

LAND REFORMS & AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

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Today, landless make a better living than those with land. There is no co-relation between landlessness and poverty.

Land redistribution played a significant role at the time of independence when the population was much smaller and the availability of land per head was greater. The landless faced a lot of problems as agriculture was the main source of income for the landless labourers. Today the situation has completely changed and land redistribution is totally irrelevant for poverty alleviation. Rapid increase in population has made land reform activities of the government totally defunct. There has

been no significant increase in the cultivated area but the population has increased manifolds has been seen. So, even if all of our land is distributed equally among the whole population, each recipient will get perhaps one-eighth of a hectare or less. Around independence a landless person could be in absolute misery but now things are different. Today, landless make a better living than those with land. There is no co-relation between landlessness and poverty.



Table-1
Landless and Poverty: 1987-88 (%)

Name of the State	% of rural landless	% of poverty	Name of the State	% of rural landless	% of poverty
Punjab	27.5	12.70	HP	8.8	15.46
Gujarat	27.3	32.33	Haryana	7.5	16.63
Maharashtra	27.0	40.10	Sikkim	6.9	34.8
Tamil Nadu	20.3	45.13	Goa	6.8	23.42
AP	15.3	27.20	Kerala	5.3	32.08
West Bengal	13.4	33.99	Orissa	5.1	55.61
MP	13.1	43.40	Mizoram	4.1	32.52
Karnataka	12.6	38.14	Meghalaya	3.7	34.60
Bihar	12.0	53.47	Kashmir	3.4	23.30
UP	11.5	41.99	Assam	2.5	36.84
Rajasthan	9.7	34.60	Manipur	0.6	32.93
Tripura	9.1	36.84	All India	14.2	39.20

Source- National sample survey 1987-88 and Lakdawala expert group on poverty

From table-1 it can be deduced that the land-less are well above the poverty line in prosperous agricultural states. In Punjab, landless are the highest in India but poverty is the lowest. On the other hand in Orissa, has very few landless i.e. 5.1%. Manipur 0.6% landlessness but

their poverty ratio is two and half times as high as that of Punjab. The table also shows that there is little correlation between tribal areas and poverty. The tribal Northern eastern states have lower poverty ratios than the All India average.

Table-2
Changes in Farm size after 1970 in selected Countries

Country	Period-I		Period-II	
	Year	Farm size(Ha)	Year	Farm size(Ha)
Canada	1971	187.6	2001	273.4
US	1969	157.6	2002	178.4
Brazil	1970	59.4	1996	72.8
Peru	1971-72	16.92	1994	20.1
Denmark	1970	20.9	2002	52.3
France	1970	22.07	1999-2000	45.0
Italy	1970	6.9	2000	7.6
Netherlands	1970	11.6	1999-2000	22.0
Norway	1969	17.6	1999	89.5
Spain	1972	17.83	1999	23.9
Australia	1970	1920.3	2001	3232.1
India	1971-72	2.3	1995-96	1.4
Japan	1970	1.0	2000	1.2
Korea Rep	1970	0.88	2000	1.0
China	---	---	1997	0.6

Source- FAO production year book

China continues to have a much lower size of land holding than India but its agricultural productivity and growth is significantly higher. China has reduced the level of poverty from 84% to 15.9% between 1981-2005. The incidence of poverty in India in the year 1980 was much lower than China (59.8%). China's experience shows that there are ways to eliminate poverty even with high concentration of workforce in agriculture and predominance of marginal holdings. The tiny size of holdings has not constrained the attainment of high level of productivity and growth of the agricultural sector. Between 1970-71 and 2005-06, the total number of operational holdings in India increased from 71.01 million to 128.89 million and operational areas declined from 162.18 million ha. to 156.62 million ha. This resulted in the reduction of the average farm size from 2.3 ha. to 1.4 ha. Small and marginal holders now cultivate 42% of operated land and constitute 83% of total land holdings.

