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the Governance of Land, Water and Natural Resources

LAND REFORM EXPERIENCES SOME LESSONS FROM ACROSS SOUTH ASIA



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Introduction

Asset poverty more often than not lies at the core of poverty. Inaccessibility to land is one of the fundamental determinants of poverty, and land redistribution is a powerful weapon against poverty. Lack of assets is an effect as well as a cause of poverty in terms of income opportunities, consumption, capability building of people and their institutions. The term ‘asset poverty’ indicates a vicious circle. People without assets tend to be consumption-poor because they rely mainly on selling their labour in poorly paid markets (i.e. on adverse terms), have nothing to sell or mortgage in hard times, and consequently are economically dependent and politically weak. Access to land and natural resources, invariably, have defined not only economic but also social and political deprivation of the masses of the developing world. However, these deprivations have also generated powerful forces of protest which have either resulted in a change of political structuring itself, or have succumbed to the structuring of the extant political construct. While the spirit of redistributive land reforms came from the peasant mobilization during the nationalist struggle of these countries of the developing world, the content of land reforms in most of these countries, except for China, Cuba and Korea came from the needs of transforming the economies into modern industrial ones to which land relations were seen to be a bottleneck. This is the story across the globe, be it Africa, Asia or Latin American countries. However, after a certain period of time land question was an avoidable issue in most of these countries.

Land reforms came on the national and international agenda in a major way in the post-World-War II period. In the ‘free world’, the newly independent countries, enamoured by the development path followed by the capitalist world (unmindful of the historical contingencies of that path, of which colonialism was one), were all set to chart out a similar path for their economies. In doing so they were led by the transition theory which posed the classic transition problem requiring agriculture to provide both surplus and labour for the growth of a modern industrial economy. Distribution of land here came in as a structural bottleneck in effecting a successful transition of the economy. The very nature of problem placed distribution second to the primary concern of efficiency in agricultural production, which would release resources (capital and labour) for investment in the modern industrial sector. Of course, equity consideration too weighed-in due to the political considerations of these ‘free’ states, but nevertheless was fashioned in a way to play a seconding role to efficiency considerations. This comes to be seen in the content of their land reforms package as well its outcome. This is not to say that efficiency of production and distribution are contradictory, rather quite the opposite. It is an equitable distribution that is a pre-condition of a sustainable expanding production; otherwise it would severely compromise the functioning of the other blade (that of demand) of the famous Marshallian scissors.

Similarly, land reforms came on the national and international agenda at least in part with an explicit political motive of containing communism from feeding on the fire of wide unrest across the ‘newly free world’ emanating from a highly iniquitous land holding pattern, which was severely compromising livelihood capabilities of the rural-agrarian masses. Most importantly, in most countries, national movements (often built with strong support of the peasantry) prioritized issues of economic justice for the masses, which obviously included redistribution of land. But the motive underwent a transition over time. Land reforms took a different orientation under the guidance of the International

Financial Institutions, especially in the developing World where this new approach was actively promoted. The focus now was on market led agrarian reforms. However, to put the agency issue in a proper perspective, it is important to locate the instrumentality of land reforms in terms of what is sought to be delivered; whether it is capability of earning livelihood, a source of well-being to the masses, or is it agrarian transformation. It is the intent of the policy regime, which would mark the choice of agency of land reforms.

Land assumes critical significance in rural areas where entire social, economic and political life is woven around it. With agriculture and primary sector activities being the primary source of income for the majority of the population in the developing world, pattern of land ownership assumes a critical significance, not only in decent livelihood capability of the masses, but also in their general well-being. Manifestations of ownership of land, and corresponding relations of production, are not limited to food security and question of subsistence. Of course, physical subsistence is the most primary human need, subject to fulfilment of which does human enterprise cater to other needs of a decent livelihood. But fulfilment of all other needs is in crucial ways dependent on the conditions of fulfilment of this basic need of food. Positioning of the individual in the relations of exchange giving entitlement to food is more or less determinant and indicative of his or her capability of fulfilling other basic needs of a decent livelihood. A landless labourer selling their labour throughout the day to be able to barely feed themselves and their dependents can neither afford education, nor healthcare in case of a medical emergency. Neither can they afford to bargain their wages, risking their daily bread. Their state of existence is more or less defined by their positioning vis-à-vis the food market. Here, their daylong labour sells for a basic subsistence quantity of food grains, leaving them with practically nothing to substantiate their human existence except for the breath they take. Therefore, issues of rights over land and access to it cannot be seen as merely a matter of equity in land distribution. It must deal with land as a productive asset, which gives access to basic needs of human existence, a source of decent livelihood.

The reforms, therefore, have to conceptualize land as a productivity unit, rather than merely being an exercise in transferring of titles. It has been seen in the land reform exercises across countries that the transferring of titles itself does not convert into entitlements in the market and polity. There are ample evidences of concentration of land re-manifesting itself due to unavailability and inaccessibility of the complementary resources, which would fructify in productive powers of land such as water, credit etc. Any production enterprise in these circumstances more often than not results in losses, which take form of indebtedness finally leading to alienation of land amounting to counter-reforms. In case of regions that are under forest, and rich in mineral wealth, rights of indigenous population for habitation along with the rights of productive exploitation have to be recognized. Declaring these indigenous segments as encroachers, and forbidding them from accessing the only source of livelihood and way of life they have known so far would amount to an effective decapacitising of these segments from any possibility of a decent livelihood. And it is in this context that land has to be seen in its relation with water and natural resources. An equitable distribution of land with an oligopoly over water would yet mean substantive inequity in terms of productive and social capacity. Similarly, forests have to be seen as productive resources that not only provide the inhabitants a livelihood, but also as a way of life far more simple and equitable than what modern societies have to offer.

As mentioned above, it is the policy regime which not only decides the content, but also the possibilities and limitations of any enterprise of land reforms. Any effort at land reforms cannot be seen in disjunction with the macro-economic policy regime. It is a given fact that land reforms cannot deliver against the spirit of the macro-economic regime in place in the country. In fact, irrespective of its packaging and content, its deliverance would be in consonance with the policy regime of the day. Macro-economic policy regime not only allows and strengthens, but also structures and enforces a certain pattern of exchange relations. Exchange relations determine distributive outcomes, which in turn effect relations of production. A just and equitable distribution of productive potential could end in highly iniquitous distribution outcomes given the way the macro-economic policy regime shapes and enforces the relations of exchange.

A conducive macro-economic policy regime, therefore, is necessary for any effective move towards land reform. It has been a historical experience that an open trade (mostly one way) policy regime necessarily leads to a concentration process in the agricultural sector and a simultaneous marginalization of the already marginal segments. Experiences of developing countries across continents speak of the indigenous population and farmers losing their land and being pushed to the margins of existence by the ever-expanding plantations and farms catering to the export-policy regime. Not only that, entire agrarian economies can be seen to have been wiped out in export promotion drives led by minerals and oil in Africa. No amount of land reform efforts would succeed in delivering the goods in a policy environment that prioritizes production over distribution. Ironically, in doing so the regime severely compromises on both production and distribution. A substantive inequity in earning capacity would mean an ineffective demand, which would dent profit realization and hence severely compromise production itself. A bludgeoning production would then require continual market (external or internal or both) expansion, leading to similar processes of concentration and consequent needs of creating and capturing newer markets.

In absence of a conducive macro-economic policy regime, the entire effort of land reforms would be futile on the count of delivering on the core issues of equity and decent livelihood capability. Experiences across the globe have seen concentration of land in few hands, as policy regime gets oriented towards market, in particular the international market. The industrial revolution in Britain, colonial experience of today's developing world, late twentieth century export-oriented policy regimes in Africa, Asia and Latin America are all undisputed evidence of this process of concentration setting in, and being reinforced by the macro-economic policy environment.

Land has come back very strongly on national and international agendas once again, but with a very different driving force with very different intentions behind it. International institutions have been a major player both in the comeback and in the framing of the land reforms agenda in the developing countries across the globe, in particular over the last fifteen to twenty years. Even where land reforms have been pushed into the limelight by pressure built-up by indigenous groups (Brazil, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Mozambique, Philippines), the content of the reform programme has been shaped in accordance with the principles advocated by these institutions.

While this comeback of land issues may be argued as a welcome development, the context and ideals under which it is being carried out, and the breach between the targeted beneficiaries and the ultimate beneficiaries cast doubt on the real intent of the programme. The priorities of the state-led land reform were the landless poor people and the destitute. How the land question is going to be settled under the policies of International Financial Institutions, often in the name of decentralization, results in effects on beneficiaries likely to be contrary to initial land reforms objectives. Given the triple squeezing (cost-price-employment) nature of today's structural adjustment and open frontier policies, the relevance of land to the livelihood of masses cannot be underestimated.

This monograph draws on some case studies of land reforms in different countries. An attempt is made to reproduce the role of peasant organizations and civil societies in bringing land reform issues to the forefront. Though the state is the main actor in the land reform process, the role played by peasants, workers, in fact the society as a whole, should not be underestimated. No social group is more conservative than a land-owning peasantry, and none is more revolutionary than a peasantry that owns too little land or pays too high a rental, argues Thiesenhusen (1989). Even for charting out a high growth path, inequity in distribution - be it of income, or assets - cannot be afforded as it not only distorts the production structure, has a built-in demand-deficiency syndrome, but also entails a high cost economy. The welfare burdens, social tensions, degradation of the environment, political instabilities, the costly flood of refugees and migrants - it is evident from a very small list itself that the costs are distributed across classes. In this respect, poverty has become a luxury which even the rich can no longer afford in the long run (Jazairy, Alamgir and Panuccio, 1992).

Ironically, there has been a global campaign against poverty under the tutelage of Bretton Woods Institutions. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers have been prepared for different countries (of course with

similar prescriptions and proscriptions), and aid is being pumped in via civil society groups (notice the state has to retreat here too under the World Bank prescription) for combating poverty. Surely, importance of land reforms could not have been missed in this highly charged campaign against poverty. In fact, a World Bank study (quoted in Thompsom, 2003, 413) observes that implementing land reform has a similar effect on poverty to a 10 percent increase in per capita income. Likewise, Bharat Dogra refer to a study by FAO which estimates that redistribution of only 5 percent of farmland in India, coupled with improved access to water, could reduce rural poverty levels by 30 percent compared to what it would otherwise be (Dogra, 2002). Besley and Burgess (2000) in their recent empirical work on the subject make a persuasive case and argue that land reforms in India, as and where implemented, have had a robust impact in reducing poverty. A one-time redistribution of assets can, in an environment of imperfect markets, be associated with permanently high levels of growth. Cross-country regression clearly demonstrates that inequality in the distribution of land ownership is associated with lower subsequent growth (Birdsall & Londono 1918; Deininger & Square 1998, Deininger & Olinto World Bank, 2001 world development report). At the household level, asset ownership has a clear impact on subsequent growth possibilities (Blanchflower & Oswald 1998; Hoff 1996). Contribution of a more equitable distribution of land ownership to human development indicators comes out very powerfully in the country experiences, such as that of China vis-à-vis India (Burgess, 1999).

Importance of land

Land has been a major determinant of social status, political power and class structure since times immemorial. It is the main asset around which power systems and social hierarchy gets structured, at least in rural society (Uphoff, 2003). Owning a piece of land gives one a very immediate and physical sense of citizenship in one country. As Penn has rightly observed “in much of the world today the ownership of land carries with it ownership to government - the right to tax, the right to judge, the power to enact and enforce police regulations.” As Dore (1958) argues, “the land ownership is a decisive determinant of the social structure, of the level of agricultural production, of the well-being of the mass of the population, and increasingly in this age when ideologies transcend frontiers, of the stability of the political system.” Inequality in access to land in whatever form stands in the path of development. Teeming slums, people under flyovers with died hopes of a possibility of better future – are the results of this inequality. This story does not end in one generation; it transcends generations, severely limiting any development potential worth its name.

Barraclough’s observation that “existing inequalities in the distribution of wealth, power and social status, which in turn impede the efficient use of disposable resources, depress the rates of investment in industry as well as in agriculture and prevent the achievement of minimum social and political stability,” though made in the context of Latin American countries, holds true for the entire developing world. Likewise, Dorner (1972) observes that a system built on inequity and privilege is inconsistent with economic development. Inequality in the ownership of land thus maps directly into inequality of income through implied distribution of rental income (Benjamin and Brandt 1997).

All the above views put together are testimony to the fact that inequality in access to assets is not only incompatible with development, which consists of substantive freedom - economic, social or political – but also works to counter economic development conceptualized in terms of higher and faster growth rate. History shows that countries with greater equality in asset holding have grown faster, for example: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China etc. The fact that ownership of land and equity in holdings has a much favourable and permanent impact on the economy than any other asset distribution because of the fundamental relevance of land to human existence is borne by the experience of these countries. Reduction of inequality was achieved through state-led land reforms in these countries. The following section sheds light on the concepts of land reform.

Land Reform

Land reforms (also agrarian reform, though that can have a broader meaning) is an often-controversial alteration in the societal arrangements whereby government administers possession and use of land. Land reform may consist of a government-initiated or government-backed real estate property redistribution, generally of agricultural land, or be part of an even more revolutionary programme that may include forcible removal of an existing government that is seen to oppose such reforms.¹

Land reform most often refers to transfer of ownership from a relatively small number of privileged owners with extensive land holdings (e.g. plantations, large ranches, or agribusiness plots) to individual ownership by those who work the land. Such transfer of ownership may be with or without consent or compensation; compensation may vary from token amounts to the full value of the land. This definition is somewhat complicated by the issue of state-owned collective farms. In various times and places, land reforms have encompassed the transfer of land from ownership — even peasant ownership in smallholdings — to government-owned collective farms; it has also, in other times and places, referred to the exact opposite: division of government-owned collective farms into smallholdings. The common characteristic of all land reforms, however, is modification or replacement of existing institutional arrangements governing possession and use of land.²

Land reform is a blanket term often used interchangeably with agrarian reform, though they are not necessarily the same thing. Land reform can be defined as a change in the agency relationship of production sphere preceded by change in land ownership. It is a process which, while effecting changes in the existing power relations in the society, enables the masses to explore a healthy economic, social and political life. As the primary source of income, status, and security for over half a billion families in the developing world, unfettered and secured access to agricultural land can play a defining role in improving nutrition for poor households. It can produce other crucial benefits like “ladders out of poverty” and a foundation for sustained and inclusive economic growth, reduced social unrest and urban migration and better environmental stewardship.

The idea of agrarian reform evolves when a society, or a part of it, realizes that some of its institutions are inadequate with regard to the reality of the existing agrarian structures and vis-à-vis the immediate economic or political needs. As observed in the April 2000 report of International Fact Finding Mission to Brazil, “Agrarian reform is one of the most effective measures for guaranteeing the right to feed oneself; it breaks up the cycle of exclusion for millions of peasants, whose access and control over production resources has been denied, whilst offering them the possibility of producing food for their own subsistence and for conditions of male and female peasants, allowing them to become real actors in the economic, social and political development of society. Agrarian reform is also the basis of a sustainable agricultural system.”

Not only do these reforms have profound implications for the livelihood of the masses, it also plays a generating force in the overall development of the economy. By reducing speculation in land, it releases crucial financial resources from agriculture to non-agricultural sectors (e.g. China, Taiwan). It changes the resource distribution, bringing equality in the distribution of wealth, access to productive resources. It also implies that with land reform other institutions must be redirected and reshaped at the same time such as the insurance of services, inputs, research, irrigation, credit, market, and strengthening the position of the beneficiaries in the market by appropriate macro-economic policy regime. Thus,

¹

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_reform

² Ibid

agrarian reform involves much more than simply distribution of land. Indeed, land tenure system can be likened to a prism which government policy must pass on its way to delivering a product or service to the recipient farmer. In traditional land tenure systems, government policy is refracted so that most of its benefits are narrowly focused on the rural elite, the large landowners. Subsidized credit, extension help, market breaks, less expensive inputs, and agricultural resources tend to benefit the dominant elites, the majority resource holders. What redistributive land reform does is to make government policies and services accrue to a larger and more needy section of the population, which is more likely to make productive use of those services. Land reform is no panacea. Its main purpose till date has been to make certain that the growth is sustainable for which benefit of growth is directed to a wider group than a select few.

In this context, it is imperative to discuss the typology of land reform. Based on the result, land reforms could be classified as 'genuine land reform', and 'blanket reform.' All land reforms that do not break the agency relations are blanket reforms, while the genuine reforms include the breaking of agency relations, establishing new social relations and also initiation of a new and more equitable wealth distribution process. Empirical evidence shows that where the land reform was aimed at establishing right to access to land as a legitimate right of the masses, reform was successful. While the case where the masses are included in a charity-oriented land reform, the outcome has been disappointing to say the least. Blanket reforms are more about putting intentions on paper rather than translating them in the fields for the benefit of the masses.

Most of land reform models inevitably bring drastic change in the mode of production in agriculture. For example, when large estates and plantations, or collective farms are dismantled into small owner operated farms, as in Latin American and transitional economies, the reforms are bound to have significant impact on productivity of agriculture either positively or negatively. On the other hand, the Asian model does not bring the substantial change of the production mode, though the land tenure relationship can be modified drastically.

As mentioned earlier, effective land reforms negate the economic prowess and profligacy of landlords and releases resources which can then be judiciously utilized for productive investment in agriculture and to increase the rate of capital formation. The following two premises of redistributive policies are particularly relevant for the understanding of the economics of land reform: (1) total income available for consumption and for capital formation in an economy is itself a function of the state of distribution. (2) Changes in the state of distribution have a direct impact on the prospects of income generation in the economy.

One of the benefits of land reform counted by a host of academicians is that it also shifts saving and labour from agriculture to industrial sector, thus further creating environment for development. Guinnane and Miller argue that land reforms, particularly the reform of tenancy system and reduction of the size of very large farms, should be seen in the liberalized situation to increase economic efficiency in three ways - 1) security of tenure and livelihood, 2) land as collateral, and 3) commoditisation of land (Guinnane and Miller 1997). In fact, this is seen to be among the most important lessons emerging from development experience in the post-World War II era.

One very important point to note, however, is that the arguments made for land reforms in effect define its content. At the risk of deviation from the immediate focus of the study, it may be pertinent to note here that development defined today is in effect a production centric process, which calls for cumulative accumulation of capital, irrespective of the sector in which it has to set in. It is in this perspective that transformation of land as collateral and a commodity are seen to be as 'should be' targets of land reforms, a step towards an efficient mode of production. What is missed is that the very fact of commoditising land and giving it a collateral value would pose serious questions not only on equity, but also sustainable economic growth (let alone development), a sustainable environment, and last but not the least – a truly democratic and just polity. Majority of the literature on land reforms has confined itself to discussing the need and packaging of reforms in the context of current development paradigm. Any reform

measure aimed at establishing, or allowing a full-fledged land market, inevitably establishes a tendency towards concentration of land and a tendency towards derivation of rental income from it.

