

Land Ceiling

Land Ceiling means fixing maximum size of land holdings that an individual / family can own.

Land over and above the ceiling limit, is called surplus land.

If the individual / family own more land than the ceiling limit, the surplus land is taken away.

This surplus land is

- Redistributed among small farmers, tenants, landless labourers or
- Handed over to Village Panchayat or
- Given to cooperatives.

Benefits of Land Ceiling

Production Increased

Earlier large tracts of wasteland belonging to big zamindars / farmers remained uncultivated. This land was now given to landless labourers. Thus the area under cultivation increased.

Equal distribution of land will encourage intensive cultivation resulting in increased agricultural production.

Some farm management studies conducted in India testified that small farms yielded more production per hectare. It is because family members themselves cultivate small farms.

Employment Increased

Land ceiling increased employment opportunities. Earlier landless labourers got employment only during sowing and harvesting season but

with land ceiling he was given land ownership and in this way he became self employed.

Social Justice

Land ceiling reduced power inequality among villagers. It promoted the spirit of cooperation among the villagers.

In India, by 1961-62, all state governments had passed the land ceiling acts. But the ceiling limits varied from state to state. To bring uniformity across states, a new land ceiling policy was evolved in 1971. In 1972, national guidelines were issued with ceilings of 10 to 18 acres for best land, 18 to 27 acres for second class land and for the rest with 27 to 54 acres with a slightly higher limit hill and dessert areas. Before 1972, the basis of land ceiling was an individual as a unit instead of family. Since 1972, family is considered as the unit of application for land ceilings. Certain exemptions were allowed for plantations of crops like tea and coffee, Bhoodan Yagya Committeees, registered cooperatives and other bodies.

The land ceiling also deals with the also deals with the acquisition of surplus land and its redistribution among the small farmers and landless workers. But the progress of redistribution of surplus land has been unsatisfactory.