CHAPTER IV

INADEQUACY OF LAND REFORM INFRASTRUCTURE

IV.1 Introduction:

An attempt is made in this chapter to analyse the land reform infrastructure in Kerala. Section IV.2 discusses the role of land reform infrastructure in agricultural development. In section IV.3 the land tenures in Kerala are analysed. Section IV.4 deals with the analysis of land reform measures in the state and in section IV.5 the conclusion is given.

IV.2 Land Reform Infrastructure in Agricultural Development:

The interaction of the social factor with the economic factors are so close and complex that it becomes difficult to distinguish and classify them under any heading. Similarly land reform and agrarian tenancy legislations are certain social processes which have great impact on the economic development of any community. Being a social factor its progress is slow, and hence it many times forms

1. Often, when land reform measures are associated with political movement, they tend to be revolutionary, radical and dramatic, but they end with the enactment of law rather than its proper implementation.
a barrier to economic development. When it is realised that this social factor (or rather institutional one) impedes the rapid economic prosperity, the necessary changes to be brought in the institutional structure to make it conducive to economic growth entails it to be grouped under economic infrastructure and policy measures are to be formulated with this basic assumption. To argue in this way, we should look how it helps and retards economic progress.

The term "Land Reform" is understood to mean any improvement in agricultural economic institutions and this definition has much currency in the United States. But according to a traditionally accepted definition Land Reform means the redistribution of property in land for the benefit of small farmers and agricultural workers. But no matter, which definition one uses, in providing the institutional context in the process of rapid transformation land reform measures must be expected to make structural changes in agricultural production, income distribution, the

purchasing power of the beneficiaries, savings and capital investment and formation. Thus land reform could achieve two objectives in the development process:

1. A more productive agriculture as a base for saving and capital formation for the national economic development, and

2. A better income distribution and social justice among the mass of peasants as a broad basis for the required social and political stability.

If these two objectives are to be achieved through land reform, then the acceptance of the latter definition would be self defeating. It would then be required to accept it as an instrument in economic development, and should include the synchronization of land redistribution with credit, marketing services, regulation of water right, irrigation improvement and development of managerial abilities of the new owners. We have the example of Egypt which has put into practice the modern ideas on land reform measures. In order to achieve the wider objective of land reform, certain pre-requisites are essential.3

Basically, as the decision on land reform is political, the strong determination of the government for its realization and complete implementation without using the law only as an eyewash for political gains is an essential condition. This is especially so in the democratic political systems. Secondly, it is of equal importance that proper measures be taken for organizing production system and intensifying technological changes in such a way that agricultural production is not disrupted. Thirdly, the reform of the government agricultural policy (price, trade and credit) to serve the purpose of land reform and to direct the realized savings into productive channels. Finally, the substitution of pre-reform social system in rural areas by a new one conducive to the creation of a social order for development.

The extent of impact of land reform on agricultural production in an economy depends on the following factors:

The Relationship between the Landlord and Beneficiaries:

The abolition of the system of absentee landlordism from the production point of view, is justified when landlords do not reinvest the profits they have gained
from their tenants in land productivity and in the well being of the cultivators. Therefore, any reform should be against the defective system of investment and trade in agriculture. This was especially so in the case of middle east countries like Iraq and Syria, when large land holdings were possessed by absentee landlords who combined in them two roles: as land owners and as tribal sheikhs with local traditional social responsibilities for the members of their tribes.4

It is always the concern of the national leaders that in areas effected by land reform, production should increase and not decline. But to raise production is not an easy task in the aftermath of the abolition of the feudal systems as an institution such as the tribal Sheikhs of Iraq and Syria, the ex-royal family and the Pashas of Egypt, the Zamindari system in India, the Jagir system in India and Pakistan, the Latifundia in Brazil and Latin America. When reforms are implemented which try to tamper with the social institution, they must be duly replaced by a new social system. It would be meaningless to

4. El Ghonemy, op.cit. pp. 1-33
have wishful thinking that the reform laws can bring in drastic changes over night on the social system which are centuries old and deep rooted in the rural life with the social values and preistiges attached there to. Hence proper corrective measures with follow-up steps should be taken from time to time to realise the objectives of such laws. In the absence of such steps the social influence of the landlords will remain and the customary and traditional landlord-tenant relation would mean no virtual impact of the land reform measures and some times the uncertainties provided by the land reform measures would culminate in a decline in the production.

