CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION
Agrarian relations are an ensemble of production relations in agriculture. On the eve of Independence, feudal and semi-feudal agrarian relations characterized rural India. The peasantry under all varieties of land settlements was exploited in terms of rack-renting, insecurity of tenure, forced labour, usury and several other features that led to an exploitative system of agrarian relations. This resulted in the impoverishment of the peasantry and stagnation of agricultural production.

In his description of the agrarian economy in the early Post-independent period, Daniel Thorner found three classes in rural India, namely landlord (Malik), peasant (Kisan) and labourer (Mazdur). The kisans are often tenants (Kauldars) and tenancy is an important feature of the Indian agrarian structure. Tenancy is many a time alleged to be the main reason for a number of agrarian disturbances. The role of tenant in "Agrarian Radicalism" is said to be larger than that of the landless labourers. At the same time, there is a considerable literature that views modern peasant politics in South Asia as highly adaptive patron – client relationship.

Tenancy is often associated with the inefficient use of productive resources and with the problem of exploitation. Some researchers characterized Indian agriculture as semi-feudal and concluded that poor tenants were ruthlessly exploited by rich landlords. Some of them also argued that markets were controlled by certain extra-economic forces linked to special institutional factors. In contrast, a few studies have shown that in certain regions at least, the tenants were from richer sections and they...
dominated the owners, who leased out their tiny and meagre uneconomic landholdings. Hence, the agrarian relations differ from region to region within a state.

In agrarian societies, in general, the ownership and control of land constitutes the immediate source of economic power and in countries like India, land has been very unequally distributed. In a traditional economy like India, the landowners not only have higher incomes as well as wealth, than other cultivating classes, who are lower in the social hierarchy and also belong to the poorer sections of the agrarian society. The traditional ties of dominance by the landlords over the landless in view of their dependence enable the landlords to control the lives of latter in multifarious ways. On the eve of Independence, land tenure systems in India crystallized into three main varieties namely the zamindari, the ryotwari and the mahalwari tenures accounting for 57 percent, 39 percent and 5 percent of the total privately cultivated land respectively. Despite differences in nomenclature, the agrarian relations in all the three tenures were semi-feudal caricatured by extremely skewed distribution of land and exploitative tenancy relations. In Zamindari and Mahalwari Systems. 75 percent of the cultivated land was under tenancy. The tenants were mostly sharecroppers with varying degrees of liabilities. The net effect of such archaic production relations was the pauperization of the rural peasantry on the one hand and a low level of agricultural production, often stagnant, on the other. It is against this background that the agrarian reforms policy of independent India was nurtured through the recommendations of numerous committees and commissions and the
documents of Five Year Plans. The agrarian reform, which abolishes feudal agrarian relations and brings about redistribution in ordering, is considered a harbinger for the emergence of an egalitarian agrarian social structure. The land reforms policy as laid down in various plan documents, reports of official commissions and committees had undergone drastic changes both in form and content and demonstrably acquired new radical postures. However, land legislations actually enacted to give a practical shape to the various aspects of agrarian reforms policy, suffer from conceptual deficiencies, ambiguities and loopholes, many of which appeared to have been deliberately allowed for. It is ironical that not to speak of the implementation of fair rent laws made in the First Five Year Plan, some states have not yet incorporated these provisions in their tenancy laws even after the completion of many Five Year Plans. Likewise, the definition of personal cultivation continues to be a loose one.

As land reforms is a state subject, in this study, the state of Andhra Pradesh had been chosen for analyzing the dynamic changes in agrarian relations brought about through various legislations and other modes. In the state of Andhra Pradesh, there are many phases in which land reforms were implemented. A fact to be recognized is that whatever little success that is achieved in the sphere of land reforms in the state has often been attributed to protracted struggles of peasants over many decades during which they fought for a certain degree of equity in the ownership and distribution of land. They waged struggles to end rack-renting, insecurity of tenure, unlawful ejections and other illegal practices of landlords. Of the three intermediary
interests, the estate system (zamindari) was abolished in two stages. Through the Madras Estate Land Act of 1908, the occupancy rights of zamindari ryots were recognized. As the act did not end rack-renting, estates were subsequently abolished altogether through Estates Abolition Act in October, 1948. Inamdars were also intermediaries and they were assigned revenue collection and self-cultivation rights. The Madras Estate Land Act of 1908 and later the Estates Abolition act of 1948 were extended to the lands over which inamdars had self-cultivation rights and the rights over their lands were passed on to the ryots with the enactment of Andhra Pradesh (Andhra area) Inams (Abolition and conversion into Ryotwari Act, 1956) 7.

