CHAPTER III

CONSOLIDATION OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS IN U.P.
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SUB-DIVIDED AND FRAGMENTED AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS:

For generations come to the progress of India in wealth and civilisation must be directly dependent on her agriculture.

Progressive agriculture demands, economic size of holding, because it is upon the holdings that labour and capital resources are employed. Economic size of holdings mean prosperous cultivation and hence prosperity to all. Hence saraiya committee is right when it remarked in 1946. "One of the greatest obstacles in the way of increasing agricultural production is the existence of the uneconomic holdings". Actually the average holding in India varies from 3 acres in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to 12 acres in Bombay as compared to 40 acres in Denmark, 82 acres in United Kingdom, 159 acres in the United States and 334 acres in Canada. No wonder then our yield per acre is much below what other countries are able to rise. Not only that our cultivable land is subdivided but it is also scattered over long distances which hinder scientific agriculture all the more. Although rapid growth of population defective laws of inheritance and succession,
they decay handicraftmen in the wake of capitalistic production the spirit of individualism are some of the chief causes of our subdivided and fragmented agricultural holdings, yet the hard fact remains that unless evil is tackled, improvement in agriculture is impossible. The remedies are usually suggested in this connection:-

1. Existing tiny holdings should be made compact by means of consolidation and,

2. Change in the laws of in heritance and succession with a view to avoid the appearance of the evil in the future.

CONSOLIDATION OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS:

Consolidation of agriculture signifies making the holdings compact and curtailed. That is in place of area of a cultivator being spread and scattered all over the village, he should get the same at one place only. The commission on Agriculture while stressing the importance of consolidation also defined the term as below:-

The only measure that appears to promise relief from the evils that arises from fragmentation of right holder's holding is the process generally know as the consolidation of agriculture holdings, though it is in reality the substitution by exchange of land of compact block for a number of scattered fragments by the process, all the land of one holder may be formed into one plot only or in few plots of different kinds of soil.
Consolidation it must be noted, can be carried out either by private individuals, or by the legislation of the Government or by the application of the principle of Co-operation. Of the three methods consolidation by the Government's legislation has not been successful. This is due to number of factors. In the first instance because peasants are generally illiterate and do not understand the practical benefits from consolidation, there is hardly their inner support. The peasant further has sort of an-central attachment to land and does not want to part with the old plot, whatever the benefits might be.

The all India Agriculture Labour Enquiry Committee 1950, has shown that the largest percentage of holdings in India are less than 5 acres. Dr. Mannu found that 150 owners had between them no less than 729 plots of which 436 were less than one acre each and 211 were less than even a quarter of an acre. In U.P. 85% of the cultivators have the holdings of less than five acres. In Orrissa 84% of cultivators have the holdings of less than 6 acres. In the Bombay 57% of the farmers holdings are less than 5 acres and while in the West Bengal, 63% of the cultivators have holdings of less than 5 acres. In Tranvancore, Cochin the average holdings is only, 2.4 acre and in Jammu and Kashmir it is 3.8 acres.

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For the whole of India the average size is 7.5 acres.
Whatever definition of economic holding in India may be adopted it is clear that large percentage of holdings are not of an economic size. In Punjab many of the holdings are below one acre. In Punjab 50% of the holdings less than 8 acres.

SIZE OF HOLDINGS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Countries</th>
<th>Average Size of Holding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Denmark</td>
<td>40.0 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Holland</td>
<td>26.0 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Germany</td>
<td>21.5 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. France</td>
<td>20.5 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Britain</td>
<td>20.0 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. United State of America</td>
<td>140.0 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. China</td>
<td>30.25 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Belgium</td>
<td>221.0 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. India</td>
<td>9.5 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION REPORT

Report of various Agrarian Reform Committee, from the recent statistics collected by Department of Research and Statistics, Reserve Bank of India, in connection the study of land problems in India. It is seen that almost contd........
60% in Uttar Pradesh were below 3 acres while in Tamilnadu almost 60% of the holdings were below 5 acres, while holdings below 15 acres constituted 88% of the total numbers of holdings. Most distressing feature were seen in Ratnagiri and Satara Districts in the Bombay State where sub-divided into 125 individuals holdings, while in another case 19 cases were owned by 126 persons.

Not only is an agricultural holding in India very small in size but it is also scattered at different places. An individual has not got all his land at one place. Fragmentation implies that a holding is cut into pieces and scattered on all sides of the village areas. Each son wants to get a share in every plot of land belonging to father situated at different places.

This evil is not peculiar in India as other countries of the world would have also faced it. A number of factors all are responsible for the sub-division and fragmentation of agricultural holdings in our country.