The Size of the Area affected:

The size of the area affected by agrarian reform in many of the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America is quite impressive. It is generally observed that the enactment of a land policy law with all the political difficulties involved and the distribution of land among the beneficiaries, may still prove to be competitively easier than its defective implementation. It is the experience of several countries in which a well planned policy of agrarian reform has been formulated, that there is a wide gap between the intentions of the law and the actualities which persist.
It is only after the agrarian reform is initiated and land ownership redistributed that the real work starts.

The Organization of Production System:

The new beneficiaries of land reform can not be expected of the required entrepreneurial qualities. The lack of sound planning of work with specific target over a specified period of time and the absence of basic element for the organisation of production in affected areas can bring forth disruption in farming and social instability. The case of Iraq during the first five years of implementing the agrarian reform (1958-63) and Bolivia during the initial period of reform (1952-56) bear witness to this.

The requirements for improving production on affected areas by land reform apply to several approached followed in organising new production system. Land reforms adopted by countries irrespective of their economic ideologies like Capitalism, Communism or Socialism aim to achieve the above mentioned objectives. However, the difference lies in the emphasis on institutional and technological approach in
designing new production system. A closer look at the method followed in land reform would reveal how land ownership, labour, capital and management are distributed in each method.

(a) The ownership and management of the land by the state with the active participation of the beneficiaries as workers on the land as part of the managerial body. This was followed by the State Farms in several socialist countries, in Cuba under the system of "grandas del pueblo" and in Algeria in the "autogestion". Some differences exist of course among these countries in the operation of this system. In collective farms as in the Soviet Union, the land as well as other means of production and produce are the joint social property of the peasants. The land, under this system is worked collectively by farmers and most of the profits are used for further development of the farms. The management is centralized in the hands of state managers working under a central planning system.

(b) The land being rented to the cultivators as tenants, but with the parcelling out of the land into individual farming units. Examples of this system are in the Sudan Gezira Scheme, and in the first phase of Libyan land settlement programme.
(c). The transfer of property titles from Ex-landlords to the actual cultivators with the organization of agricultural co-operatives as a condition in operating these distributed areas. U.A.R., Iraq, Syria, Italy and some states of India too are examples of this system.

Factors like political ideologies, its economic system, the availability of technical staff to serve as managers and supervisors, the traditional system of land tenure experienced by the farmers of the country, and the stage of development in areas affected by land reform programme, are all the determinants of the selection of either of the above mentioned methods.

The Integration of Land Reform with other Institutional and Development Factors:

The organisation of agricultural co-operative societies in land reform area is considered by many governments as an essential organisational instrument in the modernization, commercialisation and reform of the traditional peasant economy after the reform of land tenure patterns have been imposed on the old agrarian structure. This organisation measure could help in production and marketing as well as making
full utilization of what little capital is available. It is an important process adjusting the agricultural sector when it passes from a traditional to a developmental state. In this process the concern is to increase productivity by applying new technology and educating the cultivators, whether owners or workers in modern forms of production instead of letting them rely on their wisdom and experience carried over through generation. In this process co-operatives serve as a bridge between scientific agriculture and market oriented economy. Vertical integration of the production of main cash crop with their marketing and processing was a significant form of commercialisation of agriculture in land reform areas. Agricultural price mechanism and credit policy have their effect as incentives to increase production. A land reform programme must be accompanied by reform of the old credit system in agriculture if effective improvement in production and income is to be realised. This is particularly significant in cases where the pre-reform land property was used as security against default in re-paying the credit. Land reform very often prevent alienation of land property and its mortgage on the assumption that credit need would be made by the government in accordance with
managerial capacity of the borrower or with the
government guaranties and the credit should be secured
by crops, or by the joint responsibility of the
co-operative to which the new owner belongs. If funds
allocated for this credit arrangement are not
sufficient, the new owners can not obtain credit
from commercial banks or money lenders as long as
the security of land property against loan is
prevented by the land reform law. Hence it is
necessary to integrate land reforms with credit
policy, which usually results in high costs on the
part of the credit agency due to frequent default
of the borrowers who abuse the privileges and
responsibilities given to them.

Further, another important question to be considered
is the water use. Reform of the land ownership pattern
without reform of water ownership and use would not
enable the beneficiaries of the programme to cultivate
their lands except at the mercy and exploitation of
water owners. This is specially important in land
reform programmes where land was expropriated from
landlords but not water use devices, the beneficiaries
have to meet difficulties or continue under the
exploitation of the landlords who own the pumps or
springs or canals.
The elimination of social and political injustice and at the same time bringing about greater output, efficiency and employment in agriculture is one of the thorniest problems of the developing countries. Profound reforms in the land tenure structure are absolute pre-requisites, since they bring about a complete modification of the relations of farm people to the land from which they make their living. It also equalizes the opportunities by allowing all farm people a more equal access to the resources and services. Hence land reform means above all a redistribution of farm property for the benefit of small farmers and rural workers.

