

## **MEASURING THE IMPACT OF LAND REFORMS ON THE FARMING COMMUNITY IN DISTRICT MARDAN, NWFP**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper is based on a study carried out in three selected villages of Mardan (NWFP) during 2008-09. The study selected 160 respondents including 144 tenants and 16 landlords to explore the effects on literacy, productivity, the trend for modern technology adoption and litigation status after the three land reforms execution in the study area. The selection of respondents for 144 tenants and 16 landlords was carried on random basis, to ensure unbiased results. Especially designed questionnaires were used to collect the quantitative and qualitative data from the respondents. The data of the farmers applying traditional or modern techniques of production were analyzed using percentages and paired-t-test statistics. The results show that enrolment, literacy, productivity and rate of new technology adoption have increased and so was the interest to work after the land reforms. Almost 100 percent of the tenants expressed that they feel empowered and can make their own decisions after the land reforms. Additionally, the tenancy rights have improved and cost of production has decreased due to enhanced interest in farming. However, the litigation issues between tenant and landlord have increased tremendously causing a threat to the positive results of the land reforms. The study measured the rate of litigation among tenant-landlord and its impact on the farm community in the wake of land reforms executed during 60's and 70's in Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** *Land reforms, productivity, empowerment, literacy rate, decision making*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Land reform is the process of examining and changing laws, regulations and customs relating to land ownership and land tenure. Preventive legislation needs to be removed and new incentive legislation introduced (Godfrey, 1990). They are pursued every where with the core objective of crops yield maximization and empowering the landless rural people with socially equitable societal norms and values. The land reforms executed in Pakistan were intended to bring a more equitable distribution of land ownership and access to land. It involved changes in laws, regulations and customs pertaining to the interrelationship of land owners, tenants and their land. In developing countries like Pakistan, the class owning land exercises a monopolistic power creating a barrier to the social and economic wellbeing of the poor. The land reforms aim to reallocate the far reaching authority of landlords on the local political and economic resources to poor workers on the grass-root level. The world now has billionaires whose combined net worth equals the annual income of the poorest 45% of the world's population (Korten, 1996). This contrast arises mainly from the mal-distribution of land ownership and the lack of access to land by the majority (Stibbe and Godfrey, 1997). Tracing back into recent history, similar thoughts were upheld in "How the other half die" by Susan (1976).

### **BRIEF HISTORY OF LAND REFORMS IN PAKISTAN**

The land reforms in Pakistan were executed during 1960's and 1970's to bring equitable distribution of land ownership, justified access to land resources and to reduce exploitation and rural poverty. The reforms involved changes in laws, regulations and the customs pertaining to the interrelationship of land owners, tenants and their land. According to various statistics, in Pakistan, a very small number of landlords (i.e. 9%) own about 42% of the land (Nawab, 1989) North West Frontier Province is no exception.

This feature has been inherited by the country from its very inception in 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947. However, the history of land reforms in Pakistan starts even prior to its creation in 1947. The first formal attempt in this regard was made in the year 1945, when a committee was constituted with the nomenclature “the tenancy legislation committee 1945”. The task of the committee continued endlessly by a number of other efforts towards achieving the goals of land reforms. These efforts include and are not restricted to the formation of the Government Hari Enquiry Committee 1947-48 (Chishti, 1988), M. Masaud’s Minutes of Dissent 1949, Land Reforms 1958/59 and Land Reforms 1972/77. All these efforts were aimed to achieve increased agricultural production, to raise level of income and living standards of the farm families and to remove social inequalities resulting from very small and very large land holdings.

The reforms of 1959 and 1972 were promulgated by presidential orders in the form of Martial Law Regulation 64 (hereafter, MLR-64) and Martial Law Regulation 115 (hereafter, MLR-115), respectively, while the Reforms of 1977 were introduced under Land Reform Act-II, 1977. Under MLR-64 the basic ceiling on land holding was, 500 acres of irrigated or 1000 acres of un-irrigated land or an area equivalent to 36,000 produce Index Units (PIU) per individual, whichever was more. Over and above the basic ceiling, a land owner was entitled to retain (i) 150 acres of land, provided it was under orchards within the meanings of the regulations and (ii) if the land comprised of livestock farms. The approval by the government of MLR-64, also allowed a number of different types of land transfer to be made to entitled persons out of the land held in excess of the prescribed ceiling. Later, the MLR-115 of 1972 reduced the basic ceiling to 150 acres of irrigated or 300 acres of un-irrigated land or an area equivalent to 12,000 PIU per person, whichever was more. The persons possessing a tractor and tube-well of specified type were allowed to own an additional area equal to 2,000 PIU. In 1977 the land ceiling of irrigated was 100 and un-irrigated was 200 acres which equaled to 8000 PIU (Nawab, 1989). MLR-64 of 1959 provided for payment of compensation for the resumed land at a sliding scale, whereas no compensation was payable for the land resumed under MLR-115 of 1972. In the matter of allotment of the resumed land, the tenants already cultivating it were given the first right to entitlement in all of the three reforms under review. Other tenants received the second preference followed by small land owners no allot-tee however was given more than 12.5 acres. Under MLR-64, allot-tee of the resumed land was required to pay for it in installments over a period of 25 years. The amount outstanding against them on this account was later on remitted in full in 1972 under MLR-115. In light of the land reforms, MLR-84, almost 1,035,164 hectare of land was resumed. Under land reforms of 1972, 482,892 hectares were resumed out of which 348903 hectares were disposed of to 76293 person Under land reform 1977 the total resume land was 176,000 acres, of which 88,000 acres was distributed to 13000 beneficiaries (Khan, 1980).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the rate of litigation among tenant-landlord and its impact on the farm community in the wake of land reforms executed during 60’s and 70’s in Pakistan. The farmers were found practicing either traditional or modern techniques of farming in the study area. Hence the study also attempted to explore the rate of modern technology adoption following the three executions of land reforms in the study area.