(1) **LAW OF INHERITANCE**

Hindus and Mohammedans laws of inheritance and succession are the causes of sub-division and fragmentation.

(2) **INCREASE IN POPULATION**

It leads to the greater pressure of population on the limited quantity of the land.

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(3) DECAY OF INDIGENOUS INDUSTRIES

Before the advent of industrial revolution there were innumerable cottage industries flourishing in India giving employment to millions of people. But the advent of industrial revolution coupled with the laissez faire policy of the Government of India let to an influx of the cheap machine made goods into India. Indian handicraft could not withstand the full blast on this foreign competition and struggled to the ground. The people engaged lost their jobs and fell back on the land thus leading to excessive ruralisation.

(4) BREAK OF JOINT HINDU FAMILY SYSTEM

So long Hindu family continued to be joint there was no great division of ancestral property. But the advent of British rule in India and the individualistic spirit led to the break of the joint families. No great regard of the elders and not great affection for the young-esters remained. This led to sub-division and consequent fragmentation of ancestral property.

(5) INDIVIDUALISTIC SPIRIT

The joint families would not have been broken up and the Hindu law of inheritance would have remained a dead letter and the individualistic spirit not been there. It was the spirit which led the division of landed property.

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INDEBTEDNESS

The indebtedness of the farmers also sometimes lead to sub-division. Due to inability of the farmers creditors got his holding attached and sold.

The greatest evil effect of sub-division and fragmentation of land is of the emergence of uneconomic holdings. The holding become too small to support a peasant family in reasonable standard of living. There is great waste of land also. Plots become so small that some times they become totally unfit for cultivation and have to be thrown out. A good deal of land is wasted on account of the greater number of boundary lines, hedges and paths. No, scientific farming can be possible on small and fragmented pieces of land. No new methods of cultivation can be practiced. Separate tube wells can not be constructed on tiny plots of the land. The whole outlook of farmers remain conservative and backward.

Irrigation peasants toughest problem in the midst of sub-division and fragmentation. The water channels may have to pass through other peoples field which may not be allowed by them. This often causes bickerings and bad blood. Litigations and disputes are very fragmented fields.

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This is a source of continuous struggle and the result is, many criminal and civil suits are filed and much money is wasted. Fencing becomes out of question due to small plots of land. Therefore cattle and wild animals cause a great loss to the standing crops. If fencing is difficult, engaging of watchmen is all the more difficult. There is a good deal of waste of time and energy as well as labour and capital have constantly to move from one field to another. A great waste of time and energy is entitled. In brief I can say that subdivision and fragmentation hinders enterprises, prohibits the application of scientific methods and labour saving devices, leads to low yield and makes agriculture primitive and most backward.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR SPEEDING UP CONSOLIDATION**

Consolidation of today and uneconomic holdings is an urgent need for the revitalisation of Indian Agriculture and the efforts of the Govt. in this direction are certainly praise worthy. But very little has been done to tackle a stupendous problem and the achievement really touch a figure of the problem. Efforts therefore, must be made without any delay to further the work of consolidation deserve capital mention.

**COMPULSION**

Co-operative consolidation has not been successful to any remarkable extent owing to a multiplicity of causes. Therefore, the Government should enact such
laws where consolidation will have to be accepted by each and every land-holder without opposition or demur. The co-operative planning committee also pinned its faith in compulsion when it said 'we are of the opinion that in the task of consolidating the land holding into economic units, it would be suitable to follow the Danish example and prescribe by legislation by minimum sizes below which farms must not be sub-divided in any case.

**Instruments Increased**

No, doubt consolidation shall benefit the land holders themselves, but because they are mostly illiterate and conservative special inducements should be offered. Exemption of registration fees and grants of long term loans to meet the financial obligations are not enough. The Government should bear all the expenses of consolidation as in Bombay, should provide taccavi for construction of wells and tube wells in the farms of consolidated land holders and should remit the land revenue for two or three years.

**ACT ON ALL INDIA LEVEL**

For legislation on consolidation has been only on state level which has shown wide differences from one state to another. Further though the problem is present all over the country, the Govt. of Tamilnadu, Bengal, Bihar etc. have not taken many further
measures. Need therefore, is of an all parts of the country, specially now when India is itself compact and economic in size.

CEILINGS ON LAND HOLDINGS

Periodical it may seen, there are thousand of persons who own hundreds and lakh of acres. They do not themselves cultivate but employ labourers on wages. Therefore, in the interest of the country, it is essential that some upper limit should be fixed for land holding. The surplus land then can be distributed by the Govt. in such away as to make the existing holdings more economic and profitable. The cencus of land holding is an process and it is expected, this measures shall be implemented by the Govt. not at a distant date.