In a given tenurial situation, farmers seek land tenure changes because they feel their opportunities to benefit from new methods are limited. They will almost seek a system of owner cultivation on a family farm scale. Professor J.W. Mellor observes that when farmer seeks a programme of land reform, it is seldom because of its potential for increased production. They lack the experience to recognise the value of new methods. Their focus will be on controlling their own destiny, security of tenure, a changed division of farming income, political power to open schools and freedom to travel. Giving lands

5. Mellor, J.W. op.cit. p. 102
tenants can create tremendous good-will for a government. This in turn encourages the government to take the more difficult remaining step of economic development. However, once land becomes owner-cultivated, its income is expected to go up because the owner now has the incentive to put in effort to produce more. Empirical evidences coming from various countries adopted land reform bear witness to this. 6

The high rent paid on leased land has always remained a disincentive to the farmer. Apart from a disincentive, it adds to the high cost of production and thus would affect productivity and income. 7

Thus land reform and the consequent vesting of ownership rights of a piece of productive asset in a specific individual raise the security of his expectation. The use of the land and the reward from the land are thus made specific to the owner. This is bound to motivate, the existing system of property relationships, the new class of owners to

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6. In Kerala too, the farm management studies conducted in 1963-64 and 1964-65 have revealed that the holding with highest farm business are those of the owner operators. Report of F.M.S. Kerala. p.199

7. Another characteristic of the holdings with low farm business income in Kerala is the high rent paid by them. Report of the Farm Management Studies, Department of Economics, University of Kerala. p. 199
reinvest the surplus in the farming business. The decision regarding the allocation of his labour time undergoes a very healthy change. The resulting increased income he can either invest in productive assets or in consumption depending upon his time horizon. The prospects of long and secure tenure can create a condition in which the maximum incentive is given for the investment of family labour time in productive undertakings. The waste of nations' resources represented by work time is simultaneously a waste of capital forming potential. In situation where incomes tend to fall or become uncertain, this potential need not be realised. In such a situation decisions regarding household consumption versus investment are likely to be resolved in favour of maintaining family consumption.

For tenant farmers and agricultural labourers land reform is infrastructure, because it satisfies the twin objectives - externality and sociality. The land reform measures are external to the farm firm in that the decision regarding the reforms are taken outside the farm firm and they have their impact on the farm too. Land reforms provide external economies as they reduced the cost of cultivation by doing away with the rents and increasing production by higher motivation. So also they satisfy sociality, as
the land reform measures are taken by the organisational factor i.e. the government, and their benefits are accrued to all concerned.

There is accumulated evidence from countries like Iraq, Iran, Mexico, Bolivia, Cuba, Egypt, Italy, Yugoslavia and Japan which implemented radical land reforms and found them useful for the harmonious functioning of agricultural sector and its rapid growth. Thus reform may be regarded as a real condition of development in agriculture though not a sufficient condition in itself. Land reforms have to be tailored to the physical, technological and cultural conditions of the particular country. "One would like to believe that agrarian reform is the key to all the doors that need to be opened—resettlement of people, survey, reclamation of land, conversion to better farming—before this great New World Continent can feed its people and sustain its growth."8

The five year plans in India have amply recognised the increasing importance of land reform measures in the Indian context and they were given a place of special significance both in the first and second plan. Two specific objectives have been

fixed for the land reform programmes in the plans:

1. To remove such impediments to increase in agricultural production as arise from the agrarian structure inherited from the past. This should help to create conditions for evolving as speedily as possible an agricultural economy with high levels of efficiency and productivity.

2. To eliminate all elements of exploitation and social injustice within the agrarian system, to provide security for the tiller of the soil and assure a quality of status and opportunity to all sections of the rural population.  

In an attempt to achieve these objectives the following measures have been chalked out whose efficient execution has been assumed for the years to come, but as soon as possible.

(i) 1. Abolition of intermediary or rent-receiving tenures,

2. Tenancy reform including regulation and reduction of rent and security of tenures,

3. Confirmation of right of ownership on tenants.

(ii) 1. Fixation of ceiling,

2. Redistribution of land,

3. Consolidation of holdings.  

9. Government of India, Third Five Year Plan, New Delhi, p. 220
10. Ibid., p. 220
Keeping in view the above objectives, suitable and required measures have been attempted in the Kerala plan also. In India and especially in Kerala, the landlord-tenant system created great inequalities of income and social status. So the state was forced to clear the scene by eliminating feudal landlords. But, a study covering the period 1956-71, especially on the agricultural development of Kerala could not overlook the importance of land reform because, the various measures taken to improve agrarian lot could not efficiently deliver goods, which led to a neutralising effect of the programme.