The economic performances of the so called Asian miracle cases, such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, which are considered to be very impressive examples of extremely effective land reforms, made small farms efficient through dispersal strategies and highlighted the superiority of these farms in contributing agricultural surplus for investment in other sectors of the economy. The conditional ties of structural adjustment cannot be consciously permitted to obscure the virtues of small farms in fostering wholesome agricultural development. Thus, the efficiency of the sector should be improved by activating the small farms through easy access to factor markets by removing various imperfections (be it of a social or market make). Otherwise, the unbridled growth of large enterprises, and the resultant over-specialization would exacerbate the landlessness among the rural masses. The retrenched unskilled agricultural labour force would have to seek employment in the urban service sectors, this would further the social problems. Hence, the reforms in agricultural sector, particularly land ceiling, should not be integrated with blanket reforms consistent with liberalization in the other sectors.

Feudal centres created by the concentration of land ownership in few hands are the main reason of low productivity of agricultural sectors of many developing countries. It is generally well acknowledged that the class of emancipated and economically empowered small peasant producers played a key role in the agricultural revolutions in these countries. In India, a variety of regional and sub-regional politico-economic patterns have emerged since independence, and here too, the relatively successful agricultural performances have often been via the peasant route: for instance, the early green revolution belt in India, i.e. Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh and some other pockets can be described as a version of the 'capitalism from below'. Any argument against small farms and farmers made on the issue of capital formation and hence economic development is clearly ignorant of the inter-sectoral linkages. Jha very aptly points towards the importance of these historical experiences. The need for addressing the agrarian questions of developing countries with these historical contexts of colonialism/imperialism and massive migration in mind is even more urgent, as some of these processes facilitated the economic transformation of the contemporary developed world.

Furthermore, the range of trajectories of agrarian transition for the latecomers has also got constrained in significant ways. Specifically, it has become increasingly clear that for countries in the third world, where large sections of the population are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods, feasibility of successful agricultural transformation through the landlord road, or by any other road that ignores the issue of land reform, is highly suspect. There is a great deal of evidence from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America that the agricultural policies pursued in the post-World War II era (i.e. period when most of these countries got the political space to embark on trajectories of relatively autonomous economic development), generally neglected thoroughgoing land reforms. By and large, the strategies adopted by them resulted in betting on the strong and excluding the weak. Not surprisingly, across these continents, agrarian structure has either remained, or has evolved towards, what Barraclough (1997) has described, with reference to the Latin American agriculture, as "bi-model," or what Joshi (1987) calls, with reference to the Indian agriculture, as "structural dualism." Such a characterization does seem useful for much of the Third World, with suitable qualifications for country-specific differences and varying degrees of complexity and does capture one of the fundamental traits of most of these countries: that a large section of the rural population is almost trapped in agriculture for livelihood, much of it barely surviving, with no means of escape. Much of this section forms the hardcore of persistent rural poverty globally.

Thus, the process of agricultural transformation in much of the Third World, even though it may have pockets of substantial achievements, can hardly be considered as being on a successful trajectory, even in terms of the conventional kinds of paradigm thrown up by the early literature in Development Economics regarding the contribution of the agricultural sector to a country's economic development. In the case of latecomers to modern economic growth, the limited success, or even abject failure in many cases, in terms of agricultural transformation can be traced to their inability to confront squarely the

structural constraints related to inequalities in access to land, with substantial masses of landless populations in several instances eking out barest of subsistence, and insecure tenancies etc.

The process of modern economic growth has not contributed much to poverty alleviation, in fact, the growth periods have seen intensification of poverty; though, the causality between the two is highly contested. Nevertheless, because this process of growth largely bypasses the pocket of poverty, it is not surprising if poverty reduction has not gone hand in hand with growth process. Poverty is a global scourge, and it does not seem to be abating. The total population below the poverty line is estimated to be more than one billion, of which about 939 million are in the rural areas. Asia has the highest shares of these, some 633 million followed by 204 million in sub-Saharan Africa, about 76 million in Latin America and the Caribbean and the balance in the near-east and North Africa. Female-headed households account for 20 percent of all rural households in the third world (excluding China and India) are among the poorest of the poor. In sub Saharan Africa, female-headed households account for one-third of all rural households. The number of rural women living in absolute poverty has risen over the last 20 years by about 50 percent - from an estimated 370 million to about 565 million as against an increase of about 30 percent for rural men. The road to sustainable growth involves recognizing the contribution the rural poor make to economic production, savings and growth, and helping to foster conditions in which their contribution can be upgraded, made more productive and reduce drudgery.

State-led versus market-led land reforms

While the cause of land reforms is well established, there is a divergent opinion regarding the agency of reform. To date, there have been two primary agents of land reform: 1) the state, and 2) the market. While the land reforms in the immediate post-colonial period were led by welfare states, over time the mantle has shifted to the market, especially at the pushing and shoving of the World Bank. Where state-led reform with a redistributive focus takes into account the economic and social justice, market-led reforms are led by the sacred principle of efficiency. Market by its very construction does not recognize need. It is driven by demand, which is need backed by purchasing power. As Samuelson aptly remarks, the market recognizes only dollar votes in which the legitimate demands and just needs of a society have no cognitive value. Now, if land is taken to be merely a commodity, the market could successfully yield its efficient allocation (or would it?). But in this land market, of which the IFIs are staunch votaries, equity has no place. Commoditisation of land would very simply mean that at the end of the day, howsoever circuitous route may be followed, land would ultimately get concentrated in the hands of those with greater dollar votes.

Land policies should be made in order to make land an accessible asset for those who till it, invest in it, whose livelihood and well-being is dependent on it, rather than to direct it in the hands of those who can buy it with their money, derive rental income and speculate on it. Mr Borrás Jr (2006) distinguishes between these two reform kinds in the context of ongoing critique of these two reforms. According to him, market led approach is based on three stages (1) Getting access to land (2) post-land purchase farm development and (3) a financing mechanism. He also establishes the failure of market-led reforms in Colombia, South Africa, and Brazil. Regarding the land market, the land sold is of inferior quality. Evidence from Brazil, Colombia and South Africa puts into serious question the MLAR assumption of lower price of land. The unrecognized power equations, between the two actors - buyer and the seller – favours the more powerful in setting the price of land and bargaining. The willing buyer and willing seller principle of the market led reform is dubious to say the least, as it does not recognize the inherent imperfections in the nature of market mediating the transaction between the two. Power and money plays a role in financial assistance too, which is more affordable by the rich class than the poor peasants. This power is likely to be more captivating at the local level as Griffin warned that, “it is conceivable, even

likely that power at the local level is more concentrated, more elitist and applied more ruthlessly against the poor than at the centre (1980, 225).

Agrarian reform – one that is truly redistributive and based on the twin foundations of economic development and social justice – remains urgent and necessary in most developing countries today. But the market, as advocated in the MLAR model, cannot carry out a redistributive function in the way that the state can. Empirical evidence from the initial implementation of the MLAR model in Brazil, Colombia and South Africa suggests that the model simply does not work in the manner predicted by its proponents. Altering the legal framework of land relations causes great inequity; those with knowledge or access to knowledge of the new legal regime and finance can rapidly acquire land at the expense of those who suddenly find that they have no recognized interests in the land any more. Security of livelihood for them disappears along with equity, and the basis is laid for a disaffected, landless peasantry and an unemployed urban proletariat, hardly a recipe for a stable society (Alamgir, Jazaivry, and Pannucio, 1992).

The impact of state led land reforms on landlessness is much more profound than the market-led reforms. Even here, state-led land reform has taken many forms. These include successful one-time state interventions to create egalitarian peasant ownership (Republic of Korea), and expropriation to create collectivized agriculture (Cuba). In countries such as India, intermediary rights in land tenure were abolished but with due compensation. A token of equity too was bought from the landed segments in the form of a ceiling act, and security of tenure was sought to be provided to the under-raiyats by recording their rights. The success of reforms has varied: Japan's reform was highly successful, Bolivia's was less successful, and the Philippines is somewhere in-between. In India, while abolition of intermediary rights in land was successful, recording of rights and acquisition of ceiling surplus had only a very marginal success, that too in certain pockets. The state-led model has been criticized for being market distorting and inefficient. It is true that if successful, such reform would disrupt normal and unequal market relations. But once the transfer of land is completed, it would lay the foundation of a vibrant production system with remarkable economic and political stability on the basis of a more equitable distribution of wealth.

Japan was the first Asian country to transform a tradition-bound agricultural economy based on subsistence farming and hierarchical social relationship into a dynamic system, contributing to the process of modern economic growth. The effort for it goes back to the Meiji era. Provisions like land tax for large landholders, and low interest rates for peasantry etc prepared the path for a relatively radical land reform. This urgency came after food shortages during and after the world war period (1946). It started with the review of all tenurial arrangements. Within a short span of two years, the appropriated land was distributed to farmers. As a result, 94 % of all Japanese farmers now own land and cultivate their own land. The socio-economic-political effects of this rural revolution were dramatic.

Exceptional historical circumstances allowed Japan to reduce dependency on agriculture and transition to an industrial economy. Needless to say, the circumstances themselves cannot be replicated. What can however be learnt is that a strong political will pushes through dramatic changes in land inequalities. The critical lesson is that land redistribution is a pre-requisite to full-scale development. The rural poor in developing countries cannot be forced out of agriculture or pushed into low-paying wage labour for private corporations in special economic zones. If land, stolen from the rural poor, continues to be sold to large landowners and companies, resentment and resistance against such policies will also rise. The examples presented in the following chapters illustrate constant tensions between these oppositional interests, and various moments of victory and defeat in struggles for land reform. A cross-country look at land reform experiences and achievements will, hopefully, reveal alternative routes and paradigms to those invested in the struggle for comprehensive land rights.

Land Reform and its Socio-Economic Outcomes

Here, we examine the importance of land reform in fostering broad based economic growth. We try to draw on, hopefully, an interesting heterogeneous mix of cases from South East Asia and South Asia. The degree of success in each of these examples varies according to the historical conditions and circumstances of each nation at the time. Moreover, as these examples clearly show, successful and unsuccessful redistribution of land is inexorably linked to implementation, internal administrative and legislative factors, pressures from external international agencies and most importantly, political movements and pressures “from below.”

Take for instance, the highly successful case of land reform in Japan, where U.S. intervention led to the systemic dismantling of the landed elite and put land into the hands of cultivators. This broad progressive change, although administered with American interests in mind, nonetheless ensured sustainable and equitable development. In others, revolutionary governments as in China, military dictatorships seeking popular support as in Philippines, popular movements and public pressure as in the late eighties in Philippines, and responses to breakdown in centralized planning systems as in Cambodia after 1995, were the crucial motivators of land reforms. The most discussed examples of successful land reform are Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. The East Asian miracle revolves round the success of eight countries in which these six have played a lead role (Hong Kong and Singapore are the other two which are not discussed here as they do not have significant agricultural base). These countries grew twice as fast as the rest of East Asian countries, three times faster than Latin America and south Asia and about five times faster than sub Saharan Africa. In the 25 years between 1960 and 1985, the real income per capita of Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia doubled while that of other four grew fourfold.³ Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong were the most equal in terms of income distribution. A report of the World Bank (1993) suggests that this success is due to their ability to “get the basics right” thus achieving a “superior accumulation of physical and human capital”. These countries implemented extensive land reforms and the consequent smallholdings substantially improved equity and efficiency. On the other hand, countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe have had to succumb to market-led reform programme, which have done little or nothing to alleviate poverty in these countries.

These varied examples from around the world demonstrate the strategies and policies, much of which will be discussed in the next chapter, that have been used to implement land reform. This chapter is split into two parts; one shows successful cases of land reform in East Asia and the other demonstrates mixed results from countries in South Asia, Latin America and Africa. The latter prove that pockets of success at the micro-level are not sufficient in fundamentally redistributing land. Therefore, the salient and most crucial point remains that any attempt at successful land reform must be accompanied with appropriate changes in the macro-economic policy regime. The following examples bear witness to the fact that ground realities fundamentally change only when accompanied with broader, systemic restructuring of the overarching economic framework within a nation.

³ World Bank, 1993, 2

JAPAN

The most thorough agricultural reform ever carried out through constitutional means has been accomplished in post-war Japan. The Land reform process started in Japan with the enactment of Farmland Adjustment Law of 1938 and the Owner Farmer Establishment Special Measures Law in 1946. However, the real enforcement of these reforms came with the U.S occupation forces. Here too, the implementation of land reforms had explicit political goals. US occupation forces enforced the reforms as a means of breaking the power of large landowners, who were the pillars of the nationalist militaristic class.

Resident landlords were entitled to retain only about one hectare. All farmland owned by absentee landlords was to be subject to compulsory purchase by the government. The term "absentee landlord" was rigorously defined so as not to allow any loopholes for escape of this class from the provisions of the act. Any landowner, who did not reside in the same village of the leased-out land, was regarded as absentee. Therefore, even if the farming landlords' leased out land extended into neighbouring villages, it was regarded as the land owned by absentees. All tenanted land of village landlords in excess of 1 hectare (4 hectares in Hokkaido prefecture) was also subject to the compulsory purchase. Owner cultivated land in excess of 3 hectares (12 hectares in Hokkaido) was to be purchased, if their cultivation was judged to be inefficient in terms of land productivity. These limits were applied on per household basis.

The purchase price was the same as that in the first Land Reform Law, which was calculated by multiplying the rental value by a fixed factor. The rental value was an officially determined figure used for taxation purposes, which was about 20-24 yen/tan for paddy land and 10 yen/tan for upland, which was settled in 1938. The fixed factor was calculated as the ratio of the land value to a capitalized land rent, imputed from typical owner-farmers operation at 1945 price level. Thus, the factor was determined to be 40 for paddy land and 48 for upland. The purchase price was to be about 760 yen/tan and 450 yen/tan, respectively in paddy land and upland. The additional bonus payment was made to the landowners for first 3 hectares (12 hectares in Hokkaido), which were 220 yen/tan for paddy land and 130 yen/tan for upland.

However, these purchase prices were extremely low when the purchases were done due to the rapid inflation of the post-war disarray. The payment to landlords was to be made in National Bonds bearing an interest of 3.6 percent and redeemable within 30 years. The purchase price of tenants was the same as the landlords selling price. Payments could be made in cash or in annual instalments within 30 years at 3.2 percent of interest. The Land Committees were set up at three levels: Village (or Town), Prefecture, and Central Land Committees. Ten members of a Village Land Committee were elected separately by three different groups - 5 from tenants, 3 from landlords and 2 from owner farmers. Purchase plan was to be drawn by Village Land Committees with the approval of the Prefecture Land Committee and purchased directly by the government. Besides the above provisions, various regulations were introduced to control tenancy relations and the tenants' rights were strengthened. For instance, all rents were to be paid in cash and the level was frozen. Tenancy contracts could not be terminated nor refused for renewal without assent by the Land Committee.

The Land Reform Law was hard to execute, since it "involved changes in the property rights of some 6 million families of whom over 2 million had every motive for trying to obstruct its purposes" (Dore 1959, 149). More than 400,000 persons were engaged in the execution of the programme. Just after the enactment of the Law, 16,781 personnel were involved in this programme (Hewes 1950, 792-6). The programme, however, required the employment of a considerable number of personnel in both national and prefecture level. Fortunately, there were fairly well-trained individuals in the Ministry of Agriculture and at the prefecture level, such as Tenancy Officers, who were specialists of tenancy problem appointed under the tenancy programme based on the Land Tenancy Conciliation Law of 1924 (Tobata 1966, 309-11). By the beginning of 1947, 415 000 persons were mobilized, including 32 000 secretaries of the

Committees and 116 000 committee members. The figure also included about 260 000 assistant staff for the Committees, who worked for the programme without pay (NKTG, 156-7). The total costs of the programme reached more than 1 billion yen during the first three years from 1946 to 1948, of which about 60 percent were used for the operation, while the rest represented institutional costs. A well-developed extension service, well maintained land records and an efficient bureaucracy had a crucial role to play in the successful implementation of land reform programme.

As the first step of the execution of the programme, members of the Village Land Committees were elected in December 1946 and those of at the prefecture level in February 1947. As the Occupation Forces ordered that the reform had to be accomplished within two years, the first compulsory purchase was done in March 1947, just after the elections of the committees. The purchase was successively executed over ten times and 1 630 000 hectares of the farmland was acquired by the government by the end of 1948. The acquired land was immediately sold to cultivators. During the period, the land price paid to landlords, fixed in 1945 price level, was reduced to a negligible level in the process of rapid inflation. In fact, prices of consumer goods in black markets in Tokyo increased about eight times from October 1945 to the middle of 1949 (Bank of Japan 1949, 178). The price of good paddy land of 1 tan (=0.099 hectares) in 1939 was equivalent to over 3 000 packages of cigarettes or 31 tonnes of coal. In 1948, however, it was equivalent to only 13 packages of cigarettes or 0.24 tonnes of coal. On the other hand, the inflation enabled the tenants to pay up within a year or two of their purchase. Through the five years of drastic reform, most of the farmland under tenancy came to cultivators' hands. Before the reform, in 1941, tenant farmers cultivated nearly half of the farmland. Ownership of these lands was drastically transferred to former cultivators of the land. When the land reform was almost accomplished in 1949, only 13 percent remained as tenanted land. In 1955, It further declined to only 9 percent of the farmland. Accordingly, number of owner cultivators increased from 31 percent in 1941 to 70 percent in 1955, and the number of landless tenant farmers decreased drastically from 28 percent to only 4 percent during the same period. Number of tenant cum owner farmers, whose land ownership was less than half of their total cultivating area, also decreased from 20 percent to 5 percent.

On the other hand, absentee landlordism almost disappeared as 80 to 90 percent of their land estimated to be about 560,000 hectares was transferred (NKTG, 1951, 783). About 70 to 80 percent, i.e. over one million hectares of the leased out and own cultivated land by village landlords was also transferred. Thus, landlordism in Japanese agriculture was abolished for good. This reflected in an increase in the productivity scenario with labour productivity increasing annually by 5% and land productivity by 4% between 1954 and 1968.

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Land distribution in colonial Korea was highly skewed. While nearly 60 percent of the population was landless, landlords, who made for less than 3 percent of the total population, owned around 64 percent of the land area. Land reforms were taken up in southern regions of Korea for, both, economic and political reasons. Thus, a miniscule segment of the total population possessed most of the agricultural land, and high rental rates seriously compromised the economic life of tenants who comprised a huge chunk of the population. This pattern of land distribution, however, also meant that once any significant movement for land redistribution started in the country, it would have such a mass base for it to gather an unstoppable momentum. This is exactly what happened in postcolonial Korea.

