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The large farmers leased-out 2.2 per cent of their area to the marginal and small farmers. This is in agreement with the step taken by the Government on land ceiling.

Gini ratio analysis indicated a high degree of disparities in the distribution of both the owned and operated area over the entire period of study. However, the disparities in the owned area were on significant decline since 1960-61. This might have happened because of forceful implementation of land reform measures during the 'sixties. However, this decline was not noticed in Tamil Nadu where the Gini ratio increased from 0.5678 in 1960-61 to 0.6429 in 1971-72. In Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, the decrease in the Gini ratio was almost negligible over this period. This suggests for stricter enforcement of corrective measures in these States.

LAND REFORMS AND THE EMERGING AGRARIAN STRUCTURE IN BIHAR

S. K. Sinha*

Land Reforms in Bihar

The Zamindary system of tenure was prevalent in Bihar which manifested absentee landlordism at its worst and was largely responsible for the continuously deteriorating conditions of the tenant farmers. The Bihar Land Reforms Act of 1950 enacted legislation for the abolition of intermediaries which has since been largely implemented. Again the Bihar Land Reforms Act of 1961 had some provisions for tenancy regulations under which under-raiyats could generally acquire right of occupancy on twelve years of continuous possession provided such under-raiyats held land from raiyats owning five acres of irrigated land or ten acres of other land. The tenancy condition of the non-occupancy under-raiyats or *bataidars* (share-cropper) was very insecure as they were liable to ejectment on expiry of the written lease. The Land Reforms Act of 1961 did not have any positive contribution towards protecting the interest of the *bataidars* or under-raiyats who in majority of the cases held land on oral lease. The Homestead Tenancy Act of 1957 conferred right of permanent tenancy in homestead lands on those persons who had no land or held land not exceeding one acre and two lakhs of such tenants were recorded. The Fixation of Ceiling Area and Acquisition of Surplus Land Act, 1961, as amended in 1971 provides for imposition of ceiling on existing holdings. Although the Ceiling Act was brought into force, no surplus land was taken

* Deputy Director, Survey Design and Research Division, National Sample Survey Organisation, Department of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Government of India, Calcutta-17. The views expressed in this paper are the author's own and not that of the Organisation to which he belongs.

over upto the early 'seventies. Out of the cultivable waste land surrendered by the intermediaries, about five lakh acres of land has been distributed to the landless and small cultivators. This being the position of land reforms in Bihar upto the early 'seventies, appreciable reduction in the inequality of distribution of ownership holdings and in the extent of tenancy can hardly be expected. However, a study of the structure of holdings as available at different points of time may reveal certain salient features which may be of interest to the policy-makers.

Ownership Holding

The National Sample Survey results[1] indicate that the percentage of landless households has declined from 16.56 in 1953-54 to 8.63 in 1961-62 and to 4.34 in 1971. Most of these landless households became marginal owners having land between 0.01 to 0.99 acre which is evident from the fact that the percentage of such marginal holders had increased by about 14 per cent in 1971 over 1953-54 which accounted for a drop of 12 per cent in the landless households during the intervening period. Small holders owning land between 1 to 4.99 acres had increased by about 3 per cent in 1971 over 1953-54, claiming about 10 per cent more area than what they had in 1953-54. Very little change is noticed about the medium holders owning land between 5 to 9.99 acres. The large holders owning ten acres or more of land showed a decline in the number of households by about 3 per cent in 1971 over 1953-54 with a sharp fall of about 13 per cent in the area owned during the intervening period. Thus 13 per cent of the owned area released by the large holders had gone to the marginal, small and medium holders, indicating an improvement in the overall structure of ownership holdings.

Features of Leasing-out of Land by Different Categories of Holders

The extent of leasing-out of land by different categories of holders as shown in Table I reveals that there had been a consistent decrease in the percentage of the number of households leasing-out owned land and the corresponding area leased out by all categories of holders during 1961-62 over 1953-54. But surprisingly enough, there had been a spurt in the extent of leasing-out of land both in respect of households as well as area in 1971-72 in all categories of holders.