IV.3 Land Tenures in Kerala:

The question of land reforms in Kerala is vital. The tenancy relation and the land holding pattern in Kerala reveal how urgent is the need for a proper implementation of the land reform measure so that the desired objective is achieved at the earliest. The tenancy relation in Kerala has led to much tension in the farm sector thereby leading to the utter disruption of the agricultural production. The Kuttnad area of Kerala, which is considered to be the rice bowl of the state had seen the frequent fight between the tenants and the landlords, whatever may the reasons be. But the impact of such
tension in the farm sector had only led to the disadvantage of the agricultural development of the state. This is one more additional practical case for a rearrangement of the agrarian structure apart from all the other theoretical arguments like motivation for tenants etc. No doubt the problem has been rightly understood in the state long back and measures have been taken frequently. But before appreciating and evaluating the measures so far underway, the dimension of the problem and other relevant facts are to be objectively analysed.

Among the states in India the case for redistribution of land is probably the strongest in Kerala. With little per capita land availability and high concentration ratio the inequality in land distribution is quite evident in the state. Added to it is the high political consciousness of the people owing to relatively high literacy which had enhanced the pressure for a change in the existing tenurial structure.

Nearly 84% of the total house holds in the state constituted the agrarian house holds, that is

11. Kerala state occupies only 1.20 percent of the total area of the country, but accounts for 3.90 percent of the population according to 1971 census. The per capita availability of land is 0.18 hectares whereas the per capita cultivated land is only 0.11 hectares.
house hold having some interest on land. Of these, the tenants and Kudikidappu\textsuperscript{12} formed 57 percent. The distribution of house hold by type of agricultural\textsuperscript{13} classes is indicated in the table No. IV.A.

**Table IV.A**

House Holds Classified by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Landlords</th>
<th>Owner Cultivator</th>
<th>Tenants</th>
<th>Kudikidappu</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trivandrum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alleppey</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kottayam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trichur</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palghat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosiikod\textsuperscript{6}</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannanore</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{12} Kudikidappu means occupants of land without any ownership or tenancy right. Usually these are agricultural labourers.

\textsuperscript{13} The comprehensive sample survey conducted by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Kerala 1966-67 has provided certain very interesting and important data highlighting the dimension of the problem involved. The survey has provided valid estimates
While the majority of the cultivators in the erstwhile Travancore area are free peasants tenancies prevail strong in the Cochin-Malabar region. Apparently, the problem to be tackled through land reform legislation will only largely apply to the districts north of Ernakulam. Alleppey district has the highest percentage of Kudikidappu in Kerala. Twenty seven percent of the agrarian house holds are Kudikidappu here, the next highest being 18% in Ernakulam followed by 17% in Trichur. The lowest percentage of Kudikidappu is in Kozhikode. However, for the states as a whole one out of every eight house hold is a Kudikidappu, their strength being 12%. This indicates how grave/problem of landless labourers is!

The inequality of distribution as measured by the concentration ratio\(^4\) shows that there is heavy concentration of land holdings in the state. In 1950-51 according to the Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee the concentration ratio for Kerala was 0.66, the highest

\(^{14}\) Concentration ratio is one of the measures of the inequality of distribution. If all holdings thereof equal size the concentration ratio would be zero. On the other hand, if all land is concentrated in one hand the ratio will be one.
amongst the Indian states. This has fallen to 0.61 in 1961-62 and the figure has been slightly lower for 1966-67.

The distribution of house holds by size of their ownership holdings is given in the table No. IV.B.

Table IV.B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of ownership holding of each house hold (acres)</th>
<th>Percentage of house holds to total house holds area</th>
<th>Percentage of area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 1</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 5</td>
<td>91.04</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 15</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 25</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above 25</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Derived from the data in table No. 1 Appendix II, p. xiv

15. Report on the Intensive Survey of Agricultural Labour, Vol.1, All India. Government of India, Ministry of Labour, New Delhi, 1954, p. 18. Though the ratio relates to Travancore-Cochin state, it could be considered for Kerala. In fact the figure could only or slightly higher as there has been heavier concentration in Malabar.

