalisation has set free the economic forces in the non-agricultural sector and the questions like why the agricultural sector alone should have ceiling on land ? or tenancy legislation ? are being asked while no such restrictions are imposed on other sectors. It would be difficult to prevent the entry of the corporate sector in the domain of agricultural / horticultural production. In contrast, we have the situation wherein, the number of ultra marginal peasants is swelling at a fast rate. This may set aside all the presumptions set forth while planning the land reforms in the country. A sharp contrast exists in the State of Maharashtra where under the present land legislations (under Section 63) a non-agriculturist cannot purchase agricultural land without obtaining required permissions¹⁴ but it is well known that unabated purchases of agricultural land is taking place in Thane, Raigad, Pune, Aurangabad and Jalna districts (at least I am aware of such bulk purchases only in these districts). For over the last five decades the rural peasantry was kept under continuous threat of land legislations and now we have enough examples of clear violations taking help of the loopholes in the legislations going unchecked. This process should not result in economic misery of a sizable number of ultra-marginal peasants and significant gains for a small number of large owners. This is an unfortunate outcome of the ^{economic} reform process. In this context the observation of Dandekar assumes importance. He remarked "Commenting on this the reviewer advocates phasing of implementation and suggests a minimax principle by means of which at each stage of implementation, the number of those already affected would be minimised while the number of those benefited would be maximised . . . the reforms did not correct the main weakness of Indian agriculture, namely, the existence of a large number of uneconomic holding. (Dandekar, 1962 b, p. 329).

Maharashtra has five specificities pertaining to the present analysis. Firstly, the State has emerged from historically diverse agrarian situations and hence the land relations were quite different in these regions. It is on this background after the independence that the land legislations were implemented and therefore the process of implementation was not only tardy but revealed many imperfections. Secondly, the State has a history of commercialisation and

concentration of industries. A continuous link of the other regions with Mumbai (the then only industrial town in this part of the country) established a strong commercial linkage with the hinterlands. It is well known that the technological change of mid-sixties in the agricultural sector took quite some time to establish itself in the State. By then the land reform measures had already reached the second phase of implementation. The level of adoption of the new technology together with the regional resource endowment and implementation of the institutional reform decided together the regional pattern of development in the State. The uneven regional development profile caused by the uneasy nexus between agriculture and industry gave rise to many problems. Thirdly, Maharashtra has been one of the leading States in the pre-independence and post-independence Congress movement. The grass-root level structure of most of the political parties is quite well entrenched here and this has facilitated the emergence of a strong class of rural elites. The process of increased politicisation taken together with the reforms imposed from above has given rise to its half-hearted implementation (Ladejinsky, 1977). The process was further fueled by the emerging politicisation of the bureaucracy. This has led to many evasions utilising legalistic loopholes, administrative inadequacies and contravention of law. Fourthly, Maharashtra also has a history of social movements with an active role from its peasantry. Beginning, with the awakening initiated by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule through the Satya Shodhak Samaj and to the present day Shetkari Sanghatana, the platforms for the arguments were quite different so also the arguments but the participants were common to all these movements. Such movements have created positive impact in the form of an intense awareness of the rights and requirements of the peasantry. Though the movements could not win over the caste stratification they could ensure the rights of peasantry to a large extent but ironically only of the highly politicised and strong peasant groups could take advantage of this. It was noted by this author in a separate analysis that the sub-marginalisation of peasantry is growing at a faster rate among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as against the other caste groups (Deshpande, 1997). This clearly, shows that the social movements also could not break the social stratification. Lastly, Maharashtra is among the leading States in the process of liberalisation participating with zeal in the programmes opened up due to the New Economic Policy (NEP). It is also a State which has attracted one of the highest amounts of foreign investments. The emerging economic forces in

the State will require higher growth in the agricultural sector to deal with the demand forces and the consequent level of commercialisation¹⁵.