As Andhra Pradesh had been formed through the merger of Andhra area comprising coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions and Telangana area, which was under erstwhile Nizam state, the agrarian systems differed. Hence in Telangana area, a separate act had been passed viz., The Andhra Pradesh (Telangana area) abolition of inams Act, 1955. The act abolished almost all inams except, for instance, inams with charitable and religions institutions. Another important Act passed in Telangana is the Andhra Pradesh (Telangana Area) tenancy and Agricultural Land Act of 1950 (as amended in 1954). This act classified all tenants into ordinary and protected tenants. As per this act, if the tenants personally cultivated the land continuously for a period of six years during a stipulated period, he shall be deemed to be a protected tenant and as a protected tenant, he reserves the right to purchase the land from the land owners. The Telangana Tenancy Act is considered a comprehensive piece of legislation. The revolutionary
activities of the peasants of the region during 1946-51 (called the Telangana armed struggle) seemed to have contributed to this progressive legislation. On the other hand, the Andhra Pradesh (Andhra area) tenancy act, 1956 treated all the tenants as a single class, unlike in Telangana act. Even after legislation, one study commenting on the tenancy situation concluded that the only silver lining in the otherwise gloomy period of land legislation is the protected tenancy in Telangana region. In a way, this act paved the way for Operation Barga in West Bengal in the 1970's where Bargadars were treated as protected tenants.

As distinct from intermediaries, there existed in the state a class of big landlords. They wielded enormous power in the rural set-up by virtue of their command over large tracts of land. To end their privileges, the Andhra Pradesh (Ceiling on Agricultural holdings) Act, 1961 was introduced. Under the act, the ceiling limit varied between 27 to 327 acres, depending upon the class of land. It also allowed '6 to 72' acres (again depending upon the class of land) per every extra member of the family. The high ceiling limits of the 1961 Act, enabled many big landlords to shield themselves from the ceiling laws.

In the next phase, that is, during late 1960's, land grab movements and peasant uprising in the name of Naxalite movement had put pressure on the state and brought the land question to the fore. The task force on agrarian relations cautioned that if land reforms were not implemented in right earnest a revolution would become an irresistible appeal to masses. Hence, the
Andhra Pradesh (ceiling on Agricultural Value Holdings Act, 1973) came into existence in the state. The ceiling limits were lowered and ranged between 12 and 27 acres in the case of irrigated land and between 35 and 54 acres in respect of dry land. Amendments were also made to the Andhra Pradesh (Andhra area) Tenancy Act, 1956 in the year 1974. According to the amended Act, any lease of land made after the commencement of the Act is for six years with a provision for the automatic renewal of the lease unless the landowner wishes to take the land for personal cultivation. The maximum rent payable under the law ranges from 25 to 30 percent of the gross produce.