U.P. CONSOLIDATION OF HOLDINGS ACT, 1939 & 1953

Legislation for consolidation of Holdings and prevention of fragmentation of land has been exacted mostly in all the States of our country. In conformity with the latest trend of legislation in the country U.P. recently passed a new act providing for compulsory consolidation by the state at its own initiative. This act replaces the Act 1939 which allowed the use of
compulsion when persons holdings specified proportion
of area in the village themselves in favour of
consolidation scheme.

The U.P. Consolidation of Holding Acts 1953
provided for compulsory consolidation. This principles
underlying this act are that:-

(A) Every tenure holder shall be as far as possible,
allotted land in the block in which he holds the largest part of holding.

(B) The land in each village may be divided and grouped
under the following blocks namely:
(1) Block of land producing rice only.
(2) Block of land producing namely, Fasli Crops,
other than rice,
(3) Block of land possessing mainly so Fasli and;
(4) Block of land subject to fluvial action of any river.

(C) Only these tenure holders shall get land in any
particular block who already hold land there in,

(D) The number of chaks to be allotted to each tenure
holder excluding areas earmarked for 'Abadi'
shall not exceed the number of blocks in the village,
unless there is only one block and the land is not
more or less of a uniform quality;

(E) Shall tenure-holders shall be given land near the
village 'Abadi' as far as may be possible;
(F) The tenure holders belonging to the same family shall as far as possible be given neighbouring 'chaks';

(G) The location of residential house of the tenure holder or improvement, if any, made by him shall be taken into account in alloting 'chaks';

(H) An existing compact holding or from which \( \frac{6}{2} (6-5) \) areas or more in area shall not as far as possible be distributed or divided.

These principle aim at causing at little dislocation as possible and giving the greatest possible benefit to the cultivator. This scheme of consolidation has been put outside the jurisdiction of the Civil Courts in order to reduce litigation.

To begin with the act was enforced in Muzaffarnagar and Sultanpur Districts and after some experience was gained it was extended to 20 more districts.

(I) Consolidation charge will be Rs. 4 per acre, which will be paid by the cultivators Rs. 2 in advance the balance will be paid after consolidation work completed.
PROGRESS ACHIEVED DURING PLANS IN U.P.

Firstly consolidation work was started in Kirama and Musafirkhana Tahsils of Muzaffar Nagar and Sultanpur districts respectively. Much progress was achieved in these two places. The work of consolidation was started in 21 further districts of U.P. in 1955, and in 5 other districts in 1956. In 1959, 10 districts had completed the work and 27 districts the work was in operation. During 1959, 14,283 villages of U.P. could come under consolidation area occupying 1,56,23,064 holding consolidated, in this way 57,27,443 acres Land was consolidated and 8,207 villages had completed the survey work of land own rights. Work was fully completed in 32 Tehsils of 32 districts in U.P. and the total expenditure was Rs. 4.24 crores. This expenditure was about Rs. 10 per acre. Now some districts, like Unnao, Lucknow, Farrukhabad have also started the work.

The total area consolidated in various other states including U.P., upto the end of June, 1959 comes to about 191.9 lakhs acres. Substantial progress in consolidation of agricultural holdings has been made in the following states.
The above figures show that U.P. has made a considerable progress in this direction recently. It will be better to see the table given "Information Department of U.P." about the progress of the Scheme under plan.

Table showing PROGRESS OF CONSOLIDATION IN U.P. began from 1954.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AREA UNDER CONSOLIDATION IN ACRES</th>
<th>DISTRICTS UNDER CONSOLIDATION</th>
<th>AREA CONSOLIDATION IN ACRES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>34,50,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1,89,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>96,92,056</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>53,93,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIRD PLAN</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>90,00,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ROLE OF CO-OPERATION IN CONDITION

The best instrument securing consolidation of holdings seems to be the Co-operative Society. The main virtue of the society is that it is voluntary, that it rests upon the education of the public opinion in the favour of consolidation and upon the persuasion of land holders concerned. One of the voluntary agreement is sponsored by the co-operative consolidation of holding society, the results are permanent.

Inspite of the consolidation move, the holding in land shall remain uneconomic in India. In M.P. after consolidation the average of cultivation unit has increased only to 2.5 crores. The figures for Bombay and Delhi respectively are 8 acre and 24 Bighas. Therefore, even after successful work of consolidation the picture in India does not seem to be bright. Ignored agricultural practices, use of scientific implements like tractors, combine harvestors etc., and efficient marketing, to name only a few, will remain a dream, still some large scale cultivation methods is adopted. And among the large scale methods of cultivation co-operative farming holds out promising changes of success. To conclude we should undertake consolidation of Agricultural holdings closely followed by co-operative farming to have permanent solution of the evil.