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History and Politics of Land Reforms in Pakistan: A Case Study of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Era

Abstract

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto emerged as the populist leader in the elections of 1970 with his Pakistan People's Party established in 1967. Bhutto had worked in Ayub Khan's cabinet for a long time and he knew the weaknesses of incumbent government. Having established his party, he challenged the policies of Ayub government and pioneered the movement for the downfall of Ayub regime. The elections of 1970 yielded polarized electoral mandate in which Awami League won thumping majority in East Pakistan while Pakistan People's Party outdid rivals in the West Pakistan. Since Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was influenced by socialism, he sought to implement Fabian Socialism in Pakistan. Industries were nationalized and land reforms were introduced. The cry for land reforms had been throughout Pakistan's history but first serious attempt was made by Ayub regime. Bhutto criticized land reforms of Ayub in his election campaign alleging their ineffectiveness. He promised in election manifesto and implemented land reforms in 1972. Land reforms evoked various responses and yielded many results. This paper investigates the history and politics of land reforms in Pakistan and analyses land reforms of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in particular.

Land Reforms Efforts in Pakistan before Bhutto Government: A Recapitulation

Land reforms have been recognized by almost all the economists, as an important component of the strategies needed for transforming especially the predominantly agrarian economies of the world. The process refers, in a restricted sense, to the redistribution of land owned in excess of certain specified ceilings. However, in a broader perspective, land reforms encompass breaking up iniquitous concentration of land, reducing income disparities, improving land productivity, promoting rural employment, preserving socio-political stability, recording the tenant-landlord relationship on respectable basis, encouraging adoption of modern technologies for mass production and improving the overall income distribution of the economy. In his book on land reforms and politics Peter Dorner, an economist, dwells extensively on the "unfavourable consequences of land concentration" and has regarded "land reforms as a pre-condition" for development of agricultural countries.¹ Dorner argues that land tenure reforms and its potentialities must be viewed along with the redistribution of land, which is favorable for breaking down certain rigidities within a society and set the stage for a different organization in

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the agricultural sector within the overall requirements of development of a country.² While land reforms achieve set goals effectively only when accompanied by other appendage programs, it certainly serves to provide a stable base for a country's future economic and social development. A. M. Aslam Chaudhary is of the opinion that "land reforms improve the prospects for raising production by creating new incentives, for increased work and investment on more equitable land distribution."³ Land Reforms are also expected to lead to improved factor allocation, especially land and labour, in the development of the agriculture sector. Moreover, land reforms assure the achievement of a more competitive market for land, labour and capital and thereby induce measures such as ceilings on land-holding, greater dispersion of extension services and greater availability of farm credit; oligopolistic and monopolistic elements are also checked through a fairer control of means of production.

The beginning of land-reform effort in Pakistan remained confined only to the improvement of tenancy conditions. However, rendering the agricultural sector *inter alia*, amenable to the rapid diffusion of modern technology became central to the *raison detre* of the subsequent land reforms efforts. Pakistan inherited a highly skewed distribution of land: at the time of partition, on tenth of 1% of the total landowners occupied 15% of the total cultivated land in the country.⁴ The big landowners generally tended to be absentee landlords because they usually lived in cities leaving the management of their lands to their paid managers who used to exact more than justifiable share of crops raised by tenants and sharecroppers. So, the absentee landlords did not have the required incentive or market pressure to cultivate all the cultivable land and apply modern technologies to raise their farm productivity; such a skewed distribution of land led to a high rate of tenant incidence and exploitation.

The relevance of the landlords to apply new technologies, high incidence of tenant cultivation and low farm productivity triggered the introduction of land reforms in Pakistan. In the beginning, the government undertook measures to abolish "Zamindari" system and improve the conditions of tenancy cultivation. For the said purpose, in 1948, the Muslim League constituted an Agrarian Reforms Committee, which recommended the forfeiture, without compensation, of the *jagirs* and proprietary rights of land given as *inams* by the British administration; fixation of ceiling of 150 acres of irrigated land and 450 acres of *barani* land; ownership by individual owners; legal recognition of the occupancy tenants as owners of their holdings; guarantee of security of tenure to the tenants-at-will; guarantee to the tenancy period of not less than 16 years and raising the share of tenants from 50% to 66% of the total produce.⁵ Unfortunately, the landlords who dominated the Muslim League did not allow the implementation of the recommendations of this Agrarian Reforms Committee. A little later, different provincial governments enacted different regulations to improve the tenancy conditions in their respective provinces.⁶