Land productivity is inversely related to farm size class. Per hectare value of crop output was Rs. 25,173 at holdings below 0.4 ha and Rs. 18,921

at holdings of size of 0.4 ha to 1 ha. As the farm size increased towards 2 hectares, productivity declined to less than Rs. 17,000 per ha. In large farms (4 ha to 10ha) the value of aggregate production declined to Rs.13,500 per ha. Farmers operating on land holdings above 10 ha were found to have very low productivity (Rs. 7,722) about half the productivity at large holdings and less than one-third the productivity in the middle farm size category. Agricultural productivity in the marginal and small holdings was found to be much higher than the average productivity for all size categories.

Table-4
Changes in share of small holders in number and area of operational holdings at all India Level (%)

Year	Share in no of landholdings			Share in operational area		
	Marginal (<1ha)	Small (1-2ha)	Sub total (<2ha)	Marginal (<1ha)	Small (<1-2ha)	Sub total (<2 ha)
1970-71	51	19	70	9	12	21
2005-06	65	19	81	21	21	42

Source-Agricultural census 200-01 & 2005-06, Department of Agriculture & Co-operation, GOI

Table-5
Yields of principal crops in some selected Countries (Wheat and Rice) MT/Hectare

Year	China	Indonesia	Brazil	India	Thailand	China	USA	India	Turkey	Canada
	Rice					Wheat				
2002	6.16	4.41	3.30	3.14	2.62	3.81	2.70	2.71	1.82	1.94
2003	6.19	4.50	3.25	2.67	2.57	3.78	2.36	2.77	1.96	1.83
2004	6.06	4.56	3.43	3.13	2.65	3.93	2.97	2.62	1.95	2.26
2005	6.31	4.64	3.37	2.95	2.63	4.25	2.90	2.71	2.15	2.64
2005	6.26	4.59	3.86	3.17	2.70	4.28	2.82	2.59	2.15	2.74
2007	6.23	4.60	3.81	3.18	2.69	4.55	2.60	2.63	2.03	2.61
Average	6.20	4.55	3.50	3.04	2.64	4.10	2.70	3.12	2.01	2.30

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In 1970-71 total marginal and small operational holdings in India was 70% and in the year 2005-06 it has raised to 83% which indicates that when the population has increased the share of marginal and small land holdings is also increasing. Similarly, in the year 1970-71 the share in operational area of small and marginal farmers which was recorded at 21% has increased to 42% which indicates that small and marginal farmers have taken a lion share in the share of operational area.

Recommendations and policy implementation

1. Poverty Alleviation cannot be achieved by land ceilings and redistribution because there is too little to redistribute. It lies in moving an increasing part of the work force out of agriculture into more productive activities that pay higher wages. This does not imply migration to big cities.
2. Agriculture contributes only 30% towards GDP still uses 60% of the workforce. It is therefore necessary that we need divert a portion of the work force from the agricultural sector to the non agricultural sector where productivity is more. This can be best achieved by increasing rural productivity which in turns sparks non-farm rural activity.
3. Increased agricultural productivity will have to come from high-tech agriculture and the cultivation of high value items (fruits, vegetables, seeds, animal husbandry) quality control and high –tech agriculture will be facilitated by corporate farming. The main impact of such farming will be not in direct farm employment but in increasing the demand for non-farm labour.
4. It is the social reality that while we have significant strong IT and financial sectors. The benefits of these have not really reached the farmers. A good idea is to dematerialize landholding for the farmer against his ownership. In the dematerialised form, the ownership of the land always vests with the farmer and no exploiter can take his land

away. However, he may lease his land through the demat form to a corporate for a specified period. In return the corporate may :

- (a) Pay the farmer a fixed quarterly lease rental per acre
 - (b) Make him as a share holder with a certain number of shares allotted against each acre of land
 - (c) Provide employment to one member of the family per acre to discourage urban migration of labour
5. To significantly enhance agricultural productivity we must also become more open and receptive to the idea of experimenting with genetically modified (GM) crops like Bt cotton and Bt brinjal. Many countries have tackled food scarcity in the past with the introduction of conventionally bred with gene altered high yielding crops. India should adopt the biotechnology and molecular breeding techniques to increase the productivity of cultivable land.
 6. The enrichment of soil and the enhancement of agricultural productivity require the balanced infusion of several nutrients. Excessive and exclusive dependence on nitrogenous and phosphatic fertilisers is very harmful to the soil. As a result, overall agricultural productivity is bound to decline.