The study was carried out in the three villages of union council ‘Alo Qasmi’ district Mardan in 2008-09. The villages included in the study were namely; Qasmi, Sarobi and Tazagram. The total number of the respondent was 160 including 144 farmers and 16 landlords Table I. The selection of the respondents was made randomly from the sample frame. Specially designed questionnaires were used to collect the data. Simple percentages and paired t-test statistics were applied for the analysis of responses.

**Table I** *Sample plan of the respondents in the project area*

S. No.	Name of village	Absentee land lord	Owner cultivator	Owner cum tenant	Tenant	Total
1	Qasmi	8	16	24	32	80
2	Tazagram	4	8	12	16	40
3	Sarobi	4	8	12	16	40
4	Total	16	32	48	64	160

**Source: Survey**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Literacy Status of the Sampled Farmers*

As a globally recognized fact, without education and human resource development no dreams of growth and prosperity are realized. The findings reflect that a good number i.e. 58 percent of the respondents were literate against below 10 percent in 1960's; presumably as a positive effect of the land reforms. This contrast to the pre-reforms period is result of the fact that prior to land reforms the tenants were not allowed enrolling their children in schools because it negatively affected the landlord's access to cheap farm labor. In the post reform era the farmers were more empowered in their decisions regarding their children schooling and opting for higher education. Resultantly in the period prior to land reforms the study area had no school, while in the post era a large number of public and private schools are found. Table II shows the literacy status of the total sampled respondents of the study area after land reforms.

**Table II** *Literacy status of the sampled farmers in the project area*

S. No.	Particular Item	Frequency	%
1	Literate	84	58
2	Illiterate	60	42
3	Total	144	100

Source: Survey

The land reforms are also credited for the increased income levels of the area farmers. Table III reveals the education level of the sample farmer of the project area. Among total respondents 35% has obtained primary level education, 21% Middle, 14% secondary, 9% intermediate, 14% Graduate and 7% Post Graduate. The analysis shows that land reform has improved their income and now they are capable to send their children to school and improve the education status.

**Table III** *Level of education of the sampled farmer in the project area*

S. No.	Particular Item	No	%
1	Primary	50	35
2	Middle	30	21
3	Secondary	20	14
4	Intermediate	12	08
5	Graduate	20	14
6	Post Graduate	10	07
7	PhD	02	01
8	Total	144	100

Source: Survey

### *Crop Production*

The project area is well known for its fertility and production of good quality wheat maize, sugar-cane, barley and fruits. Table IV shows average yield per acre of wheat has increased by 20 mds in irrigated and 10 md in un-irrigated area. Maize yield per acre has doubled and so is the sugarcane producing 232 mds per acre. The table also shows the paired t-test results of the stated crops which were found significant according to analyses. Fruits production also increased amazingly while barley being a low income producer has disappeared from the fields. Table V indicates that per acre yields of various crops increased substantially after the land reforms. The confidence of ownership played positive role in increasing the efficiency at farm level as revealed by the 70% of the respondents. They also shared that after the implementation of land reforms the tenancy rights have been improved significantly. The earlier sense of deprivation was diverted to the self-assurance to get more output of the fields they own.

**Table IV** *Average per acre yield of the wheat, maize and sugarcane of the sampled farmer*

Name of Crop	Before	After	T-value	Result	Alpha Level
(a) Wheat					
Irrigated	11.20md	36.00md	-7.5729	Significant	
Non-irrigated	4.60md	8.40md	-25.6364	Significant	0.05
(b) Maize					
Irrigated	8.80md	18.40md	-5.3393	Significant	
Non-irrigated	4.80md	8.40md	-23.1229	Significant	
(c) Sugarcane	98.30md	232md	-24.5708	Significant	

**Table V** *Sample farmers' per acre yield in the project area*

S. No.	Particular Items	No	%
1	Increased	112	70
2	Decreased	16	10
3	No effect	32	20
3	Total	160	100

The increased production has been a reward for the majority; almost 90% of the total respondents and 100% of the tenants, as expected. However, the land lord are litigant that they could not manage the cost of production since no more they have access to the free, cheap, obedient labor of the tenant family. The debtors in the pre-reform period are creditor of today. Those who were always indebted are lending money to the then landlords; the blessings of the reforms. Another 20%, who have their land intact reported no change but a state of balance.