The movement was initially sparked by a struggle of the natives against colonial Japan - a movement against the remnants of the colonial system. With the defeat of Japan in the war, and beginning of the US military administration, a movement of denying rental payments, as well as strikes demanding redistribution of the land previously owned by the Japanese, became frequent and violent in regions that were dominated by committees and agricultural cooperatives. And once the issue of rights over land and cultivation had taken a cognitive value in the minds of the native population (in howsoever limited context of land owned by erstwhile colonial rulers), it had enough fire in the needs and life struggle of the masses to soon engulf the land owned by the Korean landlords too. On the other hand, the landlords' position was compromised by the fact that after the collapse of the colonial system, there was no institutional mechanism of ascertaining and punishing violations of tenancy contracts, particularly in rural areas. All the more, suspected pro-Japanese activities of landlords added fuel to the fire of this movement against them. The movement against tenancy had such powerful effect that while 1500 suks of rice could be collected by the landlord as rent during the colonial period, it fell to 100 suks right after August 1945, settling at 400-500 suk after 1946 for the same acreage of sharecropped land. Transaction and law enforcement costs had risen so high by 1945 that landlords lost the incentive to keep their land. It was finally the inability of the government to secure socio-economic order, and a powerful movement for redistribution that raised the costs of keeping land high enough to disincentivise the landlords from keeping land, which made for the success of land reforms.

Land reform measures initiated had three major planks: first, it brought in the clause of self-cultivation for ownership of land, meaning that an individual could own agricultural land only if they cultivate or manage it for themselves; secondly, even in the case of self-cultivation/management, an ownership of a maximum of three jungbo of land was allowed; and finally, tenancy arrangements and land renting activities were legally prohibited. However, the land reforms were not an exercise in outright expropriation of landlords. After a survey of landlord-tenant relationship was done in 1949, government purchased the land from the landlords with land securities under the provision of the ALRAA (Agricultural Land Reform Amendment Act). Land securities specified the compensation period of 5 years, as well as the price of land as a percentage of annual crop yields from the land. However, actual compensation was made by cash, and the compensation period was prolonged to more than 10 years for some of the land under reform. Land reforms were largely complete by the beginning of the 1960s, and 97.3% of the compensation for landlords was completed by the end of 1961. Altogether it took well over 10 years to complete the land reform process. In addition, the government sold the land to tenants who made payments with rice, and in fact, acted as an arbitrator between landlords and tenants.

While the reforms had complete success in bringing down tenancy incidence to almost zero, the number of owner-cultivating households, too, significantly increased from 349,000 in 1949 to 1 812 000 in

1950.⁴ The success of this exercise also had a lot to owe to the thorough development and support given to the local village government to assume land administration functions. The success of land reforms soon manifested itself in growth outcomes as agriculture achieved an annual growth rate of almost four percent under the impact of this reform.⁵

CHINA

China has undergone three phases of land reform in the last century. The first phase of land reforms was stretched over a long period, which consisted in mainly confiscation of lands of the landlords during the period 1945-50, followed by the Collectivization Era of 1950s-1979. The second phase of the reforms came in the late seventies, also popularly known as the period of 'The Household Responsibility System'. The third phase, a relatively recent addition to the legacy of land reforms is 'The 1998 Land Management Law: Strengthening Individual Household Rights to Land'.

A major achievement of the first phase of land reforms was elimination of the elite landlord class in rural society. Before the land reforms, China's rural economy was beset with skewed land distribution. Landlords exploited the peasants with excess rent. Rents from land before the revolution totalled 10.7% of the value added in the economy. On the other hand, extensive population pressure on land, exploitation of the peasants, destruction of peasant handicrafts and the impact of natural disasters were building up frustration among the masses. While the landlord flourished having liberty to enjoy an extended family and comfortable life, the peasants' family life was in distress. Among the peasants, family life was at the brink of subsistence level, with an ever-present threat of falling into a debt trap with slightest emergence of any contingency scenario. Family life was deteriorating with frequent divorces, loss of sons to the flow of unemployed migrants to the cities, increasing infant mortality, and sale of female members. Given this setting of disintegrating social and economic life, the most significant aspect of the 1945-52 land reform was not so much the redistribution of land, as the redistribution of economic security, and with it the basis for a family life.

Several provisions of the reform, which came into effect in the north and east from 1945 to 1949, and elsewhere from 1950 to 1952, brought basic economic security to those who had known none before. This process of reform was started in early 1930s by Kuomintang. While Kuomintang relied on the policy of peaceful change of ownership without annoying or disturbing the landlord class, the Chinese Communist Party relied on the mobilization of peasant class. In 1927-1931, Kuomintang reduced rent without any confiscation. The CCP reduced the rents as well as confiscated the landlord's land in the period 1931-34. Between August 1937 and May 1946, substantive reduction of rent and confiscation of lands of those considered traitors took place. The major and bold part of the reform came in October 1947, when land of the landlords was expropriated and given to the peasant households for equal ownership. This programme of CCP gave every rural family a piece of cultivable land for individual ownership. The size of this land varied from half-an-acre to two and a half acres, depending on the local land availability and family size.

Another outstanding feature of the reform was that not only were all the debts cancelled, but also rent deposits and excess rents were refunded, thereby wiping out years of unpaid obligations on the part of the masses. The reduction of current rent by 25 percent to 37.5 percent of the main crop value gave tenants a chance to rebuild their family economies on a new, more secure foundation. The redistribution of the land and assets of landlords gave tenants and poor peasants small parcels of land that could serve as safety nets for when times got hard. Another facet of this reform process was that the land reform and the concurrent "anti-local bully campaign" guaranteed the elimination of the landlord class and its armed

⁴ Ibid, 255

⁵ Ibid, 61

protectors. In the late 1940s, the Party allowed landlords and local thugs to be dealt with seriously and, often, violently. An estimated 800 000 landlords lost their lives. Many of the others fled to the cities, emptying the villages of a major source of peasant economic insecurity.

However, insufficient land coupled with the absence of complementary means of income left the majority of peasants hard pressed to make ends meet. This once again provided landlordism a possible opening for a backdoor entry, as small farmers were forced to sell their land gained during the reform process. Rich or well-to-do middle peasants who had recovered from the reform began expanding their economies and bought these parcels. The result was a process of re-polarization, which threatened to undo the gains of the reform. However, the political message was loud and clear, emphasized at times by violent means, that landlordism and accumulation of land would be forbidden by the new regime. In the violent phase of the reform in the mid to late 1940s, landlord property was forcefully confiscated, and many landlords were killed. With land ownership turning into a political liability, the price of land was sharply devalued. Beginning in the mid-1940s landlords tried to sell their property to friends or relatives, giving it away to those they trusted before it could be expropriated. As a result, the value of the land plummeted between the late 1940s and early 1950s. The elimination of rigid class hierarchy with the distribution of assets for livelihood allowed peasants to secure their future. It helped to restructure the family life too which had been torn apart by the civil wars, chaotic divorce situation and migrant herds. The land reform programme of 1950-52 involved 43 percent of cultivated land distributed among 60 percent of the rural population, or an average of 1.7 mou (.11 ha.) per person (Wong, 1973). The redistribution of tools and draught animals was even more modest. On a per capita basis each peasant entitled to reform assets received .0 17 head of oxen, .24 tool, .16 house, and 53 cattles (23.5 kg) of grain (Wong, 1973, 164 cited in Greenhalgh, 1989) until the “second land reform” in the late 1970s.

The collectivization phase

By late 1953, a political decision was reached to collectivize agriculture. Collectivization proceeded through lower and then higher-stage producers' cooperatives in which land was collectivized, then accelerated with the formation of the super-collectivized communes in 1958. With the formation of lower-stage producers' cooperatives, peasant family ceased to be the unit of economic decision making. This unit was raised to a co-operative management committee in the producers' cooperatives, which was further elevated to the commune during the Great Leap Forward of 1958-61, and then lowered to the production team in 1962, at which level it generally remained.

The collectivization of Chinese agriculture did not work out as Mao had planned. After the collectivization, production suffered due to constraints in decision-making, and the fact that the emphasis was more on owning land than on collectives. Moreover, the peasants were not able to identify their own ambitions of passing the land to their children with the collective system in the absence of any security over their owned land under this regime. After collectivization, peasant energies were channelled primarily into agriculture and construction of basic infrastructure. Only in their spare time were members of the rural collectives allowed to work in sidelines and on private plots. Furthermore, since private marketing was severely restricted, sideline activities could only enhance family consumption, but not family income. Dispersal strategies were also discouraged and eventually forbidden.

The Household responsibility system

By 1979 the central leadership made the startling announcement that rural consumption levels in the late 1970s were no higher than they had been in 1957, the year before the Great Leap Forward. This realization made the post-Mao leadership introduce, in December 1978, the first of a series of agrarian reforms designed to invigorate the rural economy by arousing the initiative of the masses. Most dramatic of these reforms was the household responsibility system, which shifted the unit of economic decision

making from the production team back to the peasant family. The reform package also increased farm prices, encouraged diversification and specialization, reopened free markets, permitted the hiring of labour, and promoted the flow of peasant funds into private productive assets and enterprises. The responsibility system parcelled out the land of collectives to individual households. In early 1984 the leadership extended contracts for ordinary crops to more than 15 years, and contracts for other types of projects (e.g. development of orchards, forests, or wasteland) for even longer. While the state has made it clear that ownership of land will remain vested in the collective, it has guaranteed long term usufruct rights to the land, in some cases issuing certificates to this effect, thus assuring peasants that their investments will be returned. The tremendous dynamism generated by the return to the family economy can be seen in the growth rates. Between 1978 and 1984 agriculture grew by 6.7 percent a year, but animal husbandry grew by 9.4 percent and sidelines grew by 18.6 percent (Riskin, 1987, 291).

In carrying out the reform, the CCP depended much on the local people who were acquainted with the local land problems. While Land reform committees and people's tribunals were set up at county and higher levels; peasant associations were set up as mass organizations at township levels where land reform took place. In order to keep landlords off the way of reforms, people's militia and special land reform police supplemented the regular army forces. Communist Party cadres were "the sinew of the movement", tying together the mass organizations at the local level, with the Party policy determined at higher levels. The Party guided the activities of over one million cadres, most of whom were not Party members, but who had gone to special training programmes to learn how to carry out land reform. Cadres learned to collect information from poor peasants, to single out the few powerful local gentry, and to arrange verbal attacks against them at mass peasant meetings. The best cadres in land reform were not those "who were conversant with land reform regulations and laws but those who were armed with a mass viewpoint and would better activate the peasant masses" (Wong, 109). Cadres then handled the details of computing surplus lands, determining how much land each family would get, and assigning specific plots of land to families. Inspection teams were then formed at various administrative levels and sent to check up on the implementation of land reform.

The way in which land reform in China eliminated one rural elite and trained a new leadership is impressive. It clearly showed that in places where an alternative cadre of local leaders is not visible, it could be created through the process of land reform. It also showed that education, literacy, and examinations are not the only ways of selecting and training local officials. The Chinese land reform success was due to this integration of central and local leadership, which is not to be found in other case studies.

Another noteworthy feature of the Chinese land reforms was that implementation was actually carried out on a regional basis and spread out over six years. Roughly one quarter of China had land reform in the context of revolution during 1946-1948. The rest had land reform from 1949 to 1952. Moreover, in regions inhabited by different minority groups, land reform was delayed for a while. The Chinese leadership firmly resisted the temptation of trying to do everything, everywhere, all at once. Indeed, the Chinese may have been forced to speed land reform by the outbreak of the Korean War, and the threat of U. S. generals to carry the war into China (Wong, 139).

While the land reforms redistributed the tangible means of upward mobility, at the same time they transformed the nature of the mobility ladder, removing status and profits from agriculture, and transferring them to commerce and industry. Where the post-reform environment provided certain conditions encouraging the expansion of family mobility strategies, the result was a virtual explosion of family entrepreneurship that, in turn, promoted a certain pattern of macroeconomic and demographic change. This pattern involved relatively rapid economic growth and diversification, rural-urban balance, and a comparatively rapid fertility decline in response to changes in the requirements for family socio-economic success. The reform and its policy environment were an indivisible package that produced a certain set of effects, some traceable to the reform itself, others attributable to the combination of reform and policy climate. Examining the impact of the reform alone would be informative but uninspiring, the most interesting and important consequences stem from the joint operation of the two.

Chinese peasants were motivated by both security and mobility goals; which goal dominated depended on the level of economic well-being, both that of the family and that of the time and place in which the family lived (Huang, 1985; Skinner, 1971). Extended to the arena of land reform, these insights direct our attention to the distribution of security and mobility motives before the reforms, and the redistributive impact on those motives achieved by the reforms. More specifically, given the significance of land as both a security and mobility resource, we can hypothesize that the redistribution of land is in effect a redistribution of security and mobility goals. The extent of the goal transformation depends on the class structure before the reform and the amount of land distributed during the reform when economic conditions permit, families with a secure land base develop explicit mobility strategies stressing demographic expansion, spatial dispersal, and sectoral diversification. For the landless and land-poor, life was a constant struggle for security, at times even survival, in which problems of land shortage and lack of food were exacerbated by class exploitation. Economic failure was reflected in demographic failure and growing inability to maintain family life. The resulting “incomplete” families lacked the full complement of members and, consequently, were unable to fully deploy the strategies of accumulation, dispersal, and diversification. Given an encouraging environment, the family economy can continue to prosper long after land reform, promoting rapid and balanced growth well into the middle stages of industrialization.

TAIWAN PROVINCE

Colonial rule in the province of Taiwan had seen substantive intervention by the Japanese in the agrarian sector. Japanese colonial rule had brought a green revolution to the island, which was basically intended to provide for the consumption of the metropolis. Right from 1895 to 1945, the island had witnessed introduction and extension of modern technology. There was large-scale development of water resources and technological improvement in rice and sugar cane production under the colonial regime, which had interests in exporting the produce to meet the needs of the metropolis. The class differentials arose as the Japanese left the province of Taiwan in 1945. Land reforms were imposed by the nationalist government, which having been exiled from the Chinese main land, had no obligation towards the landlords, who exploited tenants with ironclad rents, guarantee money, advance payments, and security deposits etc.

Land reform in the province of Taiwan was carried out in three phases: a) rent reduction in 1949, b) the sale of public land in 1951, and c) the initiation of a land-to-the-tiller programme in 1953. Land rentals were reduced from 50% to 37.5% in 1949. Contracts signed covered a land area of 256 557 hectares and benefited 296 043 farming families. The second stage consisted of sale of public land. A total of 139 058 hectares of land has been sold to 286 563 farming families since 1951. Stage three consisted of land-to-the-tiller programme. Beginning in 1953, this programme was designed to enable tenant farmers to own the land they tilled so as to increase farm production and farmers' income, as well as to transfer landlords' capital towards industrial production. Land ownership ceilings were fixed at one hectare. The former landowners were compensated in industrial bonds, which they invested in urban-industrial zones. Between 1953 and 1960, the annual production and consumption of inputs was of 23% and 11% respectively.

This policy of “nurturing industry with agriculture and developing agriculture with industry” has laid a solid foundation for the province of Taiwan's rapid economic progress. A total of 194 823 farming families have received a land area of 139 249 hectares. The rent reduction increased the income of the peasants threefold, while the production of rice doubled. The productivity of land also increased. While the peak per hectare rice output was 2052 kg in the thirties, it shot up to 2322 kg per hectare after land reform. The increase in income in this period has also seen positive changes on the front of educational level of the children, thereby indicating a positive causality from land reforms to income, and further to

education. The percentage of primary school graduates enrolled in junior schools was less than 35% in 1949-50, while in 1961-62 it was 52%. For junior secondary school graduates enrolled in senior secondary schools was 56% and 82% for those years respectively. Land reforms in the province of Taiwan beginning in 1953 redistributed a total of 44% of cropland among nearly all of the non-landowning families.

The experiments with land reform, however, did not stop there. In 1956, equalization of the land rights programme was designed to maximize land utilization, and to bring the public to share the benefits thereof by “regulating land value, taxing and purchasing land according to the value, and giving the unearned increment to the public.” The Provincial governments verify and adjust land values by cross checking with actual cases and prices of urban land transactions in all counties, cities, district towns and townships. These are analysed to ensure an accurate picture of movements in land prices as a basis for adjusting county and city land values, setting new land values and banding taxation levies, with the aim of making tax assessments fairer and more reasonable, and thoroughly implementing the policy of directing price increases into public coffers. In 1994, land value was reassessed with the total land area affected being 1 765 422 hectares. Cooperative use of land in both urban and rural areas has been affected to maximize land utilization. By the end of the fiscal year 1994, a total of 374 835 hectares of farmland had been consolidated. In 1993, among the farming population of 3 993 051, a total of 82.5% of these citizens were farming their own land, with each family farming an average of 1.07 hectares and each person owning about 0.22 hectares. Currently, the government has begun the third stage of farmland consolidation, hoping to expand the scale of farm operations and to promote joint, entrusted, and cooperative management.

NORTHERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM

In northern provinces of Vietnam, there was a prevalence of both fixed rent and share tenancy systems. Land rents ranged from a third to half of a normal harvest. Tenants had to pay the agreed upon amount even in the case of a bad harvest. Shortly after the August 1945 Communist revolution, agrarian reform was launched with the proclamation of an immediate reduction of 25% to 35% in all land rents to bring it to about one-third of the gross yield. This was followed by a land reform programme carried out in several phases between 1953 and 1957. During this period, specially created people’s courts carried out a thorough programme of land expropriation and redistribution. Rural population was classified into “peasants” and “landlords” based on land ownership and the number of days of farm work performed per year. Land was then confiscated from the landlords and transferred to the peasants. By the end of this period, 810,000 hectares, i.e. 37% of the cultivable land in northern provinces of Vietnam was distributed among 2,104,000 families, on an average of 0.4 hectares per family.

However, land reforms did not stop at expropriation of landlords and redistribution of land among the peasant households. The next major step of the reform programme was targeted at reforming production relations and releasing the productive forces in the agrarian sector. The government proceeded full throttle towards communizing the rural sector. The plots of land that the peasants had received were soon taken away through the process of collectivization.

The collectivization of agriculture was done in three phases: the formation of work-exchange teams (1956-58); the establishment of low rank cooperatives (1958-60); and the advancement of cooperatives from low rank to high rank (1960-72). The work-exchange team arrangement allowed farmers to continue to own land and equipment, but integrated production was encouraged through participation in seasonal or permanent work teams. Members of seasonal teams undertook collective work during peak labour periods, such as planting or harvesting of rice. There was no payment involved for participation in seasonal teams, since this was considered mutual aid. A team would include a whole hamlet or several families. The permanent team was an arrangement by which the farmer continued to

work on his own land, but was a member of a year-round team, such as the fertilizer team, spray team, mechanization team, and so on. Members of a permanent team were paid according to workdays or work points. By 1958, 86% of the peasant families were members of work-exchange teams. However, only 13% of these families belonged to a permanent team.

By 1958, the cooperative movement was initiated with work exchange teams, organized first into low rank cooperatives and later consolidated into high rank cooperatives. In a low rank cooperative, individual ownership of cropland, draft animals, and farm implements was preserved. While all farm work was done in accordance with a common plan of the cooperative, a member's share of output was proportional to the amount of land, livestock, and farm machinery contributed by them. Each member also received part of the gross yield of the cooperative, according to their labour contribution to seasonal and permanent work teams. The high rank cooperatives resembled the Soviet collective farm, the 'Kolkhoz'. This was an arrangement under which members pooled their land and tools to work under a unified management. In a high rank cooperative, land and other factor payments were eliminated, and output was shared solely on the basis of the amount of time spent working in production teams. Each worker was assigned points for the quantity and quality of work done each day. Payment at the end of the season was based on the number of points accumulated.

