

CHAPTER 6

POINT 5 : ENFORCEMENT OF LAND REFORMS

6.1 One of the problems in rural areas relate to the land ownership. The man who actually tilled the land did not own it. This was a very unjust system and changes in such a system in favour of the actual tiller of land were felt essential. This required Land Reforms measures Distribution of surplus land among landless rural poor constitutes an important element of poverty alleviation programme. Considering the poor quality of surplus land given to beneficiaries, a financial assistance of Rs.2500 per hectare is provided for land development, purchase of inputs and meeting immediate consumption needs. The following items are covered under TPP-86 relating to this point.

(i) Quantitatively monitored items:

Distribution of surplus land.

(ii) Qualitatively monitored items:

1. Land record compilation,
2. Land declared surplus,
3. Area distributed to SCs/STs, and
4. Number of SCs/STs Benefited.

6.2 Two major problems regarding distribution of surplus land are (i) area involved in litigation and (ii) area reserved/transferred for public purposes. The States have been requested to take appropriate legal as well as administrative measures on priority basis to dispose of the court cases quickly and distribute the land made available to eligible rural poor. The State Governments have been requested that the area declared surplus should not be put to any other use except that for distribution among the rural poor. Brief Statement showing the progress under implementation of Land Ceiling Law (Cumulative) for the year ending March 2004 is given as under:

(Land in Acres)

Items	Upto 31.3.2004
(1)	(2)
1. Returns:	
(i) No. of Returns files	12,31,151
(ii) No. of Returns disposed	12,12,265
(iii) No. of Returns pending	21,536
2. Area declared surplus	73,35,908
3. Area taken possession of	64,96,897
4. Area distributed	54,03,277
(a) Scheduled Castes	18,02,199
(b) Scheduled Tribes	7,82,411
(c) Others	27,31,924
5. No. of beneficiaries	57,46,410
(a) Scheduled Castes	20,69,179
(b) Scheduled Tribes	8,44,438
(c) Others	28,32,793

6.3 The total number of returns filed was 1231151 out of these 1212265 returns were disposed of and 21536 were pending. The higher pendency of returns (over 1000) has been reported by 5 States with break up as follows: Andhra Pradesh (1632), Kerala (1420), Madhya Pradesh (1154), Tamil Nadu (2057), and West Bengal (12334). However, there is no pendency of returns as reported by the States of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur and D&N Haveli.

6.4 73.36 lakh acres of land have been declared surplus till March 2004. The total area taken possession of till end of the year has been 64.97 lakh acres which comes to 88.56 % of the area declared surplus. The total area distributed till the end of the year has been 54.03, lakh acres. The area distributed constitutes 83.17% of the area taken possession and 73.36 lakh acers of the area declared surplus. The total number of beneficiaries till March 2004 have been 57.46 lakh. SCs, STs and others account for 20.69, 8.44 and 28.33, lakh respectively constituting 36.01%, 14.69% and 49.30% respectively. The State-wise details are given in *Annexure 6.1*.

6.5 A total of 14,799 cases, involving a total area of 8.69 lakh acres were pending due to litigation as on 31st March, 2004. Higher acreage involved in litigation has been reported by West Bengal (187000 acres), Andhra Pradesh (147450 acres), Karnataka (124232 acres), Madhya Pradesh (792475 acres), Rajasthan (78464 acres), Uttar Pradesh (43275 acres) and Gujarat (67962 acres) respectively. The states were requested to take appropriate legal as well as administrative measures on priority basis to dispose of court cases quickly and distribute the land made so available to eligible rural poor. The court-wise number of cases and area involved in litigation are 3205, 6279, 619 and 209379, 306533, 28025 repectively in Revenue Courts, High Courts and Supreme Courts as on 31st March 2004. The State-wise details may be seen in *Annexure 6.2*.