The agrarian changes in response to land reforms along with other institutional changes, social and economic factors have put the agricultural sector presently at cross roads. Among the major problems confronting the agricultural sector, the top^{most} priority has to be accorded to restraining of the sub-marginalisation of the peasantry. Apart from this it has become essential to reactivate forces in the rural tenancy market which have been distorted due to the State interventions (Sen, 1981). The ultra-marginal holdings are increasing at a rate higher than warranted by the current demographic trends. It is also observed that the ultra-marginal holdings are increasing in the group of Scheduled Castes^{and} Scheduled Tribes. If this trend has to be arrested, then basic reforms are essential to ensure economic floor level for size of holding. In ~~the~~ theoretical debates with Georgescu Roegen, Dandekar had taken up the issue of the consequences of creating individual holdings less than optimum production unit. (Dandekar, 1962,a). He forewarned throughout the arguments during 1960's and thereafter about the possibility of non-viable, inefficient small units without proper resource endowments. It seems that the possibility then expressed has come close~~ly~~ to reality.

Purchase of agricultural land by corporate sector and non-cultivator urban elites has become a recent phenomena in Maharashtra. This is clearly visible in some coastal districts as well as in the urban hinterlands. The irony of the situation is that such purchases are not easily permissible under the existing land legislations but effectively carried out by making use of some loose ends in the law. If land is being used more economically and if the displaced cultivators are not worse off in their new vocation (if any !), then such purchases need not cause any alarm. However, little evidence is available to ward off the fear.

Nadkarni (1976) brought forth the evidence based on the survey data from rural Marathwada about the tenants from dominant classes. We have also seen that the 48th NSS round not only confirms the existence of tenants from the group of cultivators holding more than 4 hectares of land leased in by the medium and the large holders, is for the period of 'more than five years' as well as 'more than twelve years'. Thus it becomes essential to distinguish between small holder tenants as against the tenants of dominant class. V M Rao (1992) argued to provide for an appropriate tax provision and compulsion for recording the tenancy in the village records. However, given the experience^{of} tinkering with land legislations during the first

as well as second phase of land reforms such policy imperatives are unlikely to help. Given the present tenancy situation in the State, it is not only the tenant who needs protection but more precisely the landlords (small and marginal holders leasing out land to large holders) who have to be guarded effectively. In the process of liberalisation it is not unfounded to expect the corrections of imperfect conditions prevailing in the tenancy market. Thus the existing tenancy legislations can be relaxed ⁱⁿ stages to allow the natural functioning of tenancy market.

An important positive gain of the legislations imposing ceiling on land holding and abolishing of intermediaries was the almost total elimination of absentee landlordism. But the pace with which the ceiling legislations were discussed and implemented was slow (more than required) for the land owning class to make 'necessary' arrangements. Aided by the sufficient loopholes in the law the acquiescence of peasantry to the ceiling laws imposed from above was not very surprising. Now it has become necessary to reconsider the ceiling legislations effectively to stop further fragmentation and increase in the number of uneconomic size of holdings. Further fragmentation and ceiling on the 'size' of assets (here land) if continued on agricultural sector even in the present phase of NEP there is a possibility of strong rural dissent. But at the same time the trend of good agricultural land going out of cultivation needs to be guarded.

Land legislations during the wee years of independence were comprehended, discussed and framed by the leading freedom fighters and not many of them felt it necessary to discuss these with farmers who were likely beneficiaries or sufferers. The situations have changed significantly during the last five decades and the process of decentralised democratisation has taken firm roots in the rural soils. If we contemplate another phase of reforms (it must come now) in response to NEP, it will neither be desirable nor feasible to alienate the peasantry from the decision making process. Raj Krishna argued strongly for peasant franchise in this context Raj Krishna (1961, p.256). There ^{is one} ~~are two~~ essential pre-requisites for creating a favourable situation. Firstly, it is necessary to initiate a debate at the State level (for individual states) culminating into a national level thinking process covering broadly : (i) Protection to lessors and lessee, (ii) Floor level ceiling for prevention of sub-marginalisation, (iii) Reconsideration of ceiling on agriculture holding and the prevention of fragmentation legislations, (iv) Land for non-agricultural uses, (v) Commercialisation trends in agriculture, (vi) Optimum economic use of village commons and (vii) Production organisation of the agricultural sector. This decade is

likely to bring together some vital issues for considerations and recently a few such national level attempts have taken place ~~abroad~~ (Government of India, 1988, Giri Institute of Development Studies, 1990 and Singh, Haque and Reddy 1992). The outcome of this discussions culminates into one important consideration that a fresh look at the changing agrarian structure vis-à-vis the development strategy under NEP, is quite essential. V. M. Rao's comment in this context is quite succinct. "The policy makers usually spend considerable time and energy in improving the legislative and implemetation aspects of land reforms (or any other policy tools sic.). While these are important aspects, the crucial criterion for successful land reforms is the extent to which they form part of a cohesive development strategy capable of integrating the objective of growth with those of equity and poverty eradication. Without the support of such a strategy, no amount of tinkering with legislation and implementation would be of much help in getting effective land reforms." (Rao, 1992, P.A.-57). It is true that land reforms are necessary pre-requisites for economic development, in turn it is also expected that the development process sets in motion some reforms process. We are at this point now.