The movement from work-exchange teams to low rank cooperatives was comparatively rapid; by 1960, 86% of the households with 68% of the cultivated land were registered under such cooperatives. The conversion of these cooperatives to high rank took another 10 years. By 1971 there were 20,000 high rank cooperatives. The advancement from low rank to high rank cooperatives was associated with declining productivity due to a payment structure that rewarded quantity rather than quality of work. Since differences in quality of work were costly to monitor and led to conflict among team members, the point system quickly degenerated into a fixed-point system for the number of hours worked. With the degeneration of the work point system to a fixed wage system, individual team members had an incentive to shirk on their assigned responsibilities; hence, productivity declined. Collectivization of agricultural production in northern provinces of Vietnam suffered the fate of similar systems in other socialist countries, such as China and the Eastern Bloc countries.

SOUTHERN PROVINCES OF VIETNAM

The experience of the southern provinces of Vietnam with collectivization (1975-81) was different from that of the northern provinces, and accounted at least partially for the south's superior performance in production and productivity. The difference was attributable to the following factors: 1) the completion of land reform prior to reunification in 1975; 2) the widespread adoption of modern technology in paddy cultivation; and 3) the existence of a flourishing private enterprise economy up until 1975.

A series of land reform measures implemented between 1956 and 1974 allowed southern provinces of Vietnam to successfully overcome the problems of skewed land distribution and high land rents. By 1955, the end of the French period in Vietnam, about 40% of the rice land areas in the southern provinces of Vietnam were held by some 2,500 individuals i.e. by 0.25% of the rural population. Rent rates were commonly 50% of the crop or more, and tenure security was non-existent. A rent control and land ownership ceiling programme was implemented in 1956, and a land redistribution and titling programme was implemented in 1970. The latter programme generally referred to as "the land to the tiller programme" enabled the redistribution of 1.3 million hectares of agricultural land to over one million farmers, an average of 1.3 hectares per farmer. This programme, completed by the end of 1974, compares favourably with the land reform programme in the north where 810,000 hectares were redistributed to 2.1 million farmers by the end of 1957, an average of 0.4 hectares per farmer.

Land reforms had a visible effect on agricultural productivity in the south as it was carried out in the larger perspective of agrarian reforms. Rice production in the southern provinces of Vietnam increased substantially during the decades 1955-65 and 1966-75. Increase in the first of these decades could be attributed to yield increases in both the irrigated and the flood prone areas of the Mekong Delta. In the irrigated areas, a doubling of rice yields was achieved by switching from a cropping system of one rice crop of 6-8 months' duration per year to a system of two consecutive rice crops per year of 4 months' duration each. In the flood prone areas, which account for 1.5 million hectares of rice lands in the Mekong Delta, the introduction of Cambodian deep water and floating rice varieties in the late 1940s and 1950s resulted in a 15 percent to 20 percent yield increase. In the decade of 1966-75 rice output growth was achieved through both an increase in yield and expansion in cultivated land. Completion of the land reform and land redistribution programme allowed small farmers to bring back into cultivation land abandoned by landlords during the war. Rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure during this decade also contributed to the expansion in cultivated areas. Increase in yield during this period is mostly attributable to the rapid adoption of modern high yielding rice varieties, especially in the Mekong Delta. The area with high yielding rice varieties grew from 500 hectares in 1967 to approximately one million hectares in 1975. The widespread adoption of modern seed-fertilizer technology allowed farmers to grow two rice crops per year in the irrigated lowlands and to obtain higher yields per crop relative to traditional rice varieties. Yields rose from 1.5 metric tonnes per hectare for traditional varieties to 4-5 metric tonnes per hectare per crop for modern varieties.

Until 1975, the southern province of Vietnam was a private enterprise economy. Even 2-3 years after reunification, the Mekong Delta farmers were allowed to operate under a relatively free system. In 1976, the fourth National convention of the Communist party adopted a resolution which urged all party leaders in the southern provinces of Vietnam to move gradually toward collectivization. The Central Coastal provinces and the Western Plateau provinces moved very rapidly toward collectivization: 90% and 52% of the farmers in each of these regions, respectively, joined the cooperatives. Collectivization in these regions was seen as a means of rebuilding their agriculture after the war. Farmers in the Mekong Delta provinces, however, resisted efforts at collectivization. Even in 1986, less than 6% of the Mekong Delta farmers belonged to agricultural cooperatives. Those that did join, joined the low rank cooperatives.

This does not mean that collectivization efforts did not affect the Mekong Delta farmers. Land was further redistributed and farmers were organized into production groups. Households were assigned land in the following manner: each adult was given 0.1-0.15 hectares of land; each child under 16 years old and adults over 60 were assigned 0.08-0.1 hectares of land. Differences in land allocations per head were based on differences in land quality and irrigation water access. There was no long-term security of tenure on the assigned land, and it could be reallocated at the will of the management of the collective. Such reassignments were common and impeded land investments for sustaining the productivity of the land. Unlike in the north, however, agriculture in the south continued on a family farm basis despite collectivization. Farmers continued to be the primary decision makers for all input and technology decisions on their assigned land, although sharing of labour and production resources became more common. Sharing of labour became especially important for power-intensive operations such as land preparation and threshing, since individual ownership of tractors, tillers, threshers, pumps, and draft animals were abolished. All such capital assets had to be sold to the province at an assessed value that was substantially lower than the market value of the assets. This equipment was then distributed to the cooperatives or districts for use in equipment pools. The net result was a sharp decline in draft power supply in most of the Mekong Delta provinces. All but two of the southern provinces had draft power shortages while only two of the northern provinces exhibited similar draft power shortages. Toward the late 1970s, input supplies to the Mekong Delta provinces declined because they were being assigned on a priority basis to farmers who were organized into cooperatives.

A comparison of per capita rice output from 1942 to 1986 reveals the depressed state of rice production in Vietnam. During this 45-year period, rice output per capita in the northern regions remained stagnant at around 200 kilograms (unmilled rice). In the southern provinces there was a steady decline in

per capita rice output during the same time period. Output per capita was around 420 kilograms of paddy in 1942, and is currently around 330 kilograms. During the period immediately following reunification (1976-81), rice output per capita was around 270-290 kilograms. At the national level rice output per capita had been stagnant during this period at 260-80 kilograms. A comparison with the Philippines and Indonesia is illustrative. Rice is also the staple food in both of these countries, and their agro-climatic conditions are similar to Vietnam. Between 1950 and 1986, per capita rice output rose by 33 kilograms and 110 kilograms, respectively, for the Philippines and Indonesia. The growth rate of aggregate rice output was at its lowest level during the 1976-81 periods, primarily because of a sharp decline in production in the southern provinces. During the years immediately preceding reunification, the southern provinces were producing around 7 million tonnes of paddy per year. For the years immediately after reunification, southern rice output dropped to around 6 million tonnes, returning to 7 million tonnes only towards 1980. This drop in rice output in the southern provinces during the 1976-81 period can be directly attributable to uncertainty caused by the attempted collectivization and “socialist transformation” of southern agriculture.

The Contract System

Faced with rising food deficits and growing farmer unrest, the Central Politburo of the Communist party issued a directive in 1981 that introduced the ‘Contract System’ in Vietnam (Directive 100 CT, April 1981). As per this directive, all farmers enter into a contract with the cooperative to produce a certain level of output on their land. The cooperative would furnish each farmer with adequate inputs for achieving that output level. While production teams were expected to continue to provide land preparation, irrigation, and input distribution services on all farms, each farmer was responsible for crop management and husbandry on his own land. The contracted output had to be sold to the state at a fixed price. All output beyond the contracted amount could be kept for home consumption or sold to private traders. The introduction of the contract system had a significant impact on food output growth between 1981 and 1987, and then began to level off. Aggregate rice output grew annually at the rate of 2.8% during 1982-87 as compared with 1.9% for the 1976-81 period. Most of the output growth can be attributed to an increase in yield rather than an expansion in cultivated areas. In the southern provinces aggregate rice output grew by over 2.5 million tonnes from 1980 to 1987. The corresponding increase in the northern provinces was around 2 million tonnes for the same time period. The success of the contract system could not be sustained over the long term due to the following reasons: 1) land use and crop choice decisions were still made by the State Planning Commission in the traditional top-down approach, without consideration of farmer preferences and local market conditions; 2) the government often failed to procure all the grain it had contracted to procure at harvest time due to financial difficulties; 3) seasonal surpluses at the farm gate led to a crash in the private rice price in several regions, which, while benefiting the urban poor, had severe incentive effects on farmers; 4) the persistence of centralized input supplies resulted in inadequate and untimely provision of inputs to farmers; and 5) lack of security of land tenure resulted in inadequate farm-level investments for maintaining long-term land productivity.

The Latest Reforms in Vietnam today

Until 1988, local party officials and the local agricultural officer carried out land assignments to individual farmers. Favouritism in allocation of the best quality land was inevitable in such a system. Moreover, since the farmer had no long-term right to a particular piece of land he could be reassigned at will by the agricultural officer. Such reassignments were particularly common for farmers who invested in land development. This frequent reassignment of land resulted in under-investment in maintaining land productivity.

In 1988, the Central Committee of the Communist party passed resolution number 10, which assigned land to the tiller for 10, 15, and 20-year terms on the basis of renewable leases. The assignment of land now was to be made to the family rather than the individual, making bequests of land possible within the family. This resolution mandated that the farmer couldn’t be displaced from his land without his

consent, and without fair compensation for the cost of land development. Moreover, it indicated that farmers would be entitled to assignment of the land they owned prior to 1975. The last two clauses, however, have also become source of substantial conflicts on land assignments among farmers. Annual growth in rice yield per hectare was the highest during the period 1982-87, relative to the period 1950-81. By 1984, average rice yields relative to 1980 yields for the northern and southern provinces were 32% and 24% higher, respectively. Likewise, during the same period, annual rice output per capita increased by approximately 40 kilograms for both the northern and the southern provinces.

Thus, the breaking up of large collective farms into tiny family units has given rise to productivity gains. It has transformed Vietnam from a food importing country to a food surplus country. Rice production has increased from 12 million tonnes in 1981 to 22 million tonnes in 1992. In addition, there has been a significant increase in the areas under industrial/commercial crops including rubber, coffee, tea, coconut etc while the land under staple foods like cassava and sweet potatoes has decreased.⁶

THE PHILIPPINES

In the Philippines, the first historic agrarian legislation was the agricultural land reform code in 1963 which abolished and replaced the share tenancy system with the leasehold system. It paved the way for the creation of the Agricultural Credit Administration (ACA), and the Agricultural Productivity Commission (APC). Both were tasked to provide adequate support services to the land reforms programme, but due to mismanagement and outright graft and corruption, these entities failed to accomplish their mandate (Adriano, 1991). The major step towards land reform came with the imposition of martial law in 1972, when all rice and corn lands in the country were placed under land reforms; all tenants and lessee in lands above the 7-hectares ceiling became amortizing owners, who would own their farms after a 15-year amortization payment scheme.

The agrarian reform programme of the Marcos administration (1972) had four major programme components: 1) The strategy was to overcome various constraints in agrarian reform such as administrative, financial, as well as managerial constraints, the agrarian reform activities were to be carried out in such a way that productivity and income of small farmers could increase, and the private sector was to assist the government in modernizing the agricultural sector to complement the agrarian reform programme 2) a continuous flow of agricultural credit to various priority projects of agrarian reform, and towards small farmers to encourage them to participate in and to promote social equity 3) a focus on an intensified modernization programme centred on the formation of compact farms, and 4) development of resettlement areas. Compact farming, complemented with land consolidation of big landed estates, was intended to bring about better management and eventually result in the formation of cooperative farms. It was also conceptualized to provide wider access to modern farm technology, and maximize the benefits of economies of scale.

The development of resettlement areas on the other hand, was to be done through total community planning, giving more emphasis on effective land usage with better market linkages. The provision of various support services was also a major concern, among which were the improvement of marketing systems, farm-to-market roads, irrigation and post-harvest facilities, of which extension, research and institutional development received prime attention.

The third landmark agrarian reform legislation followed the ouster of the Marcos dictatorship, and restoration of democratic processes in 1986. The land reform programme's agenda, which stood out, was that of 'Land to the Tiller'. Congress enacted the 1988 Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL), based on a "land to the tiller" principle. CARP recognized as beneficiaries of the agrarian reform programme not only farmers but also all workers on the land, given that they were landless and willing to

⁶ ANGOCC policy discussion paper, prepared by A. Quizon.

cultivate. The programme had a total target area of 8.1 million hectares. About half of this consisted of agricultural lands for distribution to landless farmers and farm workers, while the other half consisted mainly of classified forestlands that were to be covered by tenurial user rights to upland dwellers. As of 2003, government data claims that 76% of the total target area has already been redistributed. However, the lands remaining to be redistributed consist mainly of private lands, haciendas and large plantations, where landlord resistance is strong.

The two agencies mandated to undertake the tasks of land acquisition and distribution are the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The programme used variable retention limits: seven hectares for rice and corn lands, five hectares for non-rice and non-corn lands, and three hectares for each of the heirs, 15 years old and above, of the landowner given they are actually cultivating or managing the land. Aside from land acquisition and distribution, which is the very essence of CARP, it also provided for the delivery of support services, such as rural development projects, human resources development activities and infrastructure facilities. It also ensured the tenurial security of farmers and farm workers by giving options like leasehold arrangements, stock distribution options, and production and profit sharing schemes. It also provides legal assistance to beneficiaries to help resolve agrarian disputes. To effectively channel these support services to the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries, CARP adopted the strategy of creating Agrarian Reform Communities.

The CARP has been generally able to attain its land distribution target for the years 1987-1992. For that same period, a total of 898,420 landless tenants and farm workers became legitimate recipients of either land titles or free patents and support services. The successor of the Aquino administration also stressed on the CARP, and in many ways contributed to strengthen its administration. However, CARP had inherent bias in favour of the landed gentry by its various provisions, which limited its reach and effectiveness at once. It was inherently favourable to neo-liberal ideology, which favours the market as an efficient redistributive mechanism.

As mentioned earlier, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform programme (CARP) was the third attempt at agrarian reform since 1962 and was the centrepiece of the Aquino government's land reform programme. It covers the distribution of rice and corn lands (which is basically a continuation of the Marcos land reform programme), idle and abandoned lands, lands under the voluntary offers to sell (VOS) scheme, sequestered lands of Marcos and his cronies, and government-owned agricultural lands.

The CARP was supposed to run on a ten-year period such that by 1998, the target of 10.3 million hectares would have been distributed, benefiting around 3.9 million farmers. But implementation of the CARP continues to lag behind the target. Department of Agrarian Reform figures show that as of June 2002, CARP distributed only 5.7 million hectares or 71% of its already reduced scope of eight million hectares. From 1972 to June 2005, lands distributed totalled only 6.46 million hectares.

The CARP was flawed from the beginning. It allowed retention limits that defeat the principle of "land to the tiller." CARP inherently favours landlord interests, through such provisions as the land retention right of landlords and their children, compensation for land acquired by government for agrarian reform, amortization by beneficiaries of lands granted under the programme, and CARP's acceptance of "arrangements alternative to the physical distribution of lands such as production or profit sharing, labour administration, and the distribution of shares of stock."

Through the voluntary offer to sell or the voluntary land transfer scheme, landowners can negotiate the price directly with farmers. CARP also defers coverage of commercial farms. Because of CARP's many loopholes, landlords have engaged in massive land use conversions, and cancellation or confiscation of land certificates already issued to beneficiaries. The recommendations of the World Bank's 1975 Land Reform Policy Paper are clearly enshrined in the CARP. It relies on sales operations to "distribute" private land to the farmers. It prioritized the titling of public lands and settlements already occupied by farmers or the privatization of communal lands instead of breaking up and distributing big private landholdings.

The World Bank did not directly support land acquisition, but channelled its funds to CARP's extension programmes that only benefited the landed elite and agribusiness corporations. During the

Aquino administration, the Bank funded the nucleus estate management system, a plantation set-up centred on a corporation with small farm holdings dependent on the centre for financing, inputs, management, marketing, processing facilities and other technological support.

Not satisfied even by an overtly biased programme favouring landed gentry; the official response is loud at pointing toward the constrained rural land markets and restricted trading of agricultural lands as the downside of the reform. They decry the law that prohibits lands acquired by beneficiaries from being “sold, transferred or conveyed except to through hereditary succession or to the government for a period of ten years”. The official opinion drowsed on the neo-liberal overdose is also seeing red in the law prohibiting banks from foreclosing and owning properties secured by emancipation patent or certificate of land ownership award, it gives. If an agrarian reform beneficiary is unable to pay the bank loan, the bank has to turn over the emancipation patent or certificate of land award to the government, which in turn will give the land to another agrarian beneficiary.

Land Reform in the Philippines today

A decade of CARP did not even make a dent in the monopoly control of landlords. According to the 1998 Annual Poverty Indicator Survey (APIS), 68% of households that had at least one member working in agriculture did not own land other than their residence, and only about 3% acquired land through CARP. In the 2002 APIS, the number of families that acquired land other than residence through CARP is 376,000 or 11% of families with land other than residence. Since almost all public and other less controversial lands were already covered, CARP was supposed to start distributing the more contentious estates of landlords and corporations. But the World Bank advised the government to stop compulsory acquisition schemes and focus on the market-oriented provisions of CARP.

In its 1996 Philippines country report “A Strategy to Fight Poverty,” the Bank observed “comprehensive rural land reform, as currently structured, is bound to remain contentious, expensive, and administratively complex” and concluded that “the administrative complexity of land reform probably cannot be resolved in the context of a government-administered programme executed in a democratic society.” The Bank’s 1997 report “Philippines: Promoting Equitable Rural Growth” made more concrete recommendations, including the completion of CARP through a “process of market-assisted land reform” for holdings below 24 hectares. The CARP was already market-friendly by design, thus it required just a little fine-tuning to align it with the World Bank model. As market-oriented land reform was compatible with the framework of the existing programme, the World Bank did not even have to create pilot programmes like in Brazil and Colombia. Since 1998, land distribution through compulsory acquisition has been almost nil. Instead, the Department of Agrarian Reform advocates negotiated settlements in the context of a “demand-driven” approach.

In the mid-1990s, the country was again witness to a renewed effort by the international institutions at creating a favourable land market scenario. President Ramos’ brainchild, the Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) was supported very strongly by the World Bank. The ARC concept encourages partnership with agribusiness. ARC is defined as a cluster of contiguous barangays, where there is a critical mass of farmers and farm workers awaiting the full implementation of agrarian reform. As of June 2005, there are 1,697 ARCs in 6,307 barangays. ARCs are geared towards production of High Value Crops (HVCs) such as tropical fruits, vegetables and rubber, rather than staple crops such as rice and corn for domestic consumption. DAR encourages ARCs to enter into partnerships with agribusiness companies through such arrangements as contract growing and lease-cum-profit sharing. These arrangements, needless to say, intensify the control of transnational corporations and big local agribusiness firms over CARP land while allowing them access to cheap farm labour force, thereby reinstating very powerful counter-reform forces in the rural-agrarian setup

After the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform programme’s extension in 1998, Administrative Orders issued by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) have watered it down even further by diluting the land reform concept and strengthening the rights of landlords. For example, AO 9, issued in December

1998 provided guidelines for Agribusiness Venture Arrangements including contract growing, lease arrangements, management contracts, build-operate-transfer schemes and joint venture arrangements. This arrangement, also known as a corporative scheme, was further outlined in AO 2 of 1999.