Conclusion

The key to poverty alleviation lies in rural growth based on higher productivity, not on redistributing tiny parcels of land. India needs to take serious steps to create employment avenues for smallholders outside agriculture but within the countryside itself so the workforce in small holder households partly works on the farm and partly outside farm.

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EVALUATION OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES-WHAT, WHY AND HOW

Archana Gulati

A study carried out in rural Rajasthan revealed that even free vaccination was not enough to get parents to bring their children to the health centre to complete their immunisation schedule. The study deliberated upon lack of education/information which translated into a lack of belief in the benefits of immunisation and hence parental reluctance and on the means of overcoming the problem. By asking relevant questions as detailed above, it was found that parents could however be induced by an immediate incentive in kind (two Kgs of dal) which perhaps compensated for the loss of the parents' daily earnings incurred as a result of time spend on getting children immunised..

Prevalence of leakages in the implementation of India's social welfare and economic development schemes is a well known phenomenon. Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi's famous remark that only about 15% of government money reaching the public (made more than two decades ago), best sums up the situation even today. For example, at least 40% leakages are said to take place in the Public Distribution System (PDS). This analysis is based on secondary data. Unfortunately there is no proper system of reporting effectiveness

of a myriad of government programmes such as fertilizer, LPG and petroleum subsidies, the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, the *Indira Awas Yojna*, the National Rural Health Mission (NHRM) etc.

The only way to sustain growth is to improve programme/subsidy scheme design, plug leakages and make such spending more effective thereby making growth more broad based and inclusive. Continued spending on developmental and welfare schemes is critical but poorly designed programmes, inefficient implementation and leakages are



something which the country simply cannot afford. To this end Programme Evaluation (PE) can be of invaluable assistance in ensuring that ineffective programmes are dropped or redesigned, performing schemes improved and expanded and much needed mid-course corrections carried out promptly to extract the maximum benefit from every rupee spent.

What is Programme Evaluation

PE is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the programme, improve programme effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming (Patton 1997). Evaluation produces evidence that can be used to compare alternative programs, guide program development and decision making, and reveal effective practices. By its very nature, it supplies the publicly accessible information that is at the heart of transparency and open government.

In India billions of Rupees spend on Government funded programmes and the Government's intent is often judged by expenditure. However, evaluation by budgetary outlay/expenditure is notoriously inaccurate and unrelated to outcomes as discussed above. This Input related approach has not served the purpose of programme evaluation. Outcome/Performance Budgeting was introduced to tackle this issue but has had limited success as it tends to be a mechanical and routine bureaucratic exercise carried out with little emphasis on genuine assessment of results and shortcomings. PE per se has received increasing focus off late. In fact an Independent Evaluation Office (EO) is to be set up as an attached but arms length office of Planning Commission to assess the outcomes and impact of the major flagship programmes of the Government of India. The Union Ministry of rural Development is also planning a Concurrent Evaluation Network. (CENET).