Redistribute land reform, a government administered 'one is a demonstration of strong political commitment to quickly reduce inequalities and poverty by way of redistribution of private landed property and use rights under different institutional arrangements enforceable by law. Hence, the state governments in India in general and the state of Andhra Pradesh in particular have been involved in the redistribute land reform programme in which where surplus lands taken over after the implementation of the ceiling act as well as waste lands under the control of government were distributed to the poor. Unlike other productive assets, land held individually or communally for a long time is almost sacred and except in distress-sale situations, it is preserved as a family or heritable bond that is a non-marketable family asset essential for household food security. Viewed from this, reforming agrarian relations is not materialistic; there are other gains in social-terrain, such as self-respect and dignity, freedom from dependency upon the monopoly power of landlords and money lenders, and participation in rural organizations.
Viewed from this angle, to what extent the legislative measures and peasant mobilizations could achieve a change in agrarian relations – nay, in common parlance to capitalist relations – requires an assessment of the changes brought about in the rural economy. In Andhra Pradesh, most of the land that was leased in the pre-1947 period belonged, by ownership rights, to various absentee landlords and large holders whose ownership holding exceeded their operational holding in size. The lease market slowly changed in the 1980's and much of the land leased out was legally owned by small holders who could not take up their own cultivation owing to the operational problems like too small size, lack of skills and capital and availability of other vocations of employment. An important effect of the kind of land reforms is the creation of uneconomically small holdings. In a number of cases, especially in the Telangana villages, the tenants that leased in small lands are not the capitalist farmers, but they are many petty cultivators, some of whom happened to be the former farm-servants of these functionaries. Thus, some of the largest surviving operational holdings in many villages are broken down into small pieces under concealed tenancy. Thus the lease market showed a complete shift from the leasing of surplus lands to those of uneconomic holdings; consequently there was a complete change in class relations. Thus most of the lessors of the 1980's are no more large holders, or the feudal interests of the pre-1947 period, but numerous petty holders. Likewise, changes occurred in labour market, output and input markets leading to changes in agrarian relations.¹²
In this study, an attempt is made to analyze the direction of changes in agrarian relations in Andhra Pradesh. For this purpose, a Mandal in Nellore District had been chosen for an in-depth study of the agrarian relations that are undergoing changes due to complex factors like increasing role of the markets, a rising tendency in commercialization and introduction of mechanization in agriculture.

METHODOLOGY

For this research work, interview method, participation observation method and case study methods were adopted.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are:

1) To analyze the changes in the distribution of landholdings between 1970-71 and 1995-96 as seen from the data on census of land holdings and NSS data in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

2) To describe the extent of tenancy and the forms of tenancy in Andhra Pradesh.

3) To bring out the impact of changes in agrarian structure on altering the agrarian relations in Nellore district.
4) To portray the nature of agrarian relations in Nellore District with special reference to Indukurpet mandal.

5) To illustrate the nature of agrarian transitions through case studies in some villages of Nellore district.

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses of this study are enumerated here:

1) There is no significant difference in the landholding-structure in Andhra Pradesh prior to the implementation of ceiling laws and after their implementation.

2) There is an inverse relationship between the size of operational holdings and tenancy;

3) Between the villages even in a contiguous region, such as a mandal of a district in a state, there are significant differences in terms of tenancy and wage employment of agricultural labour.

DATA BASE

The data for the study are collected from secondary sources and primary sources. The secondary data had been collected from the official publications of Government of India and Government of Andhra Pradesh.
statistical handbooks and publications from research organizations, books and periodicals. For the collection of primary data, the researcher used different methods such as administering a questionnaire to sample respondents, conducting interviews and at times, using participant observation method. Besides the above methods, case study method had been employed for making an assessment of the changes in agrarian relations.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this study is an interrupted time series design where the study is conducted as an 'after' one as before data could be collected only through recall method. A sample design had been adopted to carry out the study as per the research design chosen for this study.

SAMPLE DESIGN

A multistage sampling method had been used for conducting this study. At the first stage, the state of Andhra Pradesh had been chosen. At the second stage, Nellore District had been chosen for study. At the third stage, a mandal, namely Indukurpet Mandal had been chosen and in the next stage, three villages in Indukurpet Mandal had been chosen for study. In the villages selected for study, a stratified random sample had been chosen based on the number of land-owner households, tenant households and agricultural labour households. In the case of land-owner households and tenant households, a
ten percent sample on random basis had been chosen, whereas a sample on random basis had been selected from among the agricultural labour households. In order to analyse the agrarian relations in the district, besides the mandal chosen for an in-depth study, three villages had been selected for a sample study.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