More recently, President Arroyo's former socioeconomic planning secretary proposed "Plan 747", a draft framework of strategies supposed to address the perennial problem of poverty in the Philippines. The plan introduced the concept of "land stewardship" that upholds the landlord's right to own and control vast tracts of agricultural land, provided he is a "responsible" steward of it. The plan also admits that the government's land reform programme has failed to solve poverty in the countryside and says that encouraging private investments in the agricultural sector will make it more productive and reduce rural unemployment and poverty. It proposes consolidating agricultural production of specific crops, such as rubber and cacao, into nucleus farms. It calls for more private investments particularly among agrarian reform lands. Clearly, the concept of "land stewardship" encourages the continuing land monopoly of landlords, landowners' evasion of land reform and wholesale land use conversion.

According to Arroyo, "to put social justice character to job creation, we have to make sure that we promote micro-finance and agribusiness." In her inaugural address, the President unveiled her vision of creating three million entrepreneurs through micro financing, and the conversion of two million hectares of land into an agribusiness hub. She said "asset reform" involves three areas of land reform — agrarian, urban and ancestral — thus, there is a need to move to the new land reform, which is to make farms qualified as collateral.

The Farmland as Collateral bill seeks to provide farmers with access to credit facilities through the use of Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) given under the land reform programme as collateral for loans from government financing institutions (GFIs). The basic principle behind the bill — a 'liberalized' agrarian reform — is essentially anti-farmer as it would lead to the re-consolidation of agricultural land in the hands of a few. The bill seeks to remove the ten-year prohibition on the sale, transfer or conveyance of distributed lands (whether unpaid, partially paid or fully paid). The World Bank, Asian Development Bank and a number of landlord-legislators have long been lobbying for the removal of this provision on the pretext that they would want to see small farmers gain access to formal credit. If passed, the proposed law will also strip away the basic protection supposedly accorded to ARBs, thereby opening them to abuse.

It will not only force small landowning farmers and many cash-strapped ARBs to sell or give up their lands, it will also legitimize the illegal and extra-legal deals that have been taking place on disadvantageous terms to farmers. These include the widespread practice of 'pawning' of lands, EPs, CLOAs, CLTs, homestead patents, usufruct or farming rights, etc. in exchange for farm capital. The government will also be freed of its obligation to provide, or even encourage credit lending to small farmers and ARBs. Bankruptcy in the countryside, on the other hand, would be compounded by government's policy of curbing spending for direct support programmes to farmers including infrastructure, subsidies to crops, farm inputs and equipment, as well as price support through direct procurement and marketing. With its adherence to globalization policies of trade liberalization and deregulation of key economic sectors, the government has left local farmers to be drowned by the influx of imported agricultural products.

INDIA

Colonial India was witness to British exploitation of its peasantry at the hands of the colonial masters. The sweat and blood of peasantry in Colonial India was a major contributor to the primitive accumulation needed to feed industrial revolution in Britain. Land revenue had formed a very significant component of the drain of wealth and resources from the country. This drain from such local levels could not have been possible for an alien administrative setup without the local and native connection. This was achieved by the colonial regime by creating intermediary rights on land between the state and cultivators.

Land Reforms were one of the prominent goals of the nationalist movement in the pre-independence India. While there was a consensus on the need for these reforms, conceptualization of 'agrarian reforms' varied greatly among different segments within the Congress, so did the commitment to it. This is reflected in the fact, that even by the late 1920s, the Congress had not established a definitive agrarian policy. It was finally in 1936 that the Congress Party as a whole produced an election manifesto, which included a statement advocating "a reform of the system of land tenure and revenue and rent, and an equitable adjustment of the burden on agricultural land, giving immediate relief to the smaller peasantry by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them and exempting uneconomic holdings from payment of rent and revenue." However, when the Congress formed ministries in 1937, a much-diluted agrarian reform legislation was introduced; in a fashion typical to Congress, its inner contradictions were covered up by allowing the language of radical economic and social change to be incorporated into its policy resolutions, while assuring that no action would be taken to unduly upset conservative landed and industrial interests within the party. Even after independence, radical language on land policy, followed by conservative action, became standard practice within the Congress throughout India. This invariably showed up in achievements of land reforms in the country.

The land reform policy in independent India was based on three pillars: 1) abolition of intermediary tenures, 2) regulation of size of landholding and, 3) settlement and regulation of tenancy. The central idea behind the abolition of intermediaries was that ownership of land should be clearly identified with management and operation of land. The owner was to be established in direct contact with state authority. Ceiling on land holdings were designed to offset the extremely uneven distribution of agricultural land. The tenancy reform was to grant security to the tenant, which besides offering a security of livelihood would also incentivize them to undertake investments in the land.

The success of land reforms, however, was predicated on political will, which was at best, ambivalent; and this reflected in the outcomes of the reform measures. While abolition of intermediaries was quite successful, achievement regarding the other two programmes is disappointing to say the least. Even where intermediary rights were abolished, the intermediaries were duly compensated by the state. Unlike China, the rights of intermediaries and landlords were not expropriated by the state, but bought out by the government. The state compensated zamindars and landlords for acquisition of their intermediary rights and land. Taking the country as a whole, by 1992 ownership rights had been conferred on (or tenancy rights had been recorded) some 11 million tenants on 14.4 million acres of land, which constituted no more than 4% of the operated area. It is interesting to note that the seven states of Assam, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, and West Bengal account for 97% of the beneficiaries.

Practically no benefits accrued to the tenants in other states. In fact, tenancy reforms led to large-scale eviction of tenants across the country. Except in West Bengal where Operation Barga was successful in recording and giving rights to the sharecroppers, and to some extent in Kerala, tenants by and large remained beyond the reach of tenancy reforms everywhere else in the country. The rights of some 14 lakh

share-croppers were protected in West Bengal and in Kerala some 2.84 lakh rural poor, mostly agricultural labourers, became owners of tiny homesteads.

As a result of tenancy reform official estimates show that there has been a sharp fall in the area under tenancy. From over one-half of the operated area on the eve of the reform, the area under tenancy has come down to about 15% of the operated area now. The tenants acquired ownership rights or were made secure in only about 4% of the operated area. This means that either the reforms led to the rural poor losing access to some 30% of the operated area, or there being a concealed tenancy of similar extent in the post reform period, thereby creating further avenues of exploitation of the peasantry due to the oral/informal nature of arrangements between the landlord and the tenant.

The achievement on the front of putting a ceiling on land holdings also draws a very gloomy picture. By 1992, only about 2 million hectares of surplus land had been distributed to some 4.76 million beneficiaries. Thus, the efforts spread over a period of three and a half decades to enforce ceilings and take-over surplus land from landlords for redistribution among landless, led to the redistribution of less than 2 percent of the operated area. Among the states, the area distributed as a percentage of the total area operated was 17.4 percent in Jammu and Kashmir, 6.36 percent in West Bengal and 5 percent in Assam. In all the other states only less than one percent of the operated area could be distributed. Thus, the achievement of land reform measures in India on the front of redistribution has been 6% of the operated area, confirming no impact on agrarian structure in most of the states. However, there is a regional variation in achievements on the front of land reforms in India, in which West Bengal stands out as an achiever.

The case of West Bengal

The post-independence attempt towards land reform started in Bengal in 1953. Since then it has seen three phases of land reform. The first phase (1953-1966) was the period of stepping towards basic legislation. There was little progress in redistribution of land, rather a deterioration in the security of the rights of bargadaars. The second phase (1967-1976), West Bengal made impressive achievements in above-ceiling redistribution of land, but little progress was made in protecting the rights of bargadaars. The third phase from 1977 onwards saw Operation Barga directed towards recording tenancy rights of bargadars. The land reform act of 1955 was the basic law followed by the government in carrying out the process. In this, the bargadaar's tenancy right was secured through written records. The share of rent was set at a reasonable level. The landlord's right to evict a bargadaar at will was tackled by bringing in very stringent provisions of self-cultivation by the landlord, and that too subject to a certain minimum remaining with the bargadar for cultivation. Thus, landlord's rights were kept in check in order to give security to the bargadaars. It also protected the ST community in prohibiting non-tribals from gaining protected bargadaar status on land owned by the members of former community.

While ceilings-surplus legislation in India's various states had only redistributed about 1.3% of India's cultivated land to about 4.3% of the rural households. Tenancy legislation in various states had protected tenancy right or in some cases conferred ownership rights on another 3.8% of India's cultivated land. West Bengal has made an impressive contribution to the achievements of land reforms process in India. Comprising only 3.3% of India's arable land, it accounts for 20% of all ceiling-surplus land redistributed in India, and 4.65 percent of all recipients of above-ceiling land in India. In terms of distributing land, West Bengal had declared 1.732 million acres of land for redistribution, and reallocated 1.04 million acres of this to 2.54 million relatively land-poor households, representing about 8% of arable land and 34% of agricultural households⁷. As of September 1999, 1.49 million bargadaars had been recorded on a total of 1.1 million acres, representing about 20% of agricultural households and 8% of net area cultivated.⁸

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Government's land policy in India has changed over the years. In the early years of Independence, land relations were explicitly recognized as structural bottlenecks in agriculture which needed to be addressed if the economy was to cruise on a development path. Therefore, till fourth five year plan the land policy had a distributive orientation. However, this distributive focus was lost when the country faced with food shortage sacrificed equity goals at the altar of speedy growth. The new policy can be famously characterized as 'betting on the strong horse'. The government's concern, henceforth, turned towards watershed development, management of degraded land, drought prone area management, desert area management, land and water management, soil and water conservation, and wasteland management.

While the Indian planning, with passing years, has seen an increasing focus on poverty alleviation programmes, ironically, it has shown utter insensitivity towards landlessness. The very development projects, which were vouched to be temples of development, supposed to be venerated by the masses, have led to dispossession and displacement of the weakest sections of the society. An estimated 40 million people have lost their land since 1950 on account of displacement due to large development projects.

While the inequality and the landlessness are growing, the government is apathetic towards the suffering of the poorest people. There is an increased tendency of marginalization of landholdings in India due to increased population pressure, which is finally absorbed, in agricultural sector in its capacity of a residual sector. 60 percent of the population is dependent on agriculture and allied activities. Almost 80 percent of farmer population subsists as near landless, owning only about 17 percent of the total agriculture. On top of that, an estimated 40 million people have lost their land since 1950 on account of displacement due to large development projects. Between 2002 and 2004, forest dwellers have been forcefully removed from 1.52 lakh hectares of forestland.

As Jha (2003) suggests, landlessness is the major cause of poverty and land is the most important structural correlates of economic well-being of masses. A recent World Bank (1997) study shows that landlessness is, by far, the greatest predictor of poverty in India, finding the incidence of poverty to be 68 percent among landless wage earners. In India a variety of regional and sub-regional politico-economic patterns have emerged since independence and here too, it would appear that, although there are contrasting styles, the relatively successful agricultural performances have often been via the peasant route: for instance, the early green revolution belt in India, i.e. Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh and some other pockets can be described as a version of the 'capitalism from below', where the middle and rich peasants played a leading role; more recently, in West Bengal the Left Front Government's land reforms initiatives empowered small and marginal farmers who have played a key role as growth agents in the state's agricultural performance. After the Left Front government assumed power in 1977, within a couple of decades more than 9,13,000 acres of land was redistributed benefiting 19,93,660 households, of which a large proportion happened to be either landless or land-poor to begin with. Through 'Operation Barga', tenancy arrangements were secured giving the much-needed relief and incentive to close to 1.44 million share-croppers in the state.

These initiatives contributed to creating an environment, which resulted in the most impressive agricultural performance for West Bengal, among major states of India, in the 1980s and 1990s; and creditable reduction in the incidence of poverty over the same period. Gradually, a variety of other positive spin-offs have also unfolded over the years. A study by Vikas Rawal on two villages of West Bengal shows the following: "the distribution of land through land reform, Operation Barga, and higher wages contributed to improving –although to a limited extent- purchasing power among the poor. Second, peasant movements during the late 1960's and the process of land reform convinced a number of large landowners that land reform was in the villages to stay and that it would be advantageous to sell some ceiling –surplus land. Third, the West Bengal Land Reform (Amendment) Bill of 1977 has specific provisions that attempt to monitor and restrict absenteeism, from the empirical evidence; it appears that these provisions impelled absentee owners and non-residents to sell a part of their ownership holdings." This sets an example for other states.

Recent policy changes and consequent landlessness

In the era of economic reforms, India is witnessing another effort at land reforms, only this time, its essence and character are completely different from what it was in the early years of independence. True to the dictates of the neo-liberal policy regime, the new generation of land reforms is to be market-led; and here too, it is not the weak and the peripheral that is the target of reforms, rather it is the motive of facilitating corporate takeover of land which is the driving force. In effect, these reform efforts are targeted at countering/watering down the extant reform legislations, put in place during the early years of reform period. While the masses peripheral to the development process over last sixty years of independence have seen pauperization in the name of development, the second-generation reforms are only expected to add millions more to the folk of deprived and marginalized.

Policies on land and also the causes of landless can be studied under the following four heads: 1) Common Property Resources 2) Forest Land, Disputed Land 3) Dispossession of lands due to industrialization, and 4) Development projects.

Common Property Resources

Common property resources include resources to which people have equal rights like fuel wood, fodder, tendu leaves etc. Despite the major contributions of CPRs in the local economy, the area under CPRs is under pressure and has declined over the past few decades. One of the main reasons of this is a large-scale privatization of community land and common property resources. This privatization might be due to encroachments by big landholders and powerful vested interests at the village level, policy induced appropriation of common lands for 'public purpose' largely given for commercial and industrial use and distribution to poor landless and agricultural labourers. However, in areas where CPRs were distributed for private cultivation to poor or landless farmers, they ended up in the hands of the rich in the absence of adequate complementary inputs or agriculture support. Many experts feel that in this way the rural poor collectively lost a significant part of the source of their sustenance.

Forestland

From 1970s onwards, the State and its forest department started moving from production-oriented forestry and forest management to conservation. This formal and exclusive conservation approach was implemented with the help of legislations like the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) 1972, and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980. Under the provisions of the WLPA, large forest areas were brought under the Protected Area Network of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries, which were to be human-free wilderness zones. Today, the MoEF figures say that 13.43 lakh (1.3 million ha.) of forestland is under encroachment in the country. The encroachers are, invariably, tribals and forest dwellers who have been there for generations. State governments in the past had passed orders for the regularization of encroachments on forest land, but no time-bound action plan was followed. In his 29th report (1987-89) to the President of India, the Commissioner for SCs and STs brought to the government's notice the different disputes related to forest land between tribal people and the State and proposed a framework for resolution. Based on these recommendations, the MoEF issued a circular addressed to the secretaries of forest departments of all states and union territories; some of the directions in the circular included: a) Review of encroachments on forest land, b) Review of disputed claims over forest land arising out of forest settlement, c) Disputes regarding pattas/leases/grants involving forest land.

The circular only highlighted the need to distinguish between "encroachers" and those with disputed claims. The fact that no effort was made to implement these orders became evident in May 2002 when the MoEF directed all states to evict "encroachers" from forestlands. The forest department promptly obeyed this order and the forest dwellers were made to pay for the failure of the State in performing its long pending task of surveys, settlement and regularization of land. Based on a Ministry of

Environment and Forests (MoEF) order dated May 3, 2002, the forest departments in some states brutally carried out eviction drives. According to the MoEF, between 2002 and 2004, “encroachments” on 1.52 lakh hectares of forest area were removed. The lands in question are those that have been brought under the jurisdiction of the forest department, and which constitute 22% of the total land area in the country.

An interesting fact is that 60% of these lands that have been declared as “forest” under the colonial Indian Forest Act (IFA) 1927 lie essentially in the adivasi dominated regions (in 187 districts) of the country. The policy of declaring areas as reserved forests to serve British commercial interests under the Indian Forest Act (IFA) led to systematic colonization of adivasi forest habitats. The process of land acquisition continued even after the British left, and between 1951 and 1988 the colonial IFA was used to bring an area of 26 million hectares under the forest department’s regime. Without even following the required procedure of settlement of rights under Sec (3) 29 of the IFA, or doing any paperwork, non-private lands of princely states and zamindars were declared as forest reserves. No surveys were carried out and the rights of existing occupants and users was not recognized or even settled. This period was also characterized by exploitation of forest and mineral resource rich areas by the State for large-scale development projects, urban habitations and timber production.

According to the Forest Survey of India, between 1951 and 1981 a total of 4.238 million ha of forestland was diverted for purposes like river valley projects, highways and industries. In most cases, people who had no legally recorded rights in the first place inhabited these forests. After displacement and with no rehabilitation, these communities were forced to shift into different forest areas, yet again as encroachers. A big problem in the country is land rights being denied because of the disputed status of the land and land stuck in litigation. According to rural development statistics of 1996, 48% of all ceiling surplus land that is not available for distribution is unavailable because it is under litigation in various courts (K N Raju - Occasional paper – NIRD, 1999). The most striking example of disputed lands is where there is complete confusion between the revenue department and the forest department about the legal status of almost 12,000 sq km of land in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. An estimated 40 million people have been displaced since 1950 on account of development projects and power projects, dams, mines and industries. Of these, nearly 40% are Adivasis and 25% are Dalits. 75% are still awaiting rehabilitation. In the post-independence period, some of the large acquisitions led to massive displacements, such as those for the Hirakud, Machkund, and Sileru dams, the Rourkela steel plant in Orissa, the different units of the Damodar Valley Corporation in Bihar and West Bengal, the Nagarjunasagar and Sriramsagar dams in Andhra Pradesh and numerous large and medium-scale industries, mines, roads and railways.

With the onset of globalization in the 1990s, the country has seen further industrial growth, a complete transformation of land use patterns, and more displacement of rural and natural resource-based livelihoods. In Orissa, Jharkhand, and Andhra Pradesh foreign direct investment in mine-based industries has led to acquisition of land on an unprecedented scale. For example, between 1951 and 1995, the Orissa government had acquired 40,000 ha for industries; in the next decade it doubled that amount. The same is the case of Andhra Pradesh, which has acquired in five years half as much land for industries as it did in the last 45 years. Most of the acquisitions in the country were, and are, done using the Land Acquisition Act of 1894. This hundred-year-old legislation, which has been amended several times, has been the single most effective instrument empowering governments to acquire land for anything that they think constitutes ‘public interest’. The Act gives very little scope to the project affected families to challenge the process of land acquisition or even to demand fair compensation and rehabilitation (Quoted in the comments on the Draft National Rehabilitation Policy circulated at the Consultation on Rehabilitation Policy held at TISS on 28th-29th December 2004). Apart from this, other aspects like the purpose of acquisition, the extent of acquisition, and the probable use of the acquired land are also problematic. A stark example of this is the case of industrial estates throughout the country where state industrial infrastructure development bodies acquire land, set up an industrial estate and then search for entrepreneurs interested in using the facilities. Because of this, industrial estates have often remained vacant for years.

