

IMPLEMENTATION OF CEILING ON AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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IN THE TELENGANA AREAS of Andhra Pradesh an attempt to limit the size of holdings was made in 1955, by enforcing, experimentally, in Khammam District, sections 53c and 53g of the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1950. These sections were added to the original Act by an amendment in 1954. The Land Commission appointed by the Government had defined the local areas and fixed the extent of family-holdings for each local area. The amendment to the Act provided that for the existing holdings the ceiling should be four and a half family-holdings, and for future acquisitions the limit should be three family-holdings, for the local areas concerned. The implementation of these provisions in Khammam did not make much headway and had to be totally suspended when the landholders secured a stay order on their enforcement. This was the first experience in the state on limiting the size of agricultural holdings. It can be presumed that the landholders got wind of the possible future measures in this direction and reacted appropriately in spite of the fact that alienations of land were restricted by section 47 of the Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1950.

The question of ceiling on agricultural holdings was taken up again in 1958, after the reorganization of the states in 1956. A draft Bill was prepared and circulated and was later sent to a Joint Select Committee. The provisions in the original Bill underwent considerable changes and what was finally recommended by the Joint Select Committee was so much in variance with the original Bill that, it is quite possible, the Planning Commission successfully played a persuasive role in improving the provisions of the Bill and bringing it in line with its own thinking on the matter, at least to a certain extent. The Bill as recommended by the Joint Select Committee was enacted into law with the title "The Andhra Pradesh Ceiling on Agricultural Holdings Act 1961".