The increase in the extent of leasing-out of land by the marginal holders might be largely due to the uneconomic condition of such holders as more than 50 per cent of the area leased out by them was under usufructuary mortgage. In the case of medium and large holders, the bulk of the area was leased out on crop-sharing and other terms.[2] It may not be unlikely that the medium and large holders became conscious of the much talked-about tenancy regulations of the Bihar Land Reforms Act of 1961 even before it came into

1. Refer to National Sample Survey Report Nos. 66, 144 and 215·3.
2. Refer to National Sample Survey Report No. 215·3.

TABLE I—PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS LEASING OUT LAND AND SHARE OF OWNED AREA LEASED OUT: BIHAR (RURAL)*

Category of holders	8th Round		17th Round		26th Round	
	Percentage of					
	Households leasing out land	Area leased out	Households leasing out land	Area leased out	Households leasing out land	Area leased out
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1. Marginal (0·01—0·99 acre) ..	9·95	8·80	5·70	4·41	10·35	13·77
2. Small (1·00—4·99 acres) ..	18·08	6·55	6·95	2·29	19·28	6·36
3. Medium (5·00—9·99 acres) ..	16·77	4·95	10·53	2·95	24·98	6·53
4. Large (10·00 acres and above) ..	27·96	8·29	14·94	4·84	31·39	6·45
5. Total	12·80	6·95	7·30	3·56	15·80	6·78

* *Source :* NSS Report Nos. 66, 144, 215·3.

force and suppressed the information on leasing-out of land in the fear of loosing the ownership rights over such lands. But with the passage of time when it was realised that the implementation of the tenancy laws was not so effective, the owners might have relaxed to some extent their attitude on the rigour applied towards concealment of tenancy. Though the increase in the extent of leasing-out of land in 1971 over 1961-62 is reflected to some extent in the estimates of area leased in, the gap between the area leased in and area leased out is so wide as to offer any plausible explanation. However to locate the dominance of leasers-in over leasers-out over the size classes of ownership holdings, the index of area leased in has been computed with the area leased out as the base for different categories of holders from the data of the 26th Round of the NSS, and shown in Table II.

TABLE II—EXCESS OF AREA LEASED IN OVER AREA LEASED OUT BY CATEGORY OF HOLDERS: BIHAR (RURAL) 1971*

Category of holders owning land	Area owned ('000 acres)	Percentage of owned area		Percentage distribution of		Index = Area leased-in / Area leased-out × 100
		Leased in	Leased out	Leased-in area	Leased-out area	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1. Landless	—	—	—	1·49	—	—
2. Marginal	868	158·34	13·77	46·54	9·69	1,145·00
3. Small	6,733	17·54	6·36	40·01	34·57	275·93
4. Medium	5,124	4·63	6·53	8·03	26·98	70·96
5. Large	5,528	2·10	6·45	3·93	28·76	32·58
6. Total	18,253	16·17	6·78	100·00	100·00	238·45

* Refer to NSS Report No. 215·3.