#### *Reasons of Productivity Increase*

Forty four percent agreed that appropriate decision regarding cropping pattern was technically the reason for enhanced productivity. The farmer used to decide the cropping patterns basing on the expected cost of production, crop prices (past and expected), new varieties, new technologies pest attacks and input availability situation. Table VI describes some of the reasons of increased productivity since the overwhelming majority claimed that land reforms have enhanced the interest to work hard. According to another 50% respondents tenancy rights have also improved causing the productivity to boost. Nearly 31 percent claimed that they do not depend anymore on the landlord for the input availability on time. Earlier the landlord purchased input disregarding the crop need.

**Table VI** *Reasons of per acre yield increased of the sampled farmer in the project area*

S. No.	Reasons	No	%
1	Interest in cultivation increased	112	100
2	Cost decreased	112	100
3	Cropping pattern improved	50	44
4	Tenancy right improved	56	50
5	Input availability improved	35	31

#### *Impact of Reforms on Land Lords*

Table VII shows the reasons of negative impact on land lord in the project area. Hundred percent land lords said that the land reforms made *kisani* (The tenant who can not pay share to land owner) in the project area and increased the litigation among the lords and farmers. About 100% claimed that the monopoly of a landlord to expel a tenant from the land was abolished.

**Table VII** *Impact on land lords in the project area after land reform*

S. No.	Reasons	No	%
1	Kisani Created	16	100
2	Expulsion by Force abolished	16	100
3	Costs of share increased	16	100

### Land Reforms and Technology Adoption

Table VIII shows the farmers' response towards technology adoption after land reforms implementation. The many fold increase in the production has clearly increased the demand for the inputs creating a stable and competitive input market. The use of agriculture mechanization, chemical fertilizers and pesticides has increased many folds providing a mix response to the reforms and other variables.

**Table VIII** *Technology adoption and land reforms in the project area*

S. No.	Items	Before	Now	Change
1	Tractor	1	8	7
2	Fertilizer application	50 bags	500 bags	450 bags
3	Pesticide application	00	70 bottles	70 Bottles
4	Pair of Bullocks	100	02	-98
5	Tube well	00	28	28
7	Green Yard Manure	100 Trolley	3 Trolley	-97 Trolley
8	Spray machine	1 in number	15 in number	14
9	Thresher	1 in number	20 in number	19
10	Bullocks operation in gur gani	50	0	-50
11	Generator application in gur gani	00	70 in number	70
12	Weedicides application	00	60 bottles	60

### Litigation Status in the Project Area

Table IX shows the litigation position of the respondents in the project area. About 100% respondents, 90% tenants and 10% land owners reported that the litigation percentage in the project area after land reforms increased and made the environment unfavourable for crops multiplication. The farmers and land owners spent huge time in the courts area and unable to give due attention to their farming sector for multiplication the agricultural productivity.

**Table IX** *Litigation status in the project Area*

S. No.	Particular Item	Yes	%
1	Tenant	144	90
2	Land lord	16	10
3	Total	160	100

Source: Survey

### CONCLUSION

There have been various critical discussions regarding the land reform system and its weaknesses on Pakistan level equally there are reported loopholes in the practice underwent in the study area. To many, no land was ever resumed from the lords because they distributed the land among their own kith and kin the reform took place in this project area so land lords were not affected from entitlement aspect however some side rule and regulations has affected their status. The study concludes that the rate of litigation among farmers and land lord increased after land reform implementation, however, some part of the goodness can not be ignored. Truly the land reform executions to a great extent have abolished the power structure and now the land lords act no more as the monopolistic. On the other hand farmers are both empowered and more satisfied. The per acre productivity of the farm community has obviously increased. No doubt with the passage of time things are bound to improve yet, the land reallocation is sitting in the base of the accelerated growth. Finally it was concluded that while the land reforms have benefited the tenant it have perturbed the landlord and the expected investment in the agriculture sector through land lord community. In alignment with the study findings following are recommended:

- i. Government should consider execution of the land reforms in the areas these reforms have not been implemented so far. It is expected to reduce the litigation cases amongst landlords and tenant farmers and ultimately will make the environment favorable for surplus agriculture production.
- ii. Along with land reforms government should provide credit facilitations to new owners on task worthiness bases to encourage export based agriculture production activities.
- iii. These land reforms should immediately be followed with human resource development endeavors and technological inputs in the target areas for a prompt and result oriented agro-based industry multiplication in the country.

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