It shows that 60% of the household own less than one acre of land each. This size group accounts for only 10% of the total owned land and the average area per household in the size group is only 33%. 91% of the household own less than five acres of land each, but they cover only 39% of the total area owned. A notable feature of the size distribution of holding is that the number of holding in the two size groups just above 15 acres is extremely small accounting for just 0.6% of the total number of holdings. This may be partly due to sub-division and alienation undertaken to circumvent the provision of the Kerala land reforms act which imposed a ceiling on existing holding. Holdings above 25 acres in size are largely plantations, which are exempted from the ceiling provision. That probably explains the comparatively large number of holdings in this group.

In the case of operational holdings similar inequality exists. While 81.08 percent of the holding are below 2.5 acres (and 91.09% are below 5 acres) they command only 31.1% of the total area under them. Contrary to this holdings with more than 25 acres constitute 0.4% and they have 12.4% of the total area of the operational holdings (refer table IV.C). In the case of average area per holding, the figure is 1.82 for operational holding.
Table IV.C

Distribution of Operational Holdings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Group</th>
<th>No. of Holdings</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Average area per holding (acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 5 acres</td>
<td>91.09</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Small holdings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 10 acres</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>6.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Medium holdings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 and above</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>20.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Large holdings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Derived from the data in the table No.2 Appendix II, p. xv

The large holdings comprise of plantations in the hands of private individuals. In the districts of Palghat, Calicut and Cannanore, they also include private forests which are all exempted from the provisions of ceiling. Strictly speaking the surplus land available is very small. The estimate of surplus land worked out under the provision of the Kerala Land Reform Act of 1963 was 1.15 lakh acres (i.e. about 2.5% of the total operational area). Though the ceiling has now been brought down from 12 standard acres to 19 standard acres, any surplus additionally
brought out on account of this lowering of the ceiling will be mostly off-set by the increase in the number of the family units over the years since 1966-67. However, it will not be far off the mark if the potential surplus is placed over 1 lakh acres. This could be redistributed among the landless agricultural labours who constitute the bulk of the Kudikidappu in the state. But the immobility of the labourer coupled with variation in the availability of surplus land in the districts may require different treatment in different districts.

Holdings above 15 acres number 25,000 in all and they accounted for 8.2 lakh hectares. Though a significant part of this will go as exempted on account of their being plantation, private forests etc. the bulk of the surplus land will be obtained from the district of Kottayam, Trichur, Palghat, Calicut and Cannanore. 17

Though Trichur district possessed a considerable number of large holding, the surplus land previously estimated under the provisions of the

17. Appendix II, table no. 3, p. xvi
Kerala land reform act 1963 was little since they had large number of family units within a household with eligibility for the full benefit of area permissible for a family unit.

One of the reasons for the low agricultural productivity in India is considered to be the fragmented nature of holdings. Fragmentation refers to the manner in which the land held by an individual or (undivided family) is scattered throughout the village area in plots separated by land in the possession of others. The scatter nature of holding is serious handicap to proper and efficient farm management.

The land reform survey of 1966-67 reveals that average number of fragments per operational holding for all agricultural classes together was 1.8 and the average area per fragment is one acre. For holdings above 5 acres the fragments ranged between four and six per holding. The fragments which lay outside the home-villages came up to 20%. Evidently, where the holding is large, there is a case for consolidation. In respect of the landlord classes, the case is all the more strong as evidenced by the data in table IV.D.
### Table IV.D

Number and area of fragments (plots) per holding of the landlord class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of operational holding (acres)</th>
<th>No. of plots per holding within the village</th>
<th>Area (acres)</th>
<th>Percentage to Col. 3</th>
<th>Source: Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Trivandrum, Kerala.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00-2.50</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.50-5.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00-10.00</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00-15.00</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00-20.00</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>7.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.00-25.00</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>9.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 and above</td>
<td>7.09</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On an average every holding is lying fragmented in the village as three different plots. In total the plots lying outside the village is $1\frac{1}{5}$% even in the case of holding with 1 acre, 7% is lying outside the home-village. For holdings above 5 acres of the landlords the number of plots varied between 5 and 10 per
holding. The plot lying outside the homes-village reached up to about 30%.

The important types of tenancies in the state are Kanam, Kuzhikanam, Kanam-Kuzhikanam, Verumpattam, Mulgeni, Chalgeni, Kudiyirippu, and a number of oral and conventional lease arrangements classified as deemed tenancy. The tenancies based on documentary rights covered 87% of the leased-in

18. Kanam was a tenure partaking the nature of both a mortgage and lease. The tenant used to pay a lumpsum to the landlord and annual rent was fixed according to the capacity of the land and from it the tenant was entitled to deduct an interest due to him on the amount he paid to the landlord.

19. Kuzhikanam meant and included a transfer by landlord to another person of garden lands or other lands or both, with fruit bearing trees thereon but should not include a usefructory mortgage as defined in the Transfer of Property Act, 1882.

20. Kanam-Kuzhikanam was a type of waste lands for improvements and the landlord was entitled to receive some monetary considerations and tenant liable to eviction if the landlord is not satisfied with the improvement.

21. Verumpattom is a lease or sub-lease, where the rent was often the net produce after deducting the base cost of the seed and cultivation.

22. Mulgeni is a land tenure system of Palghat where the land holder may give his land on lease for a year.

23. Chalgeni is a tenancy where the tenant had no substantial right on the land which could be mortgaged or alienated in any manner.

24. Kudiyirippu is occupancy of the landlords' land without any right on the land. Such occupants are obliged to work for the landlords.
area, the rest being accounted for by oral tenancies. The important documentary tenancies comprised the first four types enumerated above. The total leased-in area in the state in 1966-67 was 19.21 lakh acres (42.5% of the total area in private possession). The distribution of leased-in area by type of tenancy is indicated in the table IV.8(p. 107).

Of the total leased-in area, Verumpattom covered 44%, Kanam 26%, Kuzhikanam 15%, Kanam-Kuzhikanam 5%, Kudiyirippu 5% and deemed tenancy 3%. Between the districts there are wide variation in the type of tenancies as well as the area under each. In the southern most districts of Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey, none of these tenancies has any dominating influence. However, Kanam tenancy dominated in Kottayam, Palghat, Calicut and Trichur. These four districts together accounted for 94% of the area under this tenancy. Kuzhikanam is an outstanding tenancy in Cannanore district which covers as much as 85% of it. Similar to Kuzhikanam in Cannanore, Kanam-Kuzhikanam has 95% of its area concentrated in Calicut region. The Verumpattom tenancy is accounted for mainly in Ernakulam and the districts north of
Table IV.E

Distribution of leased in area by tenancy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenancy</th>
<th>Area (in '000 acres)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Kanam</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kuzhikanam</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kanam-Kuzhikanam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Verumpattom</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chalgeni</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Kudiyiirppu</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Deemed tenancy</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Others</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Chalgeni is a speciality of the Kasargode area. Kudiyiirppu is again another important tenancy of the Malabar region. Tenancies which were 25 years and above accounted for 66% of the land. Those less than 5 years duration covered only less than 8% of the area.
Pure tenancy is the most important form of tenancy status in Kerala. As much as 84% of the leased-in area come under this as against 5% by the intermediary tenant and 11% by sub-tenants. The cases of pure tenancies numbered 23.50 lakhs. Those under intermediary/sub-tenants were 1.51 lakhs and 2.65 lakhs respectively. These tenants are not mutually exclusive as one could have more than one status at the time. One may be intermediary tenant with regard to one plot, a sub-tenant in the case of another and the pure tenant in respect of third plot. The very domination of pure tenancy makes settlement of the tenancy relation in Kerala easy, for, it involves only parties namely the lessor and the lessee. The lessors have been mostly large holders and they covered 69% of the total tenancy areas. The Devaswoms constituted the next biggest landlords accounting for 20% of the area. The small holders covered 10% and the rest 1% by institutions other than Devaswoms. The small holders who have leased out land were comparatively high in Trivandrum, Quilon and Alleppey. On the other hand,

25. Devaswom means the property of the temples.
the large holders who comprise mainly the royal families, Namboodiri and Local Chief-tains were prominent in Palghat, Calicut and Qannanore.

IV.4 Land Reform Measures in the State:

The widely varying tenancy that prevailed in the different regions of the state, the fragmented holdings etc. have necessitated land reform measure in the state. The urgency of the problem has been duly understood by the state authorities and several land legislations have been enacted in the past separately for the erstwhile regions of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. The agrarian relation act of 1960 was, however, the first unified legislation. This comprehensive tenancy law sought to abolish the intermediaries and the enforcement of a ceiling on land was enacted in 1961. Further 1961 saw the introduction of many legislations to improve the agrarian lot. A recurring annual payment made by the tenant to the landlords viz. Jenmikarom was abolished in the Travancore region by the enactment of the Jenmikarom Payment Abolition Act, 1961. The tenants over an area of 10,000 acres of land of the Devaswoms have been brought under the direct contact with the state by the Pattazhi Devaswom Vesting and Enfranchisements Act of 1961. But the
government was forced to repeal the Agrarian Relation Act of 1960, as many provisions of it were invalidated in the courts of law. Hence in its place more compact and secure law was introduced with the enactment of the Kerala Land Reforms Act 1963. This act conferred on the cultivating tenant three main benefits.

1. Security of tenure,
2. Fixation of Fair rent,
3. The right to purchase the landlord's rights.

Despite the merits of the act much progress could not be achieved in fulfilling the desired aim. This led to the amendment of the act and in 1969, the Kerala Land Reform (Amendment) Act was introduced which came into force on January 1st, 1970. The important aspects of implementation of Land Reform Act are:

1. Confirmation on Kudikidappu-kars the right to purchase limited extent of land in and around their hutments,

2. Abolition of intermediaries and assignments of proprietary rights to cultivating lands; and

3. Imposition of ceiling on land holdings and the distribution of excess land to landless and poor agricultural labourers.
Further an ordinance was promulgated, which was replaced by the Kerala Land Reform (Amendment) Act, 1971, by the state government to slash down the amount of compensation. But no sooner an unfortunate fate had overtaken it while the amendment was struck down by the Supreme Court. However, the constitutional amendment has duly considered the inclusion of the Acts of 1969 and of 1971 in the ninth schedule by which it had gained immunity from being challenged in any court of law.

It has been often remarked that Kerala's biggest achievement since Independence is land reforms.26 No doubt Kerala has proceeded far ahead in doing away with the tenancy system, fixation of rent, fixation of ceiling etc., by legislation. But all these do not show that the road is clear off the institutional barrier for agricultural development. As a matter of fact, much development had come only after 1972 when the Kerala Land Reform (Amendment) Act was passed after the constitutional amendment. Prior to it uncertainty was the result of all the ventures in land legislation as the legislations have been

changing from time to time with changes in government. The Food Grains Enquiry Committee has reported—"In almost every state we were told that uncertainty about land reform was affecting productive efforts. The announcement of intention to institute land reforms without setting up the proper machinery for implementation has deterred the big landholders from investing in the improvement of land. At the same time the hesitancy of the big land holders is not compensated by greater interest on the part of tenants, because unless the tenants actually benefit from the implementation of reform measure, they do not have either the will or the means to invest more in land."27 The uncertainty in Kerala due to political changes had further adverse effect in Kerala. "When the Communist Party came into power in Kerala in 1957, big landlords rightly apprehended that their feudal interest on land would be at stake. This fear paved the way for large scale land transfer in the state even before Agrarian Relation Act of 1960 was adumbrated. The passing of Agrarian Relation Act in 1960 and the Kerala Land Reform Act 1963 also promoted some hectic sales

and transfers around those years.  

It is interesting to note that it had never occurred to the state planners that land reform is an economic infrastructure required for the agricultural development of the state and hence reform should be brought in its entirety so as to set the ball moving. But until 1969 all the actions towards land reform had only been piecemeal and hence it was ineffective. A realization of this is made in the Fourth Five Plan document of the state. Thus the plan document observes: "Agrarian reform in Kerala in the past could not achieve significant results. Widely varying systems of tenancy prevailed in different regions of the state. Attempts at land reforms in the former state of Travancore-Cochin and in Kerala during post independence years were not fully effective as they were subjected to frequent revisions by successive governments. The cultivating class in the Travancore region was, by and large, free from the age-old feudal liabilities, exceptions being only those who possess lands under sub-lease. In the Cochin area most of the old tenancies like, Verumpattom

and Kanapattom continued undisturbed. The tenancies in Malabar area were different from those obtaining in Cochin and Travancore areas. It was therefore, considered desirable to do away with all kinds of tenancies. 29

The official reports and plan documents suggest that ‘Land Reform' in Kerala is understood in its traditional definition. 30 But while implementing, full thought is not given to its theoretical aspects as the prerequisites for a successful land reform is rather missing. A close observation of the land reform acts makes one doubtful of the strong determination of the government, for its realization and implementation of the steps, which is an essential prerequisite. The doubts are strengthened by the frequent changes in the laws.

The pace of progress in the implementation has been so slow that it would take quite some time to make the full impact of land reform in the state. Even as late as the end of 1973, much land which was deemed

30. Land reform measures include, "abolition of intermediary interests between the state and the tiller of the soil, regulation of rent, conferring on tenants security of tenure and eventually ownership rights, imposing of ceiling on agricultural holdings
to be surplus according to the Act, could not be
distributed. The table IV.F gives the statistics of
land distributed.

Table IV.F

Surplus Land Distribution as on Dec., 1973

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Area (Hectare)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Estimated surplus land</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Statement submitted for surplus land.</td>
<td>26,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Surrender orders issued</td>
<td>5,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Land taken over</td>
<td>4,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Land distributed</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Percentage of land distributed to the statement submitted for surplus land</td>
<td>2.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Percentage of land distributed to the total estimated surplus land</td>
<td>1.07%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(Continued from page 114)

and improving the lot of agricultural labourers
including conferment of ownership rights in respect of
homesteads and huts occupied by them, distribution of
surplus land and other lands available with government
for cultivation" Government of Kerala, Fifth Five Year
Plan- A draft outline, 1974-79, p. 94.
An optimistic estimate places the surplus land in the state at 60,000 hectares. However, the statements submitted till the end of December 1973 reveals a surplus of not more than 26,520 hectares. Out of this, 5867 hectares have been ordered to be surrendered, while the take over of 4552 hectares of land was completed till the end of 1973. Of the land taken over, 642 hectares were distributed among 1930 landless labourers, including 801 scheduled castes and 38 scheduled tribe persons.31

In the wake of already existing uneconomic holding due to subdivision and fragmentation, adequate attention should have been given in the redistribution of land to landless. This should especially be so with regard to cultivable holdings. The cultivable holdings should be economic holdings so that it gives the economic stability to the holders. Then only it will add to the economic well being of the peasants as well as to agricultural development of the region. Using such indices as land productivity, farm business income, total value of output from different enterprises and

31. The Economic Review, State Planning Board, 1974, p. 66
and the value of assets, the economic holding can be evaluated. An analysis of this shows that taking above indices as evidences, the farm size group 1 to 2.5 acres may generally be considered an economically viable basic holding. In order to obtain the benefits of economic holding, as well as to take advantage of the existing credit, marketing and other infrastructural facilities, land redistribution could be made to small co-operative units consisting of 3 to 5 persons. This would also enable them to develop their managerial skill in regard to farming.

The land reform in Kerala, while providing an infrastructure for agricultural development, should settle two problems separately. One is the distribution of land to the landless as homesteads and land as means of production. The first question, though would prima facie, seem to be a social problem, it too has its


33. Appendix II, table no. 4, p. xvii & table no.5, p. xviii.

34. A detailed discussion is available in "Outlook towards land ceiling," Khan, M.B.A. Main Stream, New Delhi, 1972
economic consideration. The Kudikidappu are the house holds having in their possession no place suitable for putting up residential buildings of their own. Therefore, for the effective implementation of any planned land reform legislation in the state, it is imperative to provide the land less labourers with house sites besides ensuring security of tenure and ownership of land to tenants. In respect of the latter, the land lords alone will be affected by legislation. On the other hand, in extending an honourable settlement of the Kudikidappu, the entire society irrespective of landlord, free peasant or tenant, will have to bear the cost, for they are spread out on all lands.

Though adequate steps had not been contemplated in the earlier official documents in regard to the strict implementation of the land reform programme and the follow up steps to enable the beneficiaries to make the best use of the programmes, the Fifth Five Year Plan document had taken care of these. Thus the draft outline of the state Fifth Five Year Plan states: "Rapid strides made in the land reform programmes of the state have removed to a large extent the disabilities arising from insecurity of tenure and other problems of
related to ownership rights on land. Considerable numbers of the landless labourers have also benefitted from those progressive measures by way of getting homestead lands and surplus government lands. Yet they do not escape the disadvantages inherent in the operation of small farms. Some such relevant weaknesses are:

1. smallness of the volume of operations of either for marketing of farm products or the purchase of farm supplies,

2. difficulties in the adoption of indivisible technology and capital inputs like farm machinery and irrigation facilities,

3. relative inaccessability to modern technology, scientific knowledge, and information and

4. low capacity to command resources for securing off-farm inputs and application of modern technology."

"The basic approach in alleviating the disadvantages is to create new organization and to strengthen the organizations existing already so that the small family farm can share the benefits of big volume operation, can be made equally adaptable to modern technology, and the use of physical inputs and services; and secure resources needed for the practice of technology."35

It also envisages to strengthen and extend the working of the Small Farmers Development Agency started in the Fourth Five Year Plan.

IV.5 Conclusion:

Thus it can be summed up that the narrowness of the definition of land reform measures, hesitant enactment of the legislation and its ineffective implementation, delay in enacting a comprehensive land reform law to abolish intermediary, improper organization of the follow-up measures etc. have caused the failure to provide a true land reform in the state thereby leaving a weak institutional infrastructure in the study period, which had obviously affected the growth of agricultural sector in the state. However, a broader perspective is seen in the state's Fifth Five Year Plan, which would become a pace-setter in the agricultural development of the state.