The estimates presented in Table II reveal that the bulk of the leased-in area (about 87 per cent) was accountd for by the marginal and small holders owning land below 5 acres. On the other hand, the medium and large holders leased out 56 per cent of the total leased-out area and the contribution of small holders in this regard was also substantial (about 35 per cent). The indices of area leased in when read with the figures of cols. (3) to (6) show that the demand for additional area of land needed for operation by the marginal and small holders far outweighed the supply of land by the middle and large holders who leased out their unutilized area. What could be the reason for such discrepancy in the area leased in and the area leased out? Land leased in by the rural households from the urban households and non-household institutions might explain only a portion of the difference. Even if the entire area leased out by the urban households is taken to be leased in by the rural households, the difference of 9.39 per cent between the area leased in and the area leased out (to the total area owned) comes down to about 6.39 per cent.[3] Thus in the absence of any data it does not seem to be reasonable to believe that the non-household institutions had leased out so much land to the rural operators which might explain the discrepancy in the area leased in and the area leased out. The act of suppression of information on leasing-out of land particularly by the medium and large holders seems to have played a role in creating such an imbalance in the demand and supply position of land for operation. On the other hand, the marginal and small cultivators who happened to be the net leasers-in had given out the truth regarding leasing-in of land though some controlling force had been operating to suppress their real status of tenancy. Village studies have revealed that such leases are given for short periods (generally for one year) mostly on oral contracts so that the tenants can neither claim the ownership for the leased-in land nor can they disclose the fact due to the fear that no landlord may give them land on lease next time.[4] The fact that most of the leases remained unrecorded is evident from the strikingly low incidence of tenancy in Bihar (for less then one per cent of the holdings and also area was reported to be leased in) as revealed by the All-India Census of Agriculture.[5] Thus the interview method of enquiry through the sample survey could successfully cull out information on tenancy though some cases might have remained unreported due to the intimidation of the influencial landowners. The extent of leasing-in would have increased if complete information on tenancy could be collected and in that case the gap between the land leased in and the land leased out would have been widened.

Operational Holdings and Extent of Area Leased in

The structure of operational holdings as revealed from the data of the 8th (1953-54), 17th (1960-61) and 26th Rounds (1970-71) has undergone some change in conformity with the objectives of the land reform measures. A

3. Refer to National Sample Survey Report No. 215·3, p. 41.
4. Refer to Man Singh Mathur, "Changing Patterns of Tenancy and Leasing of Land in Punjab," *Agricultural Situation in India,* Vol. XXII, No. 6, September, 1967.
5. All-India Report on Agricultural Census, 1970-71, Government of India, p. 137.

perceptible change is noticed in the distribution in 1970-71 over 1960-61 when there was a fall of about 3 per cent of large holders with a decrease of 10 per cent in area which was distributed mostly to the marginal and small holders.[6] This indicates that the inequality in the distribution has been reduced to some extent. However, if the extent of tenancy is analysed from the estimates presented in Table III it can be observed that the area rented in by the holders

TABLE III—PERCENTAGE OF OPERATIONAL HOLDINGS BY TYPE OF HOLDING AND EXTENT OF AREA LEASED IN : BIHAR (RURAL)*

NSS Rounds	Percentage of holdings reporting			Percentage of operated area	
	Entirely owned area	Entirely leased-in area	Partly owned and partly leased-in	Owned	Leased-in
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Eighth,† 1953-54‡	—	—	—	87·61	12·39
2. Sixteenth, 1959-60‡	66·12	7·08	26·80	86·73	13·27
3. Seventeenth, 1960-61‡	74·41	3·10	22·49	89·75	10·25
4. Twenty-sixth, 1971‡	60·22	0·73	39·05	85·50	14·50

* *Source :* NSS Report Nos. 66, 113, 144 and 215·3.

† In the NSS 8th Round, information on tenure was available for the total operational holdings and not for the agricultural holdings. However, since the area under agricultural holdings was more than 99 per cent of the area under total holdings, the area leased in by total holdings has been shown.

‡ Years shown against each round indicate the reference year for collection of data on operational holdings.

has increased slightly in 1970-71 over the years 1953-54 and 1959-60 and to a large extent over 1960-61. Thus in the period in which the Bihar Land Reforms Act of 1961 came into force, there had been a sharp decline in the extent of leasing-in as well as leasing-out of land. As far as the composition of operational holdings is concerned the only encouraging feature is that the entirely leased-in holdings are almost in the process of extinction.

CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE IN KERALA AND THEIR ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

M. V. George and P. T. Joseph*

An attempt is made in this paper to analyse the structural changes of land holdings in terms of their number, size, concentration, tenancy and resource endowments and their economic implications. Since land is the most important asset held in the primary sector, changes in the distribution of land holdings or in rental or wage income accruing from such holdings have significant effects on productive efficiency, income distribution and consumption.

6. Refer to National Sample Survey Report Nos. 66, 144 and 215·3.

*Chief Evaluation Officer, State Planning Board and Assistant Director, respectively, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Trivandrum.