Displacement Due to Large Development Projects

Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, while laying the foundation-stone for India's first major river valley project, the Hirakud Dam in Orissa in 1948, said to the tens of thousands facing the grim prospect of displacement: 'If you have to suffer, you should do so in the interest of the country' (quoted in Roy 1999). The same sentiments were echoed thirty-six years later by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in a letter to one of India's most respected social workers, Baba Amte. She wrote: "I am most unhappy that development projects displace tribal people from their habitat, especially as project authorities do not always take care to properly rehabilitate the affected population. But sometimes there is no alternative and we have to go ahead in the larger interest..." (Quoted in Kothari, 1996,1476)

There is painful irony, and possible design, in the fact that there are no reliable official statistics of the numbers of people displaced by large projects since Independence. Many researchers place their estimates between 10 and 25 million. In an influential 1989 study, Fernandes, Das and Rao provide an estimate of some 21 million displaced persons (see also Fernandes 1991). The present Secretary of India's Planning Commission, Dr N. C. Saxena, places his estimate of persons displaced by big projects since 1947 at nearly double this figure — 50 million. This is also the figure quoted by celebrity writer Arundhati Roy in a recent essay "The Greater Common Good: The Human Cost of Big Dams." It is worth quoting her persuasive reasoning: "According to a detailed study of 54 Large Dams done by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, the average number of people displaced by a Large Dam is 44,182. Admittedly 54 Dams out of 3,300 is not a big enough sample. But... it's all we have... let's err on the side of abundant caution and take an average of just 10,000 people per Large Dam. 33 million... That's what it works out to... What about those that have been displaced by the thousands of other Development Projects? Fifty million people." (Roy, 1997, 7)

The central government has no policy for rehabilitation. The governments of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have enacted laws for rehabilitation and resettlement of project-affected persons. In 1994, the first draft was formulated at the national level. The irony was that the draft clearly stated that this was done in view of the new economic policy, and the expected rise in the demand for more land and hence displacement. This draft was widely debated amongst different groups and an alternative draft was proposed. However, the government never pushed the policy. In 1998, the Ministry for Rural Development prepared a draft Land Acquisition Bill as well as a draft National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy for displaced persons. This met with severe opposition from voluntary groups, and another set of meetings was organized to discuss this draft. In 2000, after several consultations, an alternative civil society draft - The Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill - was formulated. After nearly two decades and several drafts, the government in February 2004 announced the National Policy on Rehabilitation and Resettlement. The draft policy has yet again met with major criticism on the grounds that it continues to accept displacement as given, and has a welfare approach rather than a rights approach. The biggest problem with the policy is that while allowing flexibility for private sector to acquire land, it continues to ignore the issue of acquisition of land and the intrinsic problems therein.

In the post-independence period, poor and subsistence farmers were dispossessed of their lands in another form too, apart from direct displacement due to state acquisition of land for 'public purpose'. The green revolution, which promoted high cost, large-scale commercial farming based on external inputs (chemical/ fertilizers/pesticides, hybrid seeds) completely changed the face of agricultural economy in the country and further alienated a large population from their lands. Over the years, much research has gone into establishing how this farming pattern affected fertility, productivity of land, ground water resources, and health of the people in the long run. The new economic reforms have aggravated the problems started by the green revolution. The Agreement on Agriculture has meant opening of agriculture to the global market, which needless to say is on substantially inequitable terms, making the Indian farmer more vulnerable. Low import tariffs, slashing of already miniscule agriculture subsidies in comparison to what agriculture and farmers get in the developed world, genetically modified seeds; biotechnology and

corporate farming are the order of the day and have literally spelt doom for peasants who have thrown caution to wind on seeing volatile world price signals. The suicides by farmers in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra are a clear indicator of this. NGOs and voluntary organizations all over the country have been raising these issues at various fora, bringing in the questions of traditional farming systems, seeds, the patent bill, biodiversity rights, and the right to food. At the second National Consultation of the Right to Food Campaign in Kolkata, in November 2005, Dalit groups raised the issue of land rights for right to food, indicating that the issue of food security and agriculture are intrinsically linked to ownership of land. At the international level, there have been massive protests against the trade and agriculture related policies of the WTO as they relate to developing countries. The recent WTO ministerial in Hong Kong in December 2005 saw tens of thousands of protesters from all over the developing world. A delegation of farmers and activists from India was also present.

It is no more a secret that international financial institutions like the World Bank go all the way to influence land policies in developing countries. This can be seen in the fact that the Bank has put land reforms back on the international agenda. In fact, way back in 1975, the World Bank published its 'Land Reform Policy Paper' where it spoke of doing away with communal tenure systems and privatizing these to promote production of cash crops. This paper was revised in the 1990s. The new version spoke of "market-assisted land reforms" where land would be redistributed with the help of the market and aid agencies. Under the World Bank scheme, loans and credits would be granted to the landless to buy land at market rates from large owners, and also for purchase of technical inputs and marketable crop seeds.

In India, these reforms have not been directly initiated, but there has been World Bank assistance for various large-scale development projects for almost three decades now. Apart from this, agricultural reforms that focus completely on cash based intensive agriculture have been carried out since the green revolution under the World Bank's agenda. Post-1990 trends like corporate farming and land renting have also been emerging. All these have had a direct impact on land use and rights of communities. In June 2004, the World Bank released the draft Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for India that spells out the Bank's assistance to India for the fiscal years 2005-2008. As per this, the World Bank plans to double loans to India, with most of the additional money earmarked for infrastructure projects, including dams. It proposes an expansion of investment lending notwithstanding the severe shortcomings of the environmental and social policies and compliance therewith of government authorities. In a National Consultation held in Delhi on August 7, 2004, several civil society organizations, including major national alliances on mining, forestry and dams and hydropower, rejected the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy. They questioned how and why the Government of India could succumb to the bank's strategy of promoting large-scale privatization in important sectors such as power, water, agriculture and other basic services, going much beyond the mandate of the tenth five-year plan and the Common Minimum programme adopted by the United Progressive Alliance government at the Centre.

In view of the present situation, some of the opinion is for legalizing tenancy markets, land markets, allowing contract farming and giving homestead plots to each and every landless people. However, what should not be missed is that mere needs do not transform into entitlement in the market. Needs have to be backed up by purchasing power to take the shape of effective demand in the market. Market forces do not lead to equity, and the sale of land by landlords does not mean that the poor people can afford to buy it. Development projects have contributed a lot to the inflated land price. Tenancy market legalization also does not rule out the possibility of exploitation of the tenants. Contract farming brings with it the indebtedness of the farmers. So, these things have to be well regulated otherwise the socio-economic well-being of the masses would be severely compromised.

NEPAL

Nepal was largely under a feudal system, where a small number of landlords held most of agricultural land. The state extended its control over the land by the administrative device of making land grants and assignments and raising revenue. Most of the landlords who were granted state lands were not directly involved in farming but contracted with tenant farmers on a customary and hereditary basis. The basic purpose of the reforms was to protect the tenant farmer, take away excess holdings from landlords, and distribute property to farmers with small landholding (holdings of one to three hectares) and landless agrarian households.

Land Reforms so far undertaken in Nepal concern mainly three aspects of agricultural system: 1) insecurity of tenure, 2) excessive rents, and 3) privileged forms of landownership and use. Efforts at land reform began with enactment of the Land and Cultivation Record Compilation Act in 1956, and continued with the Lands Act in 1957 when government began to compile tenants' records. Although these acts facilitated land reforms, the lot of the small farmer did not improve. The Agricultural Reorganization Act passed in 1963, and the Land Reform Act passed in 1964, emphasized security of tenant farmers and put a ceiling on landholdings. Loopholes, however, allowed large landholders to control most of the land. While there was some success in providing security to tenant farmers, not much has been achieved in redistribution.

As of 1990, average landholdings remained small. A confluence of the traditional inequality in the distribution of cultivable land, and extremely limited scope for expansion of the cultivated land, excessive dependence on subsistence agriculture for livelihood, failure of the non-agricultural sector to create significant employment opportunities – all amidst fast growing population, over a long period of time is at the heart of the widespread poverty, especially in the rural areas of Nepal.

To reduce inequality in the distribution of agricultural land, the Lands Act 2021 (1964) is being implemented from as early as 1964. This act fixes ceilings on the land an individual can own, protects the right of tenants by registering his or her name in the owner's deed itself, fixes rent on agricultural land and does away with the traditionally very high interest rates on rural loans. This law has been amended six times. Most important among them are the fourth and the fifth amendments. The fourth amendment has made a provision of apportioning 50% of the land hitherto cultivated by a tenant between the tenant and the landowners to ensure that the tenants become the owners of cultivated land. In the same amendment a provision has also been made to provide credit facilities to the tenant, should she/he be interested in buying the owners' share also. It came into force in January 1997. The Fifth Amendment that came into force in 2001 has reduced the ceilings as summarized below, while retaining the provision of the Fourth amendment.

Two-thirds of Nepal's total geographic area consist of rugged hills and snow-capped mountains. The country has almost no scope to bring new areas under cultivation without serious environmental risks. Even if all the cultivated land of a little over 2.5 million hectares is equally distributed among the nearly 3.4 million farmer households, a family will not have more than 0.8 hectares. This, in itself, is a serious constraint. The above constraint vis-à-vis the skewed land distribution which continues in the face of various reform measures, have meant dependence of the rural households on forests. Considering these realities also, policies have been made to allocate parts of forestlands as Community and Leasehold Forests for creating forest-based income and employment opportunities. The Forest Act, 2049 (1993), which continues to hold forests as state property, has made provisions to hand over management of some of the potentially productive forests to the near-by communities themselves. In addition to this, patches of forests are allocated to specifically targeted groups of poor households residing in the nearby areas on a long-term lease of 40 years.

These initiatives have been undertaken with intent of increasing access of peasants to land. In addition, the Country has enacted some very significant laws, which can go a long way in ensuring livelihood capabilities of a huge section of population dependent on agriculture, and weaker sections including women. Examples of such initiatives are the following:

- According priority to agricultural uses over electrical, industrial, navigational, recreational and other uses and recognizing water users' groups as legal entities in the Water Resources Act, 2049 (1992).
- Enactment of a law to prohibit the use of Kamaya (bonded labourers) and provisioning for fixation of minimum wages for agricultural labourers in 2001.
- Devolution of authorities on a number of development issues, including some of the quasi-judiciary authorities to the self-governing entities at the village and district levels through a Local Self-Governance Act, 2055 (1999)
- The Country's Civil Code has also been amended to enable women to have a share in parental properties.

The objective of these legislative initiatives was to reduce inequality in the distribution of agricultural lands, improve access to other natural resources and ultimately, to contribute to poverty alleviation. A number of specific programmes are under different phases of implementation to translate the above legislative and policy initiatives into reality. A Community Forestry Development programme is under implementation for nearly three decades. Similarly, a Leasehold Forestry programme is also under implementation for over a decade now. The users of these systems themselves are managing an overwhelming majority of the existing irrigation systems in Nepal. Programmes with different nomenclature and geographic and technical scopes are also under implementation in support of this traditionally existing practice, apart from giving it legal backing. To improve access to energy in the rural areas, a Biogas Support programme that provides cleaner energy while supplying organic fertilizer is also under implementation.

In terms of their effect and impact, the available evidence indicates that the proportion of people below the poverty line decreased in the eight-year period from nearly 42% in 1995/96 to 31% in 2003/04. There is a general decrease in the level of inequality despite the fact that implementation of the provisions of the Fourth and the Fifth Amendments of the Lands Act still has a long way to go. Over 1.5 million rural households, which is almost half the total number of agricultural holdings of the country, are participating in the management and benefits sharing from the community managed forests in varying degree. Since the Leasehold Forestry programme is still to expand and intensify, the number of specifically targeted poor households is expected to gradually increase. Yet the available evidence suggests that this programme has been successful in contributing to poverty reduction, apart from improving the environment.

However, Nepal's experience in the implementation of the various programmes related to agrarian reform and rural development needs to be read with caution. For a less developed country like Nepal, where the budgetary resources of the Government are limited, support of external institutions come to play an important role in materializing national commitment and efforts. The experiences of the Community and Leasehold Forestry Development programmes, the Biogas Support programmes are good examples in these aspects. And if the observation that there are no free lunches available in the market is to be taken seriously, any attempt to deliver goods on the land and livelihood issues of masses on shoulders of external funding agencies which count their returns before investing needs careful analysis.

Social and Political processes underlying Land Reform

The examples of land reforms demonstrate the centrality of land not only in the livelihood and well-being of the masses, but also in gaining social and political power. Inevitably then, land reforms lie at the centre of struggles for social and economic justice. Access and ownership of land decides the terms of social, political and economic relations of exchange, and also shapes and sustains power structures in society. It is not coincidental that the political elites are also landed elites in most of the developing world. Motivation and momentum for land reforms, thus, derives in a major way either from the interests of those in power or the needs of those without power.

Agrarian unrest and peasant movements have been prime movers behind land reforms in developing countries. These movements have invariably been a response to extreme inequities in the rural agrarian scenario. The character of these inequities and processes shaped the content and direction of the peasantry's response. For example, where foreign interests in land were the generators of these inequities, peasant revolutions and movements took a nationalist character. Peasants and farmers lent body and soul to nationalist movements against colonial rule. After dismantling colonial rule and in response to these mobilizations, the governments of newly independent nations delivered land reform packages. Unfortunately, these promises remained exactly that, promises.

Similarly, the institutions and processes through which land reforms were carried out in these countries had a defining effect on the outcome of reforms, reflected in the success of meeting the basic objectives of reforms. However, even in cases that can be classified as successful, the success is not without qualifications. The qualifications come out in form of the actual effect of land reforms on the masses, the costs they had to pay, and final outcome of the reforms. We also notice the temporal character of the successes, in which we see peasant movements bringing forth and forcing radical land reforms and then sadly, witness their complete reversal. In this chapter we consider as successful cases those experiences which saw peasant mobilization effective enough to force and carry through a package of land reforms. We classify the experiences wherein reform measures were left halfway or were reversed after initial success as limited success cases. In this chapter, we try to read the essentials of some successful experiences, as well as some not so successful cases of land reforms among these countries.

Successful Experiences

CHINA

Though the struggle for land between small peasants and landlords has been endemic in Chinese society for centuries, in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, the influence of world markets exacerbated existing contradictions. While European traders and missionaries had for centuries respected the sophisticated political and religious structure of the Chinese Empire, through the Opium Wars (1839-42) British trading interests broke Chinese resistance to the free import of opium and textiles. This forced opening of trade not only sucked the Chinese rural-agrarian economy in the trap of colonial exploitation through export of silk, but also had a very negative effect on the labour power in the countryside due to its forcing of opium in the Chinese consumption basket. Furthermore, the already exploitative rural elite made common cause with foreign businessmen involved in world trade. Peasant movements emerged during the 1920s out of the wretched conditions of the peasantry, about half of which was landless or semi-landless and was being blatantly exploited because of corruption and regional power struggles between the war-lords. These peasant movements were finally culminated into revolution.

The resistance by the peasants began in the south near Canton (now Guandong) in the areas where the anti-imperialist Taiping Rebellion (1850-65) had originated. From the very outset, nationalist sentiments had played a major role in these movements (Wolf, 1969,143). Considerable rural unrest and local social movements were encountered by Mao Ze Dong when he returned to his home province of Hunan, after his efforts to rally the Shanghai working class for a communist revolutionary movement, which had been ruthlessly crushed by Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang government in 1926. Mao's report on an investigation of the peasant movements in Hunan (Mao, 1971) shows the strength of the movements and also the surprise of its author in finding peasants organizing on their own, while, according to theoretical Marxist conception, the urban proletariat should be the class to take such an initiative. Mao Ze Dong followed the age-old folk tradition of mostly Taoist-inspired people's rebellions in Hunan, as he helped the peasants and their secret societies to become better organized, thus laying the foundation of the Red Army.

One of the great feats of more than twenty years of struggle by the Chinese peasant guerrilla armies was the Long March in 1934-35, in which the communist army escaped total annihilation by the overwhelmingly superior armies of Chiang Kai-Shek by withdrawing to isolated areas of Yenan (now Yunan) province. Here, the numerically weakened but spiritually and morally strengthened communist army could establish a base, distribute land to the tillers and build a society based on rural egalitarianism, which served as a base for the conquest of all of China in the late 1940s (Snow, 1972).

The peasant mobilization, in order to be successful, had to use a sophisticated strategy of alliances between different classes of peasants and other parties. As Mao Ze Dong pointed out in his strategic writings, the peasant movement had to be developed while taking into account a great variety of contradictions in interests. In order for mobilization to be effective, it was necessary to study, in each local situation, the prevailing class contradictions and to distinguish between those which were fundamental and those of secondary importance. Mobilization could often be achieved along the lines of the most fundamental contradiction. The enemy could be the local gentry (rich farmers), or the middle farmers or foreign interests. But the poorest members of society and their interests were always the basic point of reference in a stratification consisting of 1) rich farmers, who did not work the land themselves, 2) Middle farmers, who had more land than they could work themselves, 3) Subsistence Farmers, who had just enough land for subsistence, 4) Semi-landless Farmers, who did not have enough land and had to work for others for subsistence, and 5) Landless agricultural labourers.

Such strategic study-cum-action regarding local, national and later international contradictions

advanced the cause of the Chinese peasants. Local circumstances and the broader economic and political context (including, post-1937 anti-Japanese struggle) also contributed to the success of the peasant movements. The leadership was aware that if the rebellion was to become a true revolution, it had to ensure the participation of women. Women had played a considerable role in rebellious or revolutionary movements in China's past. As Wolf notes, most of the secret societies tended to accord equal status to women. (1969,112). These societies facilitated the growth and orientation of the Communist Party. Judith Stacey (1979) noted that women in the liberated areas derived significant benefits: land reform granted them equal rights to land, which was a first condition for peasant women's economic independence.

The social movements of the Chinese peasants increasingly became a militant political organization, not merely struggling for concrete benefits and abandonment of unjust practices, but with the objective of gaining state power to achieve those goals for the country as a whole. Thus, a social movement that had resisted state power for over two decades took up state power itself, and brought about the reforms that the peasants and women had been agitating for. The most important results were the land redistribution policies, giving all tillers access to land, and later, in the mobilization initiated from above, movement toward the gradual formation of co-operatives and collectives in rural areas to support rapid industrialization.