The first major land reforms were introduced in Pakistan by the martial law government in 1959, called as Ayub's land reforms. The MLR-64 of the Martial Law Regulations of 1959 pertaining to land reforms was applicable only to the then West Pakistan.⁷ According to these land reforms, land ownership ceiling was fixed at 500 acres of irrigated or 1000 acres of un-irrigated land or 36000

produce index units. The excess land was acquired by the government and sold to the tenants. Further, sub-division of the existing holdings beyond 12.5 acres, which was recognized as the size of a subsistence holding, was prohibited. However, the 1959 Land Reforms Act did not significantly alter the concentration of land ownership, besides the fact, that these reforms served as the basis for the successive agrarian reforms. The reason for less effective reforms is that the ceiling on individual holding, expressed in land area and the Produce Index Unit, remained quite generous. Similarly, there were substantial inter-family land transfers and even outright evasion of the ceiling requirement on individual holdings. Resultantly, the landless and the near-landless peasants received little land; a high proportion of the beneficiaries of these land reforms were the small and medium land owners.

The second major land reforms were introduced in 1972, by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, through Martial Law Regulations 115 (MLR-115) which was transformed later to Land Reforms Regulations 1972 (LRR-1972).⁸ The main provisions on land ceilings under the 1972 law were expected to effectively break up the iniquitous concentration of landed wealth, reduce income disparities, increase production, streamline the administration of land revenue and agricultural taxation and truly lay the foundations of a relationship of honour and mutual benefit between landlords and tenants.

Land Reforms under the Government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto announced the outline of his land reforms in a national broadcast on March 1, 1972.⁹ In order to get the desired aura of importance of the step, he declared a public holiday on March 3 “to commemorate the infinite blessing of this day, the beauty and splendor of its promise”.¹⁰ His speech included a scathing attack on the land reforms of 1959; he called them a subterfuge, and characterized his own reforms in these words:

The reforms I am introducing are basic, affecting the life and fortunes of the common man more than any other measure that we may introduce in the future. They will bring dignity and salvation to our rural masses that from today will be able to lift their heads from the dust and regain their pride and manhood, their self-respect and honour.¹¹

Bhutto emphasized, in his speech, that while his announced reforms would cover ‘a wide spectrum, the basic aim was to break the power of the rent-collecting absentee landlords and improve the position of peasants, especially the landless tenants and small owners. The proposed reforms were to include: (a) new and lower ceiling on individual holdings, (b) resumption by the state of excess land without compensation, (c) free redistribution of resumed land to landless tenants and small peasant-owners, (d) exemption from future payment on land bought by tenants and small owners under the 1959 land reforms, (e) new restrictions own the eviction of tenants, changes in the responsibilities on payment of water rates, land revenue and seed costs, (f) right of pre-emption for tenants on the land being sold by owners, (g) consolidation of land holdings, (h) introduction of a flat rate land revenue system, and (i) introduction of a work’s program to create employment for agricultural labourers.¹²

As chief Martial Law Administrator of Pakistan, Bhutto promulgated the Land Reforms Regulation of 1972, called the Martial Law Regulation 115, on March 11, 1972: this regulation repealed the land reforms Regulation of 1959: it was to take effect in all areas of Pakistan except the tribal areas.¹³ The mainly significant provisions of the Regulation, with amendments made by the provincial assemblies in 1972 and 1973 have been discussed throughout the remaining part of this paper.

Ceiling on Individual Land Holdings

A person was allowed to own 150 acres irrigated or 300 acres un-irrigated or an area equivalent to 12000 PIUs (Produce Index Units), or whichever of these was greater. The original Regulation had set the limit at 15000 PIUs. There was a bonus of 2000 PIUs added to the ceiling of 12000 PIUs to the owners of a tractor or tube well. In the original Regulation, the bonus was set at 3000 PIUs but the condition was that the owner should have owned a tractor or tube well before December 21, 1971. The condition now changed to a bonus of 2000 PIUs for the owner of a tractor/tube well even if he came to own it after December 21, 1971. The new ceiling, with or without a tractor or tube well, was in any case significantly lower than allowed in the 1959 land reforms. More significantly, the new Regulation abolished exemptions for orchards, studs and livestock farms and *shikargahs* (game farms); it also disallowed exemption to private charitable and religious institutions. The interfamily land transfers were allowed, up to a maximum of 14000 PIUs, if they took place between March 1, 1967 and December 20, 1971; all transfers after December 20, 1971 were declared illegal.¹⁴

The 1972 Regulation also dealt with the question of ceiling on the holdings acquired, except by inheritance by civil servants since January 1959 and up to two years after leaving the service. The civil servants were to surrender all land in excess of 100 acres; military officials were not subject to this limit. However, they were affected in case they had exchanged land allotted to them in the border area with land elsewhere in the interior. To prevent the possibility of pre-emptive transfers, all landlords were required to submit declarