CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

&

CONCLUSIONS
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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The principal objective of the present study was to attempt to examine questions having social implications of the Land Ceiling legislations in the state of Haryana. Broadly, the study has attempted to answer that how the ceilings on agricultural land have affected the status and prestige (alongwith economic and political aspects) of the one time rich landowning class in Haryana. It has also explored- how this class attempted to evade the 'Acts', or to what extent it has lost the land. And that, did the class diversify its occupations to maintain or improve its status or have some of them sold their land and moved to urban centres in search of higher status and better life. Several other related questions ran parallel to the above mentioned ones which were also examined.

The field of the study extended to 32 villages in 8 districts of the state of Haryana.

'Social mobility' in the present study referred to the same broad concept as defined by Sorokin (1959). The sub-types which were frequently used in the study were 'upward' and 'downward' mobility and were treated as congruent with 'social sinking and climbing' or 'ascending and descending mobility'.

The concept of 'Surplus' or 'Acquired Land' exclusively meant the land which was acquired due to the two Ceiling Acts for agricultural holdings.

Despite the difficulties faced in eliciting the information from the respondents, the data was more or less successfully gathered.
It was found useful to make three categories of the targetted landowners, viz., total submitters, partial protectors and total protectors.

Chapter-IV, i.e. 'Total submission and Social mobility' was an attempt to appraise the landowners who were not able to save any part of their land which was declared or should have been declared as surplus.

The loss of land for the 'total submitters' came out to be 614.5 acres with an average of 43.9 acres per family. The range of loss of land was from 4 acres (Case-7) to 100 acres (Case-3). The general reasons/factors found to be responsible for the landloss in this chapter were: illiteracy and ignorance; lack of muscle power; and covert jealousy of other villagers.

While 'illiteracy and ignorance' was assigned as the major reason in the 14 cases, jealousy and factionalism was also considered important in two cases (Case-1 and Case-11). Case-7 assigned weak leadership of his mother-in-law as the main factor who was a widow and headed the family at the time of the First Act. Case-8 termed his prolonged illness as the main factor of landloss and the subsequent social sinking.

The list of strategies employed to circumvent the Acts, although unsuccessfully, included- Land transfer; court cases; bribe to government officials and use of muscle power. Land transfer was tried in Cases-1, 2, 5 and 10. Cases-11 and 12 knocked the doors of court and Case-3 and 13 resorted to the relatively uncommon methods of offering bribe to the officials and use of muscle power respectively. While the remaining 6 families claimed to have employed none of the strategies.

In 9 of the 14 cases the families were on with their traditional occupation, i.e. farming and cattle rearing. Case-6 had recently allowed his son to go in for business. A part of families in Case-11 and 13 had gone in for tertiary services along with their traditional occupations.
Cases-9 and 12 had gone for as much diversification as was possible. On the whole, the landowning families were struggling to earn their livelihood through their traditional occupations, though a desire to go for tertiary services was perceived in most of the cases.

The classification of the landowning households was too broad for generalizations. Yet six cases (Cases-1,2,3,5,11 and 14) were found sinking down from the ‘very big’ category to the ‘big’ category with respect to landownership. The other 8 cases remained in the ‘big’ category even when they lost the entire land that was declared as surplus (or should have been deceased as surplus).

It was perceived that in 9 cases (Cases-1,2,3,4,5,7,8,11 and 13), a clear downward mobility was experienced in all three aspects (social, economic and political). While Case-6 found only a social degrading and that too more because of lost ‘Jaildar status’ than because of the loss of 21 acres of land. Case-9 found that a major part of his family (which was engaged in business and tertiary services) has improved its status, while the part of the family which is engaged in agriculture is experiencing the social and economic sinking. Case-10 considered the loss as more of emotional than anything else which is evident in the death of his predecessor. Case-14 too considered the loss as more of emotional and social than economic or political as the increased production has neutralized much of the loss.

As far as the place of residence was concerned, except for the families in Case-9 and Case-12 in which some part of the family had moved out, all others were staying in their native villages. There was also an instance of a Pakistani refugee (as quoted by Case-7) who had submitted the declared surplus land, disposed-off the permissible area and migrated permanently to some urban centre which was not known to the villagers.

It was also ascertained from the sample in this chapter that there was almost no caste bias in taking over the surplus land. Out of the total
sample of 42 cases, 21 belonged to Jat (Hindu) caste and 12 belonged to Rajput (Hindu) caste besides other less prevalent castes in the area. The total submitters comprised exactly the same proportions of these two castes as did the total sample.

Furthermore, for our sample in this chapter, it can also be said that the data in the revenue records more or less matched the ground reality.

Chapter-V dealt with the cases which were able to save a part of their land that was declared as surplus (or should have been declared as surplus).

The total landloss for the sample of partial protectors was 589 acres averaging 49.08 acres per family. The range of landloss was from 8 acres (Case-19) to 190 acres (Case-23). The general reasons/factors given for the landloss (though partial) in this chapter were: illiteracy and ignorance; lack of muscle power; wrong calculations; and lack of acquaintance with bureaucrats and politicos. While 'illiteracy and ignorance' was the most predominant reason; lack of muscle power (Case-22), wrong calculations (Case-18) and lack of acquaintance with bureaucrats and politicos (Case-15) were also quite significant.

The list of strategies employed (whether successfully or unsuccessfully) to circumvent the legislation in order to avoid the possible landloss included- repurchase; court cases; gifting or donation of land; land transfer; sale of land and use of muscle power. Repurchase of the allotted land was employed as strategy by Cases-15 and 16. Suits were filed in court by cases- 17,20,21 and 26. Multiple strategies like donation or gifting of land; land transfer and sale of land were employed by Cases- 18 and 22. Muscle power was also used as a strategy by Case-24. The remaining two families (Cases-19 and 23) did not seem to have employed any strategy.
Four of the twelve families did not diversify their traditional occupation. The other five families (Cases-15,16,17,21 and 23) had gone for tertiary services as a subsidiary occupation. Case- 20 had practising professionals in his family. Case-26 had resorted to politics to enhance his prestige. A great deal of diversification was observed in Case-18. Yet, it can be said that except Cases -18,26 and 20 the others did not show signs of upward mobility though most of them aspired for tertiary services (Government services for their offsprings). Most of the families (Cases-16,17,22,23,24,25 and 26) felt that their loss was more of social and economic than political while Cases- 15,19 and 18 termed their loss as only ‘social’. Case-21 did not find any loss or downgrading in his status due to the loss of land.

When the changes in the category of landownership were analysed, it was found that Cases-18,20,25 and 26 had come down from the ‘very big’ category to the ‘big’ category. Case-17 had come down from the ‘very big’ category to ‘small’ category. Case- 16 had come down from ‘big’ to ‘small’ category. In Cases-16,17 and 18, natural devolution due to disintegration of the family had a more severe effect than the land acquisition. The remaining families remained in their categories even after the landloss.

Case-18 had previously migrated from Pakistan in 1947. The family did not stay for long in the village where it was allotted land and is now living at various urban centres, though the present head himself was running his business at the village where the land was allotted to him. The entire family had migrated in Case-20, while only a part of the family had migrated in Cases-16 and 23.

The social categories of the partial submitters included Jat, Rajput, Brahmin, Khatri, Baniya and Jat (Sikh). Six cases were from Jat, two from Rajput and one each from Brahmin, Khatri, Baniya and Jat (Sikh) castes.

For the cases in this chapter, except the Cases-25 and 26, the data in revenue and tahsil records did not match the ground reality.
Lastly, Chapter VI, i.e. Total protection and Social mobility, took up the cases who by dint of one 'strategy' (or trick) or the other have saved their land. The Chapter also included the cases who had litigations going on for a part (or whole) of their land but retained the possession of that land.

For this chapter the strategies employed for saving the declared surplus land were: filing a suit in the court; use of muscle power; mutual adjustments; and offering inferior land for allotment. Most of the cases {i.e. 12 cases (Cases- 27,30,31,32,33,34,35,37,38,39,41 and 42)}, filed a suit in the court to save their land. While Case-27 also had an out-of court settlement (or mutual adjustment) with the allottee. Case-39 had sold-off the land exceeding the permissible limit and got the same land declared as surplus. This was followed by a suit in the court which he won. Case-29 resorted to mutual adjustment with the allottees. Case-30 used muscle power followed by a litigation as a strategy for saving the land. But in this case the litigation went on till year and a half back which resulted into a big financial loss forcing the owner to sell 120 acres of his land to save 46 acres of land which was declared as surplus. Case-28 used only muscle power as the strategy. Case-31 offered inferior land for allotment, of which the allottees did not take possession. This was followed by a litigation which was won. Case-36 did not need to do much except that he offered inferior land which the allottees did not claim at all.

Kanwar Pal of Case-40 who was living in his native village in Jind district could be appraised as the most noteworthy case in the study. Kanwar Pal's family used muscle power to the extent that two allottees got killed in a series of clashes. The family had to fight six civil and criminal cases but it did not yield any land and was finally back almost to its previous socio-political standing.

Seven of the sixteen families (Cases-28,30,31,35,36,38 and 39) were engaged in their traditional occupation (farming and cattle-rearing) without any apparent diversification. Whereas, Cases 27 and 33 had gone in
for business and tertiary services in addition to their traditional occupation. Case-37 had closed down his existing business but a part of his family had gone in for professional practice and tertiary service. A part of family in Case-41 had gone in for professional practice and tertiary services. One member each from families in Cases-29 and 39 had gone in for professional practice at nearby urban centres. Five members of the family in Case-32 had gone in for tertiary services. Somewhat differently, Case-34 was rearing about one hundred cattle (though the number was reduced since 1953) and was thus satisfied with his traditional occupation.

Surprisingly, a downgrading was felt by a notable proportion of the total protectors too. The element of honour and prestige attached with the land was the major social factor for such a feeling, while the cost of litigation, increased cost of living and the increased population pressure were major economic factors for the feeling of downgrading. Cases-28,32,34,38 and 39 termed their loss as more profound in social sense. Cases-30 and 35 indicated that their loss was more of economic than social. Cost of litigation and population pressure were the major causes of downward mobility for Cases-41 and 42. The increased population pressure alone was a matter of concern for Cases-31 and 36. Case-40 went down in all dimensions due to the criminal and civil cases, factionalism in village and political rivalry, but since his son got elected as Sarpanch of the village and the cases were decided in his favour, the family was comfortably placed. Six of the sixteen total protectors did not feel any downgrading at all. Case-27 was also a victim of political rivalry and his son was murdered as a consequence. Most of the families in this section remained in their category. Nevertheless, Case-30 had come down from the ‘very big’ category to ‘big’ category as he had to sell 120 acres of his land to meet the cost of litigation and secondly because of natural devolution within the family. Case-41 has also came down from ‘very big’ to ‘big’ category as a consequence of natural devolution. Cases-32 and 37 had increased their holdings overtime but even then they remained in the same ‘big’ category.
Case-39 disposed-off 12 acres of his land which exceeded the permissible limit but yet remained in the 'big' category of farmers. Case-38 too had to sell 5 acres of his land but due to other reasons. He too remained in the 'big' category.

Seven of the sixteen families (Cases-28, 29, 31, 35, 38, 40 and 41) were residing at their native villages. In seven other families (Cases-27, 32, 33, 34, 37, 39 and 42), some of the members had settled down at some other places than their native village. While in Case-30 one of the brothers had settled down at his in-laws' place where he had inherited his father-in-law's property. In a similar vein, the living owner's father (Case-36) had settled down at the family's present place of residence.

Of these total 'protectors', seven belonged to 'Jat' caste, another seven to 'Rajput' caste and one each to 'Meo' and 'Ahir' castes.

For the cases in this chapter it can be said with considerable authenticity that the data in the revenue records (i.e. the records with the Naib Tahsildar for surplus lands) did not match the ground reality.

It is quite evident that the politically active families are relatively more mobile and aware about the government policies than the others in rural society. Four political positions were taken to analyse the political activity of the families in the context of this study. It was found that 23 cases (54.76%) have not attained any political position (Member of Panchayat was not taken into consideration; refer Table-3.12). In 'Total submitters' 10 of the 14 cases (71.42%) had not attained any political position and of the remaining 4 cases, 3 were sarpanch (or ex-sarpanch) but that too only recently and not at the time of the Acts. Only Case-6 held a position that could make any difference. Hence it can be said that most of the total submitters were not politically very active at the time of landloss. In Partial protectors category the families were politically more active. 6 of the 12 cases had attained one political position or the other. While quite evidently, 'Total protectors' were the most active ones.
9 out of the 16 cases (56.25%) had attained positions like sarpanch (one to more than five times), Lumberdar and Jaildar.

Thus it can be ascertained (though roughly) that political activism has much to speak for the sample of this study.

It was a difficult proposition to summarize the 42 cases taken in the study. Utmost care has been taken to incorporate the various aspects of the cases under separate headings but yet it is understood that the summary will not serve as an exact replica of the study.

CONCLUSION

The study was exploratory in nature and had attempted to analyse the phenomenon of 'land ceiling' with respect to the targetted landowners. For this purpose of process-analysis as against the analysis of individual traits alone, case-study approach was considered a fruitful approach (Goode and Hatt, 1952).

The present study has explored the answers (to some extent) to the questions it was ostensibly intended to. The results could be summarised as follows;

The average landloss per landowning family in the study due to the two Ceiling Acts, came out to be 28.65 acres (i.e. a total of 1203.5 acres). This loss was enough to hurt the status and prestige of the losers in the rural context. The consequent reaction was a notably tough resistance. The landloss was considered as more of a social sinking than economic or political. The results support Beteille's (1969) view that it meant for them that they are no more as powerful as they used to be. Atleast a few cases were strong instances of this aspect of landloss. If we also take into account the land that the landowners were forced to sell in an anticipation of the legislation the total landloss amounts to 3333.5 acres (the average landloss
per family being 79.36; also see Table-3.5). Two of the cases were forced to sell 825 acres and 500 acres respectively at a very low rate (see Cases-18 and 22). Hence, the government has partly succeeded in reducing (rather than taking over) the land of the targeted landowners. A fairly large number of landowners in the sample were able to partly or totally protect their land by dint of one strategy or the other but they too had to lose much in the process.

The major strategies employed by total submitters were: land transfer, litigation, bribe to the officials and use of muscle power. Most of the strategies were the same in all categories except repurchase, gifting or donation of land and sale of land for the 'partial protectors'. The exclusive strategies for the total protectors other than the general ones employed by others were: mutual adjustments and offering inferior land for allotment. As is clear, the total submitters employed a smaller range of strategies which too were employed in smaller proportion. The strategy of changing the 'class' of the land though frequently mentioned by the experts was not observed in the sample taken for this study.

At the initial stages of the study it was expected that the landowners might have acquired more land after the Acts but the landowners generally did not acquire more land. The general reasons given for this were less money and a fear of losing the land again. Besides that, a great deal of diversification was also speculated but on going to the field it was found that only a few families have diversified their occupation in the total submitters and a little more in the other two categories. On the whole a little diversification was noted and much of it was going in for small services. Only six cases went for self-employment.

The targeted landowners were also not all that active in politics, as most of them remained busy with the litigations on their land and other related problems. Less than 50% had ever attained any political position.
In the sample taken for this study a little geographical mobility was noticed especially so in case of the total submitters. Only two out of 14 cases had partially or fully changed their place of residence. On the whole, precisely 36 of the heads lived with their families at their native villages and the remaining 6 had migrated out in search of better living. 7 other cases had some part of their families living at some other place but the heads staying in their native villages.

There is almost a negligible evidence of caste bias in the acquisition of land although Case-18 complained of such partiality. The most prevalent agricultural castes in the state i.e. Jat and Rajput, were also found most preponderant in the targetted landowners. Six of the nine castes in the sample were found in the total submitters and likewise in the other chapters.

If at all any category that can be marked out as ‘frequent loser’, was that of the ‘liliputians’. By ‘liliputians’ we mean those individual families which were weak in some manner like weak leadership, less male members, widows, physically handicapped, financially or politically weak, illiterates etc. Therefore, the study supports the view of Sharma and Puniya (1989).

Lastly, it is a right place to remark the major problem that was encountered in this study. The revenue records were not updated as it was observed that most of the times the records gave the same amount of land that was declared as surplus in the first instance as the amount of land acquired and distributed (or utilized). But, in many cases the previous landowners were also found to be practically the present owners and were working on it. In some other cases, a litigation was going on. There were also some instances where the land was in the name of state government but the possession remained with the original landowner.

In the context of this study, comments of knowledgeable persons were also noted. The following are the contents of some of the conversations with them.
Ch. Rajinder Singh of Hodal (Faridabad) found that the population pressure and the Ceiling legislations jointly dragged the rural society. He added that now the rural population is engaged in nothing, as in general the ownership holdings are reduced to less than a plough unit holding. Therefore, the efforts of mechanization and expensive technology according to him were not quite fruitful as very less farmers were in a position to avail that.

Ch. Lehna Singh a senior Block Development Officer remarked that the legislation was nothing but a vote catching policy of the then ruling political party. The policy according to him lacked rigorous implementation.

In a discussion with Mr. P. N. Pimpley and Mr. Sagar Preet Hooda it came out that even if there was no land ceiling, natural devolution would have done its part and the holdings were bound to reduce with time.

Some other veteran villagers questioned that why was the government so serious about the inequality in rural society and why not in urban society. They further probed about the effectiveness of Urban Land Ceiling Act of 1976.

Social mobility has long been a central topic of sociological speculation and over the last fifty years, the object of many empirical enquiries. The same interest was one of the main factors of the initiation of this study. For the sample of this study it can be safely concluded that there are only a few examples of upward social mobility (e.g., Case-12) and in most other cases there is a downward social mobility or social sinking or descending mobility, if at all there is any. But, it is evident that the land acquisition alone was not a sufficient causal factor. Land acquisition, cost of litigations and population pressure can collectively be considered as sufficient antecedent.

Despite the fact that the sample size was small and not quite representative, several hypotheses can be generated from the study, viz., Any further land ceiling would yield negligible results and may encounter a stiff
resistance; a floor rather than a ceiling could bring more fruits (cf. Gadgil, 1954); Land hunger cannot be satisfied in existing conditions, therefore, the rural society is in need of some other enterprising projects which can absorb and satisfy the increasing rural population, etc.

Based on the results of the study and their discussion it can be concluded that the rural society in Haryana needs to be researched more, as a lot is still to be understood in agrarian land relations of the state.