

Project title	Surplus Land Allotment in Kerala
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Abstract

The Kerala Agrarian Relations Act 1960 was the first unified legislation in Kerala and contained provision on ceiling of land. This Act came into force on 1st April 1964. The amendment included nullifying the exemption in ceiling limit existing in favour of certain classes of land.

The total number of beneficiaries of surplus land in Kerala as at the end of 1993 was 1.43 lakhs. The scope and coverage of the surplus land distribution to the landless was indeed quite limited. The study was carried out in five districts of Kerala - Palakkad, Kozhikode, Thrissur, Kasaragod, and Alappuzha. Forty beneficiaries from each of these districts constituted the sample. The sample survey estimated the average area in all the five districts. About one third of the beneficiaries were illiterate. The major problem in taking over surplus land was court intervention. No case of dispossession was reported.

In the state about 2500 cases covering an area of about 23000 acres were still pending before the courts. The per cent of area covered by stay against the land ordered to surrender was about 17 per cent. There was no problem in recording the rights of the beneficiary and almost all reported receipt of the 'Pattayam' (title) document. Only two cases were reported where the beneficiary was involved in litigation after allotment of the surplus land.

Thirty per cent of the selected beneficiaries sold out/leased out their allotted land. The main reasons were personal needs and long distance from their residences. Majority of the cultivated land was under perennial crops. About 14 per cent of the members of the beneficiary family in the age group 6 to 18 were not going to school. Most of the beneficiaries were fully satisfied with their allotted land. Only two households had newly acquired pump sets.

Majority of the beneficiaries were aware of the financial assistance to surplus land allottees, but a considerable number did not receive the assistance. Regarding poverty alleviation schemes majority of the beneficiaries were aware of IRDP schemes and a reasonable number of beneficiaries also availed the benefits of the schemes.

Since the surplus landowners surrender only their most uneconomic land, large portions of the surplus land allotted to the beneficiaries were barren and cultivable waste. Considerable amount of money and labour was needed. It was suggested in the study that the subsidy be fixed according to the nature of the land. For capital improvement measures, Government was suggested to provide 25 per cent of the cost as subsidy. It was suggested that proper passage should be provided to each beneficiary while allotting the land. The feasibility of providing a portion of the allotment on poverty alleviation schemes to surplus land allottees could be examined.

