

Regulation of Rents: Under the British Government, the rents charged was highly exploitative with no sound economics behind it. These highly exploitative rents spelt high misery on the tenants and trapped them into vicious circles of debt and poverty.

To provide relief to the tenants from exploitative rents, the Indian government after independence passed legislations to regulate the rents (maximum limits on rent was fixed) and to reduce the miseries of the tenants.

Security of Tenure: To protect the tenants from arbitrary evictions and to grant them permanent rights over land, legislations had been passed in most states.

Legislations passed by the States has three essential aims; Evictions must not take place except in accordance with the provisions of law; Land may be resumed by the owner, if at all, for the “Personal Cultivation” only; In the event of land taken by the owner, the tenant is assured of a prescribed minimum area.

However, the vague definitions of Tenants Personal Cultivation and landowner under the law made it difficult to implement the tenancy reforms. The rights of resumptions provided in the law combined with the flaws in the definitions of the personal cultivation rendered all tenancies insecure.

Ownership Rights of Tenants: It has been repeatedly emphasised by the government, that the ownership rights of the land should be conferred to the actual cultivator. Accordingly, most states have passed legislations to transfer ownership rights to the tenants.

However, the success of the states in conferring the rights to the tenants varied widely. Some states like West Bengal, Kerala and Karnataka, has performed exceptionally well in this regard. In West Bengal due to the “**Operation Barga**” maximum sharecroppers were given ownership of land.

Land Ceilings

Land Ceiling on agriculture land means a statutory maximum limit on the quantity of land which an individual may hold. The imposition of the Land ceiling has two main aspects:

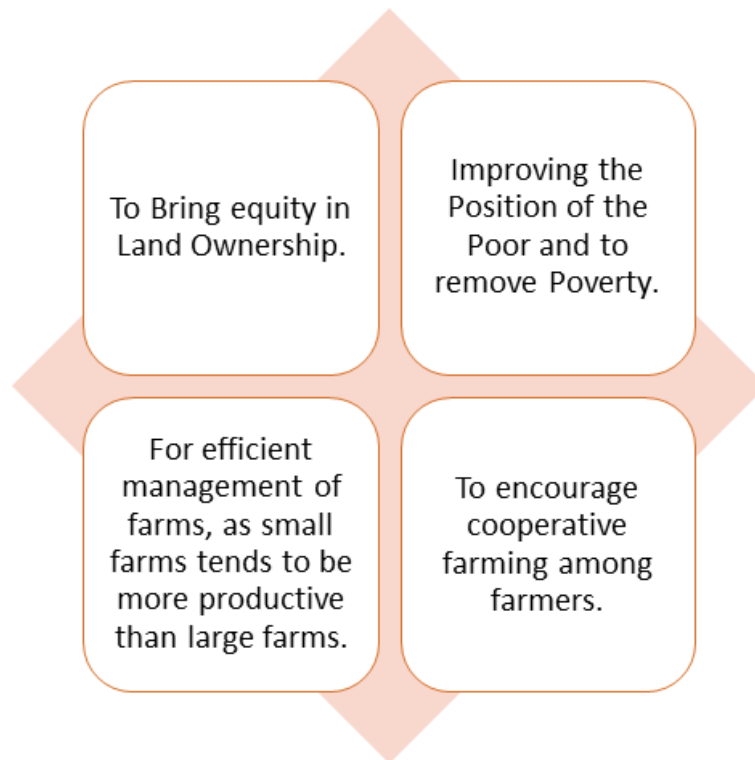
- Ceiling on future acquisitions.
- Ceilings on existing land holdings.

By 1961-62, ceiling legislation had been passed in all the States. The levels vary from State to State and are different for food and cash crops. In Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, for example, the ceiling on existing holding is 40 acres and 25 acres. In Punjab, it ranges from 27 acres to 100 acres, in Rajasthan 22 acres to 236 acres and in Madhya Pradesh 25 acres to 75 acres.

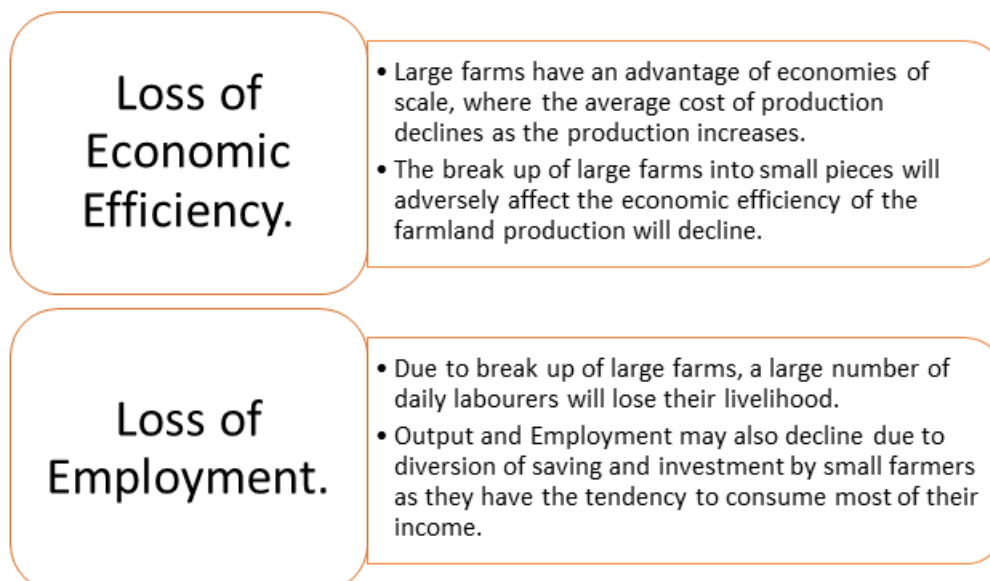
In order to bring about uniformity, a new policy was evolved in 1971. The main features were:

1. Lowering of ceiling to 28 acres of wetland and 54 acres of unirrigated land
2. Change over to the family rather than the individual as the unit for determining land holdings lowered ceiling for a family of five.
3. Fewer exemptions from ceilings.
4. Retrospective application of the law for declaring Benami transactions null and void,
5. No scope to move the court on the ground of infringement of fundamental rights.

Why was Land Ceiling needed?



The Argument against Land Ceiling



Land Consolidation

Land Consolidation means merging of multiple consolidated farms and giving it to each farmer. The measure is adopted to solve the problem of land fragmentation. The Land consolidation program required granting of one consolidated land to the farmer, which is equal to the total land holdings in different scatters under the farmer possession. It simply means instead of holding multiple small lands in different places; the farmer will be given a single big piece of land.

Why the Program Failed?

- The programme failed to achieve its desired objective because the farmers are reluctant to exchange their lands for the new one. The arguments given by the farmers is that their existing land is much more fertile and productive than the new land provided under land consolidation.
- The farmers also complained about nepotism and corruption in the process of consolidation. The farmers complained that the rich and influential often bribes and manage to get fertile and well-situated land, whereas the poor farmers get unfertile land.

Cooperative Farming

Cooperative farming is advocated to solve the problem of subdivisions of land holdings. The idea was to make farming profitable for small and marginal farmers having small pieces of land.

Under Cooperative Farming setup farmers having very small holdings come together and join hands to pool their lands for the purpose of cultivation. Pooling of farms helps in increasing production, and the farmers can have more produce to sell in the markets after taking out their subsistence need.

Cooperative farming also helps in mechanisation of agriculture as the owner of the multiple small farms can pool their money to buy a mechanical tractor or other equipment's which they could not afford otherwise.