However, as industrialization became the main target of the communist government, the people were victims of disastrous experiments, such as the Great Leap Forward and famine. Because of the increasingly absolutist rule of the Communist Party and internal policy struggles, the Chinese population suffered intensely and many lives were lost, as described by Stiefel and Wolf (1994,117-118):

JAPAN

Land reforms in Japan, as in other Southeast Asian countries had a lot to do with the international social and political processes. Wolf Ladejinsky, main advisor of the United States occupation forces in Japan, described how in 1951 General MacArthur subdued communist thunder in Japan with democratic land reforms. (1977,151). He referred to the fact that even before the triumph of the Chinese peasant movements, the land reform implemented in the areas under their control had a strong radiating influence in Japan, where semi-landless peasants, mainly tenants, had been organizing since the First World War to achieve better tenancy conditions and reforms.

In Japan, the First World War had brought about changes in the rural areas that were mainly favourable to the landlords. Rising land prices gave landowners new opportunities for profitable speculation in land, while many small farmers lost their lands because of indebtedness, partly as a result of inflationary tendencies. Absentee landlordism increased and tenant farmers were forced to pay higher rents in kind. Situation reached an end where tenants did not have enough rice for their own physical survival. The result was a large, spontaneous peasant revolt, the Rice Riots of 1918, which spread to more than 30 prefectures and lasted 42 days.

At the same time, rapidly increasing industrialization created greater opportunities, causing people to migrate from the rural areas to the cities. The bargaining position of urban labour and of the peasantry improved somewhat, and the formation of labour unions accelerated along with the occurrence of strikes. Because of the relative labour shortage, tenants were able to threaten landlords with non-cultivation of the land if rents were not decreased.

After the First World War, industrial crisis led to the dismissal of many workers. When they returned to their already overcrowded villages, rural unrest grew. Tension increased rapidly as those who returned acutely felt the backward conditions in which tenants generally lived. The organizing experience they had gained in industry was soon applied to bargaining for better conditions in the rural-agrarian

setting. Formally organized tenant unions began to develop in the areas around the new industrial centres, particularly Nagoya.

Local unions generally grew spontaneously at the buraka (hamlet) level, around rent disputes. Workers who had been dismissed because of union activities and had to return to their villages were particularly influential in these activities. Several workers became effective peasant organization leaders. The need for an organization at the national and prefecture levels was increasingly felt but did not materialize until 1922, when a group of intellectuals, journalists, a missionary and a labour leader took the initiative in creating the Japanese Peasant Union (Nihon Nomin Kumiai, abbreviated Nichinó).

By 1926, Nichinó claimed a dues-paying membership of about 68,000 peasants. Its chief aim was still to reduce rents, but it also had political demands, such as legislation to protect tenants, as well as the objective of socialization of the land. After universal suffrage was introduced in Japan in 1925, and the number of voters rose from 3 million to 14 million, Nichinó became politically more influential. Nichinó leaders invited the 28 labour federations with more than 1,000 members to form a Workers and Peasants Party. Such increasing involvement in political and ideological issues led to splits and mergers among peasant organizations and political parties. One divisive point was whether to include all peasants and small landowners, or tenants only. Another was between those who saw the tenants' struggle against the landlords as a class struggle directed toward overall social change, and those who were more in favour of compromise and the achievement of concrete benefits for tenants specifically.

However, it was observed that these differences were primarily differences between leaders. Which national organization a particular local tenant union was federated with depended more on personal connections with particular leaders than on ideological attachment to one doctrine rather than another. And, indeed, in their practical activities the various federations differed little from each other. Their chief function was to assist tenants engaged in disputes, to encourage the formation of local tenant unions in districts hitherto unorganized, and to direct and co-ordinate the formulation of tenants' demands (Dore, 1959,77).

Whatever occurred nationally, the main function of tenant unions at the local level was in rent disputes with landlords. Buraku unions had taken many of these disputes up before the national organization was created, but the local-level struggle was made more effective through the national union and its officials. In the campaign to spread the movement, those burakus were chosen where the most severe and acute problems existed. Very large landowners were helped by police repression of tenant organizations; smaller landowners used their traditional paternalistic control to pressure tenants against joining a union. Kin relationships, favours and threats to force people to pay their debts were used to exert pressure on tenants. These obstacles could only be overcome by an organized strength of the peasants.

As peasant unions spread throughout the country and became better organized, their demands changed. Initially, demands were mostly for postponement or reduction of rent payments when harvests were bad, or other emergencies. Later, demands for permanent rent reduction of 30 percent were increasingly heard. Landlords often tried to evict peasants when they started to organize unions. Rather than being solved through negotiation, more and more disputes were brought to the courts, which generally ruled in favour of the landlords. Peasant organizations thus became increasingly aware of the need for political action at the national level. Radical views on the need for drastic social structural change in order to improve the life of the peasants found an increasingly positive response. The leftist Workers and Peasants Party, on the whole supported by the Nichinó, won considerable influence during the 1928 elections to the Diet.

The government, alarmed by the rising tide of radicalism in the peasant and labour movement, ordered nationwide arrests of movement leaders in the so-called 3.15 event (15 March 1928). This was a serious blow to the Nichinó, which had most of its top leaders at the national and some prefectural levels imprisoned. Some, such as national leader Tokuda, remained in jail until after the Second World War. However, local action continued in spite of increasing difficulties, showing the strength of the needs and demands of the tenants.

In September 1931 an explosion engineered by the Armed Forces near Mukden in China was used as a pretext for the occupation of Manchuria. This action considerably increased the authoritarian tendency of the Japanese government, and the influence of the armed forces, and marked the beginning of a period of serious repression. It is striking that in spite of all the repressive measures, the number of disputes continued to increase. Local buraku groups, independent of any direct support by a national peasant or political organization, waged most tenancy disputes.

These seemingly unstoppable peasant protests prepared the way, before and during the Second World War, for land reform that was finally carried out in 1946, which was relatively radical as a result of the revived peasant pressure. The peasant movement survived and, in fact, was strengthened by the defeat of the Japanese army in 1945, although many of its leaders had spent years in jail. The movement was quickly reactivated and pressed for land tenure reforms similar to those tried in some areas in China. The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) pressured the post-war Japanese government to abolish feudal-type relations in the countryside and avoid the risk of peasant rebellion. This pressure was not without political overtones, as on the one hand, the landed gentry was seen by the occupation forces as being closely related to the defeated state system in Japan, and on the other, there was the threat of communism spreading in the region on the wave of peasant discontent.

Between 1946 and 1949, almost all land property in excess of one hectare of irrigated paddy was redistributed among the tillers, mainly through purchase and resale. Organized peasants played a crucial role in this process, together with the rich farmers and landlords. The redistribution proceeded with the close supervision and advice of the technicians of the occupation authorities, and Wolf Ladejinsky (cited above) played a crucial role in this process. The opposition of the landlords was largely overcome by providing them with institutional forms of expression, and a stake in industrialization. Village (and town) land committees played an important role in the implementation of agrarian reform. These committees consisted of five tenant members, three landlords and two owner-farmers, with each group electing its representatives. Although some land committees continued to be dominated by the landlords, institutionalization of the dealings between landlords and tenants in village land committees limited the number of incidents involving some kind of violence during the crucial years of the reform. The institutionalization of the peasants' participation in the land reform process through the land committees constituted an important adult education programme through which 150,000 people received leadership training (Ladejinsky, 1977,133). It has been estimated that from 10 to 40 percent of the village leaders after the reform had achieved their leadership positions thanks to the reform. (1992)

INDONESIA

One of the most spectacular peasant mobilizations in Asia was the Indonesian Peasant Front (BTI, Barisan Tani Indonesia) created and directed by the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party). The communities tried to arrive at a united front policy and to build up a mass organization, particularly among the peasants, following to some extent the Chinese grassroots mobilization model in a generally peaceful manner.

In the first place, the survivors of feudalism in Indonesia were denounced. Emphasis was given to the need of organizing peasants, taking as a point of departure their most strongly felt demands and grievances. It was suggested that local organizations be created around such demands, adapted to a particular village or area. Party cadres were instructed to identify the most acute problems in each particular area or community. A policy of 'three together' was followed, whereby PKI activists had to 'live together, eat together and work together' with the peasants. They also helped solve all kinds of practical, day-to-day problems, such as rent payment, etc. Such small but successful actions were seen by the PKI and BTI cadres as the best way to be accepted by the peasantry, and to create networks for mass mobilisation. It was emphasized, however, that such actions should be accompanied by stimulating among

the peasants the awareness that the basic solution to their problems could come only with the end of their exploitation by landlords, and that this had to be achieved through organized struggle. Actions that directly affected the relationship with the landowners were not to be undertaken, however, until local-level organizations had gained enough strength. Then demands for joint land rent agreements, lowered interest rates on loans or lowered land rents could be brought up.

It is surprising that the spread and development of the BTI and its activities in Java came about in a society still dominated by tradition and respect for harmony (*rukun*) and established leadership, although the first signs of a decline in customary relations were there. It was a big step to systematically undermine the hold of traditional wealthy leaders over their villages, and to bring the people to the point of opposing that leadership on crucial issues such as land tenure. It would be an exaggeration to say that clear-cut class struggle emerged, but there were certainly elements of one. By bringing up examples of existing but hidden grievances against those in power, people were made aware that the harmony in their villages was disappearing or had not really existed. As cases of abuse and usury under the modernization process and increasing absentee ownership became known, peasants gained increasing awareness of being exploited. The BTI used this awareness as a means to organize the peasants as a special interest group.

Strong new local leadership was needed to rally the people against traditional elites in addition to mobilizing them to oppose the deteriorating land tenure situation. Identification with the fate of poor peasants was the initial step to gain their adherence and admiration. Loyalty to charismatic, particularly able and courageous leaders brought together the Javanese peasants in their struggle for improvement and change. Such leaders also took on the fatherly role traditionally played by landlords and wealthy farmers among the peasants in their village. Once traditional patronage was undermined and new leaders enjoyed sufficient prestige, it was possible to compete successfully with old leaders in elections for *lurahs* (village-heads) and even higher positions in local government. In several areas, particularly in Central Java, BTI and PKI leaders were thus gradually taking over official positions from the established local elite. In the process, the activists often used Javanese mythological elements and spiritual practices that were cherished by the masses as the characteristics of a just society (Adas, 1979,93). In this effort, the activists sought to gain the collaboration of the local *dukuns* (healers) and traditional *wajang* puppet players.

In spite of the difficulties typically faced by organizers in highly traditional rural areas, the BTI was the most impressive of all the communist-oriented mass organizations in Indonesia. By the end of 1953, it counted several hundred thousand members, and 8.5 million in September 1964. The growing strength of the communist and communist-oriented mass organizations provoked a strong response from the armed forces. A PKI Party Congress planned for 1959 was initially forbidden by the army, but was later allowed, due to support from President Sukarno. However, the scheduled elections of 1959, which could have given the Communist Party a majority in parliament or made it the most influential party, were not held. Instead, presidential rule, or guided democracy was initiated, and President Sukarno tried to keep a balance between the army, the Communist Party and other forces.

The bargaining position of the BTI as a mass organization was, however, strong enough to take up the land reform issue successfully at the national level, and obtain the promulgation of a land reform law in 1960. According to this law, landowners who had more than the official ceiling of five hectares of irrigated paddy land had to make the surplus available for redistribution to the landless. But this reform was only slowly and inefficiently implemented, leading the BTI and PKI to step up their activities and become more militant, and risking the harmonious collaboration that existed at the national level between them and various other political forces. In order to speed up the reform programme, in 1963 Aidit endorsed a unilateral action movement (*Gerakan Aksi Sefihak*) of the peasants. The tactic most frequently used was occupation of the lands to which landless peasants were entitled under the law. By occupying certain parcels, the peasants involved indicated which lands were to be distributed.

It is difficult to assess whether the unilateral action movement was instigated by the BTI or PKI leadership, or was a spontaneous response by the peasants to doubtful practices and unilateral actions by landowners, such as distributing surplus land to their own relatives or eviction of possible claimants. While such actions by the landowners were an effort to avoid land distribution or prevent peasants from

claiming their new rights, the unilateral actions of the peasants were directed toward the initiation and acceleration of the land distribution process. In August 1964 President Sukarno also endorsed the unilateral action movement, and during the second half of 1964 drastic steps were taken to accelerate the stagnant land reform programme. This suggests that the unilateral action movement grew to considerable proportions, and may indicate how effectively the BTI and PKI had organized the peasants. Actually, militancy is generally not considered a characteristic of the Javanese peasants. The fact that, in a good many instances, local harmony was abolished shows how far the process of 'de-traditionalization' had progressed. On the whole, local people took the new course of events for granted, with about half a million peasants benefiting from land reform in a relatively short time during the second half of 1964.

There is evidence that during the period of rapid land distribution little violence occurred. A ferociously violent reaction came, however, in October 1965. After an abortive coup, allegedly by leftist officers, a military regime came to power. Sections of the army, together with the youth of the largely Islamic rural elites, assassinated more than half a million peasants and peasant leaders, as well as other communists or alleged communists. After this massacre, the BTI was virtually non-existent. According to Ernst Utrecht (1975), an important role played by certain representatives of traditional Javanese cosmology (shamans, dukuns) in the BTI movement, probably ensured that the fire of resistance would smoulder for decades to come.

INDIA

In India, social mobilization of peasants for agrarian reform was also an integral part of the nationalist liberation movement from the beginning. Indian peasants, who lived in scattered villages, became politicized in the wake of the nationalist movement. The general spirit of defiance of authority generated by the nationalist movement from 1920 onwards, and Gandhi's charisma promoted the growth of peasant movements almost throughout the country (1982:28). Gandhi's mobilization techniques included meetings, processions, signature campaigns and satyagraha (soul force through passive resistance), mostly to achieve rent reduction and abolition of feudal dues. In fact, it was participation of peasants that gave the nationalist movement its force and mass base. Farmers' unions (Kisan Sabhas) sprung up in many areas and became particularly strong in Bihar. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati was one of the pioneers of the movement, and it was at his initiative the All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) was formed in 1936. One of the major demands of the AIKS was abolition of the zamindari. The Kisan Sabha had a particularly powerful presence in Bihar, which was the hub of a powerful peasant movement in the pre-independence period. Within two years of its formation, AIKS had 500,000 members.

As a reaction to the 1943 famine in Bengal in which many peasants died, the tebhaga movement emerged against landlords. The movement demanded that two thirds of the crop be remitted to the cultivator, as recommended but not implemented by the 1940 Land Revenue Commission. The tebhaga struggle was supported by the Bengal Kisan Sabha, which organized massive demonstrations in 1946. Because of the strong influence of Communist leaders in the movement, the Congress Party leadership responded with severe police repression. This caused the collapse of the movement but radicalized the peasantry even more, indirectly strengthening the Communist Party in Bengal. Thus, the base was laid in West Bengal for the coming to power through regular elections in 1967 of a United Front government, dominated by the communists, which later carried out moderate but effective land reform in that state. A similar transition had occurred in 1957, through an elected United Front government in the state of Kerala.

The peasant movement was also very strong in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. In the colonial period, Nizam and Muslim elites ruled this state. The feudal conditions prevailing in the rural areas were challenged in the 1940s when a class of rich peasants emerged and supported the nationalist cause. When the Nizam declared independence for Hyderabad in 1947, the Congress Party joined the

radical agrarian struggle against the Muslim feudal elite. In areas where the Communist-oriented AIKS had gained peasant support, the Muslim elites mobilized a paramilitary force that killed or jailed thousands of peasant militants (Sundarayya, 1979, 545). The peasant mobilization achieved short-lived land redistribution (of over a million acres), and local village committees abolished feudal servitude. In 1948, however, the Indian army moved in to pacify the Telangana area, and integrate the state into the Indian union. This action, as well as internal divisions over the strategy to follow whether an insurrectional armed struggle, as in China, or parliamentary politics, brought an end to the peasant movement in this region in 1951 (Karunan, 1992,42-44).

During the 1960s, Maoist-oriented communists came to the foreground in India. The growing contradictions between rich and poor in rural areas led them to initiate rebellions (partly among tribal communities) under the guidance of their ideologue, Charu Mazumdar, in Naxalbari (Darjeeling district) and Srikakulam. These Naxalite rebellions remained rather isolated, and when they became increasingly violent they were isolated by army and police intervention (Sen, 1982,212; Karunan, 1992, 47). But rural unrest remained endemic in most of India in spite of, or partly as an unforeseen result of, top-down rural development efforts.

One effect of years of agitation in different parts of India was some measure of tenancy reform, mainly in the areas where peasant organizations had been active in the late 1940s. However, these reform efforts remained relatively localized or were not systematically implemented. The evaluation by the Indian government of its tenancy reform programme presented at the 1966 World Land Reform Conference (United Nations, 1968) stressed that tenants should be encouraged to organize themselves into unions or co-operatives in order to enforce the reform measures. However, little or nothing was done about this in practice. In fact, after the Tenancy Act of 1950, there was a mass eviction of peasants in several parts of the country, because there was no check against this practice. In some areas, violence was used against the tenants; elsewhere peasants gave up their tenancy rights voluntarily.

The lack of progress in land reform in India during the 1950s and 1960s has been described extensively by Wolf Ladejinsky (1977). India's situation was complicated by the fact that each state government had its own policies, which were not always the same as those prescribed by national legislation. During field trips in 1952, Ladejinsky was struck by the fact that rental rates for tenants were very high, mostly far above 50 percent of their yields. As a consequence, in the district of Tanjore in Madras state, the communists had taken up the land reform issue. They did not create the grievances; in the absence of any effort by the Madras government to correct the maladjustments breaking into the open, the Communists articulated the grievances to the obvious satisfaction of large groups of non-political farmers. (Ladejinsky, 1977, 165). This led to considerable losses for the Congress Party, but not to effective reforms, even though the communist led peasant organization had 200,000 members.

Community development emerged as an internationally sponsored strategy in the early 1950s, with support from the Ford Foundation and the Indo-American Technical Cooperation Fund as means of countering peasant unrest in the wake of a distorted agrarian production and power structure. This approach was soon adopted on a large scale and in a few years became a nationwide programme widely presented as a strategy of meeting the Communist challenge, as the US ambassador to India at that time, Chester Bowles, indicated (1954:2). As part of this strategy, community development and agricultural extension workers generally accepted that communicating new ideas via established leaders in the villages would automatically benefit the whole community. Information about improved technology, such as better seeds or fertilizers, was given to the more advanced farmers, the opinion leaders, who were prepared to adopt new practices. The expectation was that the other farmers would eventually follow their example. But this approach completely ignored the uneven distribution of land and other resources in rural areas. It strengthened the economic position of those who were already better off, widening the gap between poor and rich at the village level. Thus, the community development strategy actually sharpened the contradictions and the potential for social conflict in the villages.

This rich-poor polarization was accelerated by the Green Revolution. The introduction of high yielding varieties of grains through credit-worthy farmers to increase food production was strongly

supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and other western donors and agribusinesses. A disadvantage of this approach was that, while an important minority sector of the peasantry could benefit, majority sectors did not share in this process and remained behind (Dasgupta, 1975; Palmer, 1976). Although food production increased considerably, growing contradictions between rich and poor led to social discrepancies, tenant displacement and increasing landlessness, enhancing unrest in many rural areas (Ladejinsky, 1977,472).