Notes:

1. There are five broad regions in Maharashtra having distinct history of the emergence of agrarian structure. These are :

(i) Konkan Region : This is a Western Coastal region consisting of Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts.

(ii) Western Maharashtra : The districts falling in the south western and central Maharashtra which do not form the part of the other regions are included here. The districts included here are : Kolhapur, Solapur, Satara, Sangli, Pune, Ahmednagar and Nashik. The later three districts actually form the central Maharashtra region.

(iii) Khandesh Region : Includes only two northern districts of Dhule and Nashik.

(iv) Marathwada Region : This was a part of erstwhile Hyderabad State and includes Aurangabad, Jalna, Parbhani, Beed, Nanded, Latur and Osmanabad districts.

(v) Vidarbha Region : This region was in the erstwhile Central Provinces and Berar. It includes districts of Akola, Amaravati, Buldhana, Yavatmal, Wardha, Nagpur, Chandrapur, Gadchiroli and Bhandara districts.

2. Mohammedan Law of inheritance causes large number of claimants.

3. The land price was fixed very low and any rationale behind fixing such low price could not be traced. Which clearly showed derecognition of the market forces while framing the legislations, a point often argued by Dandekar, (Dandekar, 1994).

4. Dr. Ambedkar in his early writing clearly brought out the burden of uneconomic and fragmented holdings in Maharashtra.

5. Dandekar and Khudanpur (1957), gave a clear picture of this. It was later confirmed and supplemented in an in-depth analysis by Dantwala and Shah (1971). Even after the second phase of tenancy reforms the discrepancies continued.

6. Not recording of 'other rights' in the proper column in the village records was a common practice in Marathwada. It was told by a retired deputy collector from the region that there were quite a few villages where there was absolutely not a single protected tenant. A village in Parbhani taluka of Parbhani district was cited as an example. This was mainly due to faulty recording.

7. The intricacies of the Hyderabad tenancy act were explained to me by a high level retired revenue official who worked in the region for all through his career.

8. The conditions of land records has been pathetic in the country. Planning Commission had appointed Professor Wadhwa as one man commission on registration of title to land. Wadhwa recommended 'Torren System' on experimental basis to replace the present presumptive titles to land. (Wadhwa, 1989).

9. It is interesting to note that the partitions could not be easily resorted to by the Muslim landlords due to the Mohammedan Law except for inam lands. As a result, Muslim landlords could not circumvent the ceiling laws as easily as was done by Hindus.

10. The terms of lease are also undergoing significant changes in the State. NSS 48th round reported that 36.17 per cent of the total tenancy area under fixed cash rent and only 6.52 per cent area under rent in terms of fixed product. The share of produce forms the second preference among the terms of tenancy. But the share tenancy contract was more common during seventies (NSS, 26th round) .Dogra (1991) analyzed the economic reasons for such shifts as seen from the literature.

11. Report of the National Commission on Rural Labour (1991) and the Planning Commission study (1989), deal with this aspect.

12. Size of land holding in Yavatmal was large mainly due to existence of money lenders, Mali Patils and Deshmukhs. We have not any analysis of the intervention of caste as a social operand in changing agrarian structure in Maharashtra. It must be noted that the hypothesis pertaining to changes in the caste dominant use of resource structure is quite relevant in Maharashtra. Thimmaiah and Aziz (1983) analysed this unique hypothesis in the context of Karnataka.

13. Commercialization of agriculture is noted in the case of Parbhani District.

14. Section 63 (a) and (b) of the Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands. Act incorporates that - in view of eliminating further absentee landlordism no sale, gift, exchange, or lease of any land or interest therein to a person who is a non-agriculturist or who is not an agricultural labour. The Collector however, may grant permission for such transaction.

15. Lipton (1974) has given a theoretical setting for the process of land reforms in developing countries. The context is changing very fast with the relaxation of urban land ceiling act being already on cards.

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