Requisites of Effective Programme Evaluation

For PE to be truly effective every government scheme must have clearly defined mission, goals

and objectives and these in turn should be linked to the appropriate measurable performance indicators. The questions that need to be asked and answered by the evaluators are:

- What are the inputs/essentials of our programme?
- What does our programme do (activities)?
- What are the intended results of our programme (short-term and long-term outcomes)?
- What internal and external "influences" that affect our programme (funding, political, social, organizational, technical/technology, etc.)
- Is the programme achieving its objectives & is it achieving them at the lowest practicable cost
- If not what can we do to remedy the situation

To give an interesting example of the same, a study carried out in rural Rajasthan revealed that even free vaccination was not enough to get parents to bring their children to the health centre to complete their immunisation schedule. The study deliberated upon lack of education/information which translated into a lack of belief in the benefits of immunisation and hence parental reluctance and on the means of overcoming the problem. By asking relevant questions as detailed above, it was found that parents could however be induced by an immediate incentive in kind (two Kgs of *dal*) which perhaps compensated for the loss of the parents' daily earnings incurred as a result of time spend on getting children immunised.. This is similar to the logic behind conditional transfer programmes such as Brazil's *Bolsa Familia* wherein cash transfers are used to ensure children's vaccination and schooling. These ideas have in fact been adopted by the Indian Government for health related schemes such as the *Janani Suraksha* programme. Interestingly this programme while fairly successful, has also come under criticism from certain quarters because of the fact that the performance indicators of this programme are number of institutional deliveries rather than actual maternal/baby health outcomes. The former can be ensured by cash transfers but the latter needs robust and good quality rural health facilities. This again underscores the need to ask

the right questions and hence identify the correct performance criteria.

For PE to be meaningful it is essential to have up-front and continuous communication, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement and participation and a clear understanding and “buy in” by all participants of the benefits of performing the programme evaluation. At the very least the implementers of the programme must be closely associated with identifying the right questions and demanding answers thereof. In the absence of the same PE can become meaningless and lead to sub-optimal results by way of irrelevant studies and undoable recommendations. The scope of the evaluation and its defined “boundaries” should be well planned and laid out as part of the design (what will the evaluation answer and not answer?). Maximum effort and cooperation should be rendered in accessing the data and information crucial to the programme evaluation without resorting to short cuts as challenges in obtaining necessary data and information will impact design, implementation, analysis, and expectations of evaluation results.

Importance of Independent Evaluation

While close association of the user Department/Ministry/Agency is absolutely essential to delineate appropriate boundaries and goals of evaluation and to create a sense of ownership, third party evaluation adds value particularly where an independent and objective assessment is desired or where professional facilitation of the evaluation process is desired. The owner department may feel compelled to prove effectiveness because after all they designed the programme. However, what is more important is improvement and achievement of the real socio-economic outcomes that the programme hopes to achieve. The best way forward is to combine governmental concurrent evaluation and internal audit with professional third party assessments. For example, social audits of MNREGS have exposed several lacunae in implementation. Independent evaluation can add credibility as long as it is properly designed and based upon credible

data. Also all PE whether in-house or third party, should be constructive and aimed at organisational learning and programme improvement.

Following Up is Critical for Success

No matter how rigorous the methods of data collection, design, and reporting are in evaluation, if it does not get used, it is a bad evaluation (Patton, 1997) or at least it's a waste of time and resources. The ultimate purpose of evaluation is improvement and this means following up. A commitment to act on results of PE is critical to the success of government programmes. This means that PE must be formalised in organizational culture & behaviour. It must be incorporated in all contracts resultant to programme implementation. Follow up actions should also form part of the contracts by way of clauses relating to mid-course corrections including budgetary adjustments. Results of PE must be disseminated widely and placed in the public domain. The government and its agencies should embrace rather than fear PE and see it not as a report card but as an ongoing process of learning and discovery and a tool to achieve programme effectiveness. Once the public see that findings of PE are acted upon by way of corrective action their commitment and support too will become a given. PE should also aim towards continuous improvement in the skills of programme designers/implementers as it adds to knowledge about the correct activities/methods as against ineffectual/wasteful ones.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that continued government focus and expenditure on developmental schemes and social outcomes is essential for sustained and hence inclusive growth. This in turn demands effective PE. To this end PE should be ingrained into all government programmes. It should be budgeted for and institutionalised. The results of PE must be placed in the public domain and its findings followed up rigorously.

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