According to Sharma, the percentage of rural households living below the extreme poverty line rose from 38 percent in 1960 to 53 percent in 1968 (1973). It is estimated that landlessness among Indian peasants increased from 20 percent to about 50 percent between 1950 and 1980. Increasing frustration and deprivation led to greater participation by underprivileged groups in forms of intense resistance, leading to what an official inquiry called agrarian unrest. This report of the Ministry of Home Affairs concluded:

The problem, in other words, has to be tackled on a wide front effectively and imaginatively. Failure to do so may lead to a situation where the discontented elements are compelled to organize themselves, causing the extreme tensions building up within the complex molecule, that is the Indian village to end in an explosion (1969,102).

Januzzi (1994:140) pointed out that the shattering of Congress Party dominance in the 1967 elections demonstrated that formerly submissive peasants were beginning to act on their own behalf, contrary to the expectations of the landholding elite.

Agrarian unrest has continued in the Indian countryside, often including atrocities committed by the wealthy and even the state against the restless poor. The local landlords effectively sabotaged land reform efforts. Januzzi observed that land reform for India as a whole has been a lost opportunity, but that, for electoral reasons and because of growing tensions and contradictions, future governments of India will have to deal with it.

PHILIPPINES

Like most of Latin America, the Philippines was colonized by the Spanish, who utilized and strengthened the existing feudal power structure, inter-marrying with local chiefs and creating a class of so-called caciques. After a revolt in 1898, which was largely agrarian in character, threatened to overthrow the colonial regime, the United States took over the Philippines from Spain. However, this did not fundamentally change the cacique system. In fact, the frustration of the peasants became more acute by the emphasis placed on the need for democracy and education, without doing much to realize these ideas. Tenants, who formed the majority of the agrarian population, particularly in the densely populated areas of Central Luzon, depended almost completely on the landlords for their livelihoods. They often rented buffaloes and houses from the landlord, and in some areas paid a tenancy rate as high as 90 percent of the harvest. Permanent indebtedness was common.

Commercial agriculture, introduced under US colonial rule, caused a serious deterioration in conditions for the peasants. An increasing amount of land was dedicated to commercial crops, particularly sugar and tobacco, which could be exported to the United States. Land ownership became increasingly concentrated as a result. In addition, a more business-oriented approach was introduced on the new plantations, modifying the paternal relations that had existed on the traditional estates. Absentee landlords became increasingly common. The paternalism that had helped to maintain some appearance of benevolence in the old system disappeared, and landlords became hated strangers (Jacobi, 1961,199-201). Average tenancy rates went up from 38 to 60 percent between 1903 and 1946. Especially in Central Luzon, in Nueva Ecija and Pampanga, the situation of the inquilinos (cash tenants) and peasants under the kasama system (share tenants) became unbearable.

An additional source of frustration for the peasantry was land-grabbing, by which large owners claimed adjacent small holdings and won their case in the courts because of their influence and ability to pay lawyers. Thus, thousands of once independent and self-sufficient farmers were reduced to the status of tenants and landless farm labourers (Jacobi, 1961,201). As a result, several local and more or less spontaneous uprisings of peasants took place. By 1919, a sharecroppers' union had been formed by a communist leader, Jacinto Manahan, which became known as the National Union of Peasants in the Philippines (Katipunan Pambansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas, KPMP) in 1924.

The peasant organizations generally used non-violent methods, such as demonstrations and sit-down strikes. If there were any arrests, they went together as a group into jail. Dramatic stage presentations and cultural activities were used to teach the peasants about the labour struggle, and to turn the strikes into public manifestations. However, the country also saw reactionary organizations of landlords come up against the land reforms. Landlords organized armed groups, such as the soldiers for peace, to oppose and clash with the socialists, which led to considerable violence in the rural areas of Central Luzon. When the socialists were prohibited from holding meetings, the organizers used any kind of gathering, such as Protestant religious meetings, to make propaganda for the peasant cause.

As a reaction to the Japanese occupation on 29 March 1942, the united peasant organizations created the People's Army against the Japanese, or Hukbala (Hubko ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon). The aims of the Huk movement were expressed in a manifesto emphasizing opposition against and expulsion of the Japanese, co-operation with the Allied armies, apprehension and punishment of traitors and collaborators with the Japanese, complete independence for the Philippines, and the establishment of a democratic government with land reform, national industrialization and guarantees for a minimum standard of living as the core agenda (Salmon, 1968,12).

Beginning in 1942, the peasant organization accepted the use of military means, with many peasants carrying arms and forming squadrons of approximately 100 men each. Thus, the armed struggle against the Japanese was initiated. The armed units operated in the areas around the homes of members. Support for the units was organized in the villages through the Barrio United Defence Corps (BUDC), in order to guarantee a food supply and other necessities. BUDC councils were created in the villages with the result that the spread of a resistance movement brought forms of democratic decision-making to the villages, which had traditionally been dominated by the caciques. The BUDC councils formed the local government in the areas controlled by the guerrilla forces. This system functioned particularly well in the areas where the peasant organizations had gained strength before the war.

The Huk movement was particularly successful in mobilizing masses, and became so strong that it controlled the entire areas of Central Luzon, which the Japanese could not enter. In those areas, de facto political control and local government were in the hands of the resistance forces which had their base in the peasantry. The lands of many landlords who collaborated with the Japanese and lived in the towns were taken over by the Huks, and harvests were no longer handed over. Landlords who supported the Huk movement were allowed to remain on their land but had to accept a fixed rent. Huk leaders were elected governors in some provinces in the December 1944 elections.

Although the efforts of the Huks facilitated the US army's liberation of the Philippines from the Japanese, relations between the Huks and the Americans were never good. It was feared that the Huks would radically change the social order in the Philippines if they had the opportunity to do so. A few months before he died in 1948, US-supported president, Roxas, outlawed the Huk organization. His successor, Quirino, attempted to negotiate an amnesty realizing that policy of armed repression had failed. Reconciliation was attempted, with the minimum demands presented by the Huks, which were mainly peasants' demands. They were - (1) division of estates, and their resale to tenants with government assistance; (2) support for migration from overcrowded to less crowded areas; (3) laws establishing a fair sharing of the crop by landlords and tenants; (4) curbs on usury; and (5) a minimum wage scale. A 70:30 Rice Share Tenancy Act in favour of the peasants was soon promulgated, but implementation was very defective, and no truce between the government and the Huks actually resulted.

The armed Huk resistance flared up again and gained increasing strength between 1948 and 1950. The Huk leadership seriously considered the possibility of overthrowing the government by armed force, and the organization's name was changed to HMB (Hukbong Mapagpalayang Bayan, or People's Army of Liberation, although they also remained known as Huks). Some of the leaders, including Taruc, only half-heartedly agreed with this change in approach, which was actually made for doctrinaire reasons. As Taruc reported (1953:67.99), the show of force that the Huks made by occupying several towns and besieging others scared the government enough to reorient its policies, with help from US advisory teams. There was a cleaning up in the government ranks and Ramon Magsaysay became the new Secretary of Defence in 1950. He was given the responsibility of reorganizing the army and modifying its approach. The Philippine Constabulary (PC), that is, the police force was integrated in the army and personnel were shifted to ease tensions. Cases of abuse were investigated, and arbitrariness was punished. Magsaysay's experience during the Second World War and the pressure from the US advisory missions were factors contributing to this new approach. Magsaysay's 1953 presidential campaign and the reforms that were promised, particularly land distribution, also helped to appease the peasants.

The possibility of a peaceful solution to agrarian and other problems seemed to emerge. Divisions of opinion between Taruc and the more doctrinaire leaders came into the open. Taruc surrendered in 1954 under a pledge of amnesty by President Magsaysay, although the pledge was not kept. Taruc was jailed for many years. In the meantime, the peasants adopted a wait-and-watch policy, and the Huks had to withdraw due to decreasing support among the peasants and the increasing effectiveness of the army. Between 1952 and 1954 several institutions and programmes were created to deal with the peasant problem in various ways, as an alternative to the violent struggle in which the peasants had become involved. One programme was the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), a private community development agency, sponsored by Dr Y.C. James Yen of the Joint Sino-American Commission on Rural Reconstruction, which had been active in mainland China before 1949, and had later carried out rural development activities in the region of Taiwan. The PRRM was called on by President Magsaysay to help with pacification and counter-insurgency activities in the epicentre of the Huk movement, the municipality of San Luis in the province of Pampanga (the birthplace of Luis Taruc).

Specially trained village-level workers were stationed in San Luis to try to win the confidence of the people and wean them from their support of the Huk rebels. Since the reform programme was not extended to the country as a whole, efforts to revive the peasant struggle flared up time after time, and a considerable number of Huk guerrillas remained active in Central Luzon. Another effort to neutralize radical peasant mobilization was the creation of the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) in 1953 by a group of Catholic laymen, headed by Jeremias Montemayor, a lawyer and lecturer at the Institute of Social Order in Manila. The Institute was created and headed by Jesuit priests, with the goal of guiding the social action of the Catholic Church, particularly in the field of unionization. Initially, the growth of the FFF was facilitated by the active support of President Magsaysay. FFF leaders had easy access to the presidential offices to have concrete cases of farmers' problems and complaints resolved. The problems were generally local, without much impact on government policy as a whole. In a relatively favourable climate, the FFF enjoyed a rapid growth to over 36,000 members by March 1957, particularly in Central Luzon. After the death of Magsaysay in March 1957, the situation became more difficult, but the FFF was able to consolidate its organization.

The role of the parish priest as facilitator was often crucial to the establishment of an FFF organization in a village. The fact that an increasing number of local parish priests became favourably inclined toward the FFF was a key reason for the organization's spread into many areas, particularly in Mindanao. Although the FFF published a booklet (*Land to the Tiller*, drafted by Fr. Mauri, its former religious advisor) containing a number of radical suggestions for agrarian reform, the FFF undertook very little political pressure or action to influence the drafting of land reform bills.

Because of the resistance in influential circles to even moderate land reform, the FFF gradually became more openly radical. At times it organized public demonstrations in which a great number of individual cases were brought together and given wide publicity. At such events, student sympathizers

played an important role. A whole series of individual cases was resolved after a spectacular demonstration was staged in Manila in September-November 1969. The demonstration consisted of a marathon picket of almost two months in a park (the Agripina Circle) in front of the Bureau of Lands, and sometimes extended into the lobby of the building itself.

The assassination of several local FFF leaders also had a radicalizing influence. It did not stop other more radical peasant organizations from emerging until President Marcos declared martial law in 1972. Many organizations were banned and went underground to join the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA) (Karunan, 1992,72). This organization, led by José Maria Sison, waged an armed guerrilla struggle along Maoist strategies. During the 1980s, NPA had about 3,000 fighters and a considerable base in the wider population. However, internal divisions, due to policy changes in China, have weakened the NPA's influence.

Land reforms promulgated under Marcos in the 1980s were directed towards betting on the strong, including multinational agribusiness corporations. The World Bank-supported agrarian reform programme of the Aquino government, which came to power on a wave of protest in 1986, was also disappointing. But peasants continued to organize in the Kilusang Magnubukid ng Philipinas (KMP, National Peasant Movement in the Philippines), and under the leadership of Jaime Tadeo became increasingly vocal in favour of more radical land reform (Karunan, 1992,88).

Conclusion

Increasingly today, we hear people remark “the world is getting smaller.” The advent of globalization has met with mixed responses across the world. They range from praise for interconnectivity and exchange between people to alarm and contempt towards environmental deterioration and rising inequality. Together, these are the contradictory and ambiguous results of globalization currently unfolding throughout the world. These commonalities, which exist between countries in our contemporary moment, are precisely what allow us to draw a variety of positive lessons from the social and political history of one fundamental human necessity - land. For it is land that lies at the centre of all the questions on economic, trade and environmental policy plaguing governments, lawmakers, activists, and most importantly, ordinary citizens today.

When political elites and World Bank officials implement seemingly innocuous, top-down poverty alleviation schemes asking ‘how do we make globalization work for all?’ they fail to see the most basic underlying causes of poverty and destitution in much of the world. In opposition to this institutional ignorance, we witness a variety of people’s movements emerging from below, composed of the landless rural and urban working poor, struggling to survive and at times, taking things into their own hands and voicing their demands through mobilizations, both violent and peaceful. The examples in this document locate these moments of public discontent and pressure exerted on the state to address the need for land rights. In order to reassert the importance of land reform to current questions on global socio-economic structures, we retrace the key components of our arguments.

1. We have mapped the historical trajectories of several countries and asked a basic, but critical question – Why land?
Land sustains and fulfils fundamental human needs, from food to shelter. The inability to own land debilitates the tiller/cultivator’s ability to reap the benefits of his/her labour and generate income. A cycle of asset poverty prevents consumption and mobility and therefore exacerbates economic and political dependency.
2. Sure enough, we are not saying that there should be no diversification away from agricultural production for those dependent on land. On the contrary, a proper economic transformation must imply an opening up of new cultivation activities for a land-dependent population. In fact, one may even argue that the whole successful resolution of ‘the agrarian question’ means that dependence on agriculture for livelihood as a percent of GDP and workforce becomes smaller.
3. However, this must not be a forced transfer of people from agriculture to so-called development. To avoid this, redistribution of land becomes a pre-requisite for economic growth and development.
4. It must be emphasized that the models of economic transformation in developing countries will be necessarily different from the models of western capitalism. This is largely because the historical conditions and the overall global conjuncture are very different from what those countries confronted when they embarked upon economic growth. It is extremely important to realize that one obvious consequence is that the pace of movement out of agriculture will be necessarily much slower. This obviously implies that instead of aping contemporary models of corporate capitalism, which is what is being

done by governments of developing countries, we need to find our own appropriate models which would ensure decent livelihoods to masses in rural areas. For reasons of space, we cannot elaborate here.⁹

5. The introduction substantiated the first question with evidence on the destructive and self-perpetuating consequences of inequitable land distribution. Wealthy elites, who own the best lands, control and expand agricultural production for export, continually displacing the poor to ever more marginal areas for farming. The poor are forced to fell forests located on poor soils, to farm thin, easily eroded soils on steep slopes, and to try to eke out a living on desert margins and rainforest. As they fall deeper into poverty they are often accused of contributing to environmental degradation, and worse are treated as criminals on the charges of encroaching on what has come to be defined as public property.
6. The inability to own land in rural areas is closely linked to urban poverty. The landless poor must abandon the countryside in massive numbers and migrate to cities where only a lucky few make a living wage, while the majorities languish in slums and shantytowns.
7. Arguably, these dire consequences reaffirm the need to redistribute land through comprehensive agrarian reform. This is a basic prerequisite for the kind of inclusive, broad-based development that would allow nations to provide all of their citizens with a decent standard of living and make possible more ecologically sustainable management of natural resources. Compelling empirical evidence strengthens arguments for broad and effective land redistribution. For instance, as stated earlier, in India the redistribution of only 5 percent of farmland combined with better access to livelihood resources could reduce poverty levels by as much as 30 percent.
8. In addition, as the cases in this monograph showed, multiple actors and interests push for, partially support or all together prevent or block land reform. The economic and political elite of a country, external agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF, citizens' initiatives and organizations, and NGOs influence land policies. Keeping in mind the contestations and conflicts between these actors, we then ask – how does land reform happen?
9. Land reform legislations and efforts at implementation have invariably derived from the force of peasant mobilization; it is the character of the peasant movement that shapes the agenda of reforms. Through political organizations, coalitions and alliances land reform demands have been pushed to the forefront of social justice movements and national policies.
10. The presence and pressure of multiple interests can break or make changes in land policy. In democratic countries, it was seen that governments paid lip service to the recommendations of NGOs while pushing through land legislation favourable to the landed and corporate interests. In other cases, such as Nepal, we observed small but effective initiatives such as the CSRC, a movement where the social and economic roles have been fundamentally altered and formerly subjugated people are now empowered. However, to replicate this experience within Nepal and the world requires sweeping changes in larger economic policy and intense pressure on state mechanisms.
11. The pressures of external agencies such as the World Bank on the agricultural policies of postcolonial nations also need to be read critically. As the case of South Africa betrays, it is clear that conditional policies intending to “integrate” countries into global markets and trade resemble a double sided-knife. On the one hand, the implementation of market-led

⁹ Please see “Editor’s introduction” in Praveen K. Jha, *Land Reforms in India: Issues of equity in rural Madhya Pradesh Volume 7*. Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2002.

land reforms has deepened poverty and inequality internally and on the other side, multilateral loans have buried South Africa in a cycle of debt.

12. Another important lesson to be learnt from country experiences (such as China, and Vietnam) is that a cultivator has to be the base of any agricultural enterprise, and policies should be targeted at enforcing her/his positioning as a primary agent of agrarian economy. State-enforced collectivization may often run into difficulties because of the loss of incentives on the part of the peasantry. It failed to take cognizance of the character of land as a living unit rather than a production unit. Any effort at land reforms, therefore, should follow a bottom-up approach, at least in policy formulation and implementation design at various stages.
13. The experience of countries such as Japan proves beyond doubt the economic viability of small farms, indicating that economies of scale are not an issue in agriculture. Wherever land reforms succeeded in redistributing a significant proportion of quality land to a majority of the rural poor, and when the power of rural elites to distort and capture policies was broken, the results have invariably been real, measurable poverty reduction and improvement in human welfare.
14. Therefore, development's primary purpose needs to shift from large industrial farms focused on profits to small farmers with secure tenure, long-term productivity of their soils and conservation of functional biodiversity.
15. An unambiguous political direction combined with an elaborate structural intervention result in significant victories for land rights. Operation Barga, in West Bengal in India is a clear example of this. Here administrative officers recorded the rights of tenants while party workers from state government supported the tenants in mobilizing and claiming their right to land. Clearly, the lesson is that peasant mobilizations can influence and transform the economic regime when supported by broader networks and mechanisms.
16. Women's right to land is an issue largely ignored by policymakers and organizations. Women sustain rural households through unpaid labour both within and outside the home, yet in most third world countries, they are far more impoverished than men. The lack of land and the inability to draw on its related resources prevents women from breaking the cycle of poverty. The enormous benefits of winning land rights for women are shown in improved family structures, better nutrition and rising incomes in rural households.
17. The gap between policymaking and implementation continues to debilitate possibilities of effective land reform. Thus, successful transformation of an inequitable agrarian structure warrants not only a pro-active state whose policy orientation derives from the needs and welfare of the masses, but also a peasantry which is not only conscious of its needs and interests, but is ready to seek them pro-actively. Mobilizations and movements have the power to impact political processes, which ultimately lead to policy transformation.

Clearly, what is at stake is a model of development that is inclusive, rather than exclusive. The varied examples here prove land as a fundamental basis for citizenship. Internationally, strong social justice movements have been the impetus and motivation behind changes of overarching economic policies, and have inevitably encountered resistance from those in power. Both the state and international agencies have to come to terms with the fact that their policies will fail to survive if they continue to benefit the few at the expense of the majority. To make international economic policies and civil society 'work for all,' new paradigms that include all, need to be developed. The voices of citizens from across the globe show that alternatives to prevailing policies exist and can be created. It is this shared global experience that has, hopefully, revealed to us a variety of possibilities and lessons for the future of land reform.

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