A structured questionnaire had been administered to the sampling units when the researcher stayed in those villages and personally administered the questionnaire. Further, the researcher adopted the participant observation method by staying in the villages for a considerable time period. In the study, three villages in one mandal, namely Indukurpet Mandal had been chosen. The three villages are: Indukurpet-I, Jangamvari Doruvu and Somarajupalli. On the basis of interviews conducted in the villages, case studies of some peasant households had been built up.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected from various sources and through different methods had been processed systematically. Two-way and three-way tables had been used for analyzing and statistical tools, such as averages, Gini coefficients, correlation ratio, index numbers and 't' tests have been used. The village case studies as well as case studies of some sample units had also been represented. Albeit, as this study is a historical-oriented one, sophisticated statistical tools were not deployed.
The 't' test equations are followed in this research work. The test statistics used is as follows:

\[
't' = \frac{X_1 - X_2}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum(x_1 - x_1)^2 + (x_2 - x_2)^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}}} \cdot \frac{n_1 n_2}{n_1 + n_2} \cdot \frac{n_1 n_2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}
\]

LIMITATIONS

This work had been undertaken as a part-time research work as the researcher is working as a lecturer in a college. Hence, the data collection could be done only during the period of vacation. As the topic chosen for research study requires a greater interaction with the villagers and also a stay at least for a short period, the researcher utilized other short time stays for eliciting information in the village. During vacation the data collection work had been completed. As the researcher could start his work rigorously only during summer vacation, the vacation in the year 2004 had been spent in the villages of Indukurpet mandal. Hence, the researcher restricted the scope of this work to three villages in the mandal.

Another limitation of this study is that this study had been undertaken in areas where irrigation facilities are better than those areas which are considered to be dry. One reason for this choice is the researcher's surmise on the basis of his study of literature that the diversity in agrarian relations can be captured mostly in the villages with more irrigation facilities than in the villages with lesser irrigation facilities.
As the gamut of agrarian relations is wide, the scope of the study had been restricted to a study of tenancy and conditions of agricultural labour. The size of the ultimate sampling units was restricted to a smaller size, as the work had to be undertaken on part-time basis. One area into which the researcher did not delve is the implications of the tenancy contracts on improving the efficiency of production. Further, the equity aspects could not be analyzed in an analytical way, though indirect references were made on these aspects in the case studies. An aspect that did not receive serious attention in this study is the sociological and cultural dimensions of differentiation of peasantry, which is an offshoot of the emerging agrarian relations. Here also, the researcher could draw certain inferences based on his participant-observation method.

Participant-observation and case study methods tend to bring an element of subjectivity and value judgment consciously or unconsciously. But the researcher believes in what Gunnar Myrdal had emphasised in research in social sciences. According to him, objectivity lies in stating the subjectivity of the researcher. Hence, the researcher is of the opinion that his subjective position is to view the subject of agrarian relations from the stand point of view of those who are in a weak bargaining position that is essentially from the tenant's and the agricultural labourers point of view. At the same time, he is not prepared to compromise with the facts that had emanated from his study.

One more limitation of this study and of the inferences drawn is that they are area-specific and time-specific. In a study of this nature, any single
year is considered as inadequate due to the peculiarities of monsoons. Hence, the researcher had to rely on other methods, such as recall method for getting data on the earlier two or three years for ascertaining the changes occurring in contractual arrangements. For a study, which has to partly depend on historical data also, the researcher felt that sophisticated statistical tools may not be worthwhile and hence he resorted to case study method for analyzing the changing dimensions in agrarian relations in the village.

CHAPTERISATION SCHEME

This study is organized into seven chapters. In the first chapter on introduction, the methodological aspects of the study had been presented. A review of literature on agrarian relations had been undertaken in the second chapter. The third chapter examines certain aspects of the agrarian structure of Andhra Pradesh. The fourth chapter describes the study area namely Nellore district, Indukurpet Mandal and the villages selected for study in an elaborate analysis. The fifth chapter presents the tenancy relations and conditions of agricultural labour. In the sixth chapter, some case studies of respondents are presented to highlight the specificity of the contractual arrangements and their implications for agricultural development. The inferences and conclusions that emerged from the case studies had been presented in the last chapter.
REFERENCES


3. Ibid, p.3.


6. Ibid.


8. Ibid, pp.5-6.


