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Topic : Land Reform System

Land Reform System:

Land reform refers to efforts to reform the ownership and regulation of land in India. Or, those lands which are redistributed by the government from landholders to landless people for agriculture or special purposes are known as **Land Reform**.

In brief:

Land is precious for any country and used by people for productivity and as a source of food, for place to live, for wood, for place to work. In India, before colonial rule the land used to be in the hands of the community as a whole. However during the British Raj, this was changed.

Lord Carnwallies had introduced Permanent Land Settlement for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in **1793**. According to this the tax farmers appointed by the British rulers was converted as various Land Lords. Under this rule they had to pay fixed commission to the East India Company. Thus these intermediaries were formed and called Jagirdar / **Jamindar**.

Emergence of Tenants: Following the Land Settlement Act, 1793, the farmers purchase lands from the Land Lords and hire it for their agricultural use. These people who hired the land were called tenants.

Variations in Tendency:

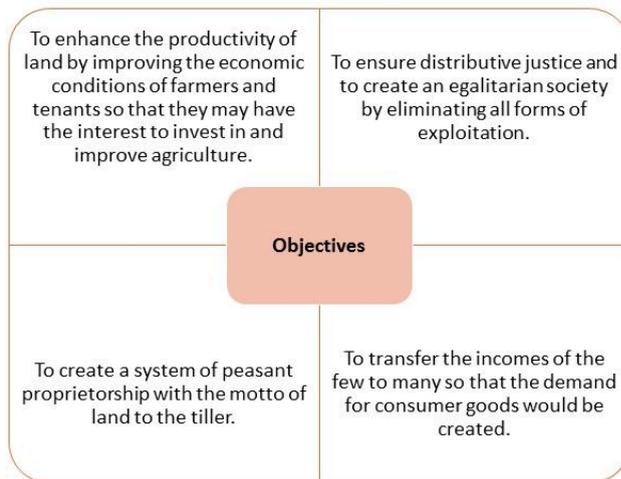
Cash Tenants: They pay a fixed tax for the use and occupy of the land.

Share - cash Tenants: They pay part of their rent in cash and other part as share of the crop.

Crop - share Tenants: They pay a share of crops only.

Croppers: They pay crops of the share. But they were not independent and worked under the landlord.

Objectives of land Reform:



Abolishment of Intermediaries:

- It was widely recognised that the main cause of stagnation in the agriculture economy was to a large extent due to exploitative agrarian relations.
- The Chief instrument of the exploitation were the intermediaries like Zamindars, patronised and promoted by the British government.
- About 60% of the area under cultivation was under the Zamindari system on the eve of the Independence. The States took the task of abolishing the intermediaries like Zamindars by passing the legislations.
- The government estimates state that in total during the first four Five years Plan, 173 million acres of land was acquired from the intermediaries and two crores tenants were given land to cultivate.
- Abolition of intermediaries is generally agreed to be one component of land reforms that have been relatively successful. The record in terms of the other components is mixed and varies across states and over time. Landowners naturally resisted the implementation of these reforms by directly using their political clout and also by using various methods of evasion and coercion, which included registering their own

land under names of different relatives to bypass the ceiling, and shuffling tenants around different plots of land, so that they would not acquire incumbency rights as stipulated in the tenancy law.

- The success of land reform has been driven by the political will of specific state administrations, the notable achievers being the left-wing administrations in Kerala and West Bengal.

Tenancy Reforms:

Tenancy reforms included the following set of measures:

- 1.Regulation of rent
- 2.Security of tenure
- 4.Ownership rights of tenants
- 5.Tenants in India are classified into

Occupancy Tenants: They enjoy permanent rights over land and cannot be evicted easily.

Tenants at will: They do not enjoy any right over land and can be evicted by the landlords anytime.

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Therefore, to protect the tenants at will and subtenants, the tenancy reforms are passed by the various state governments.

Regulation of Rents:

Under the British Government, the rents charged was highly exploitative with no sound economics behind it. These highly exploitative rents spelt high misery on the tenants and trapped them into vicious circles of debt and poverty.

To provide relief to the tenants from exploitative rents, the Indian government after independence passed legislation to regulate the rents (maximum limits on rent was fixed) and to reduce the miseries of the tenants.

Security of Tenure:

To protect the tenants from arbitrary evictions and to grant them permanent rights over land, legislation had been passed in most states.

Land Ceilings:

Land Ceiling on agricultural land means a statutory maximum limit on the quantity of land which an individual may hold. The imposition of the Land ceiling has two main aspects:

- Ceiling on future acquisitions.
- Ceilings on existing land holdings.

Need for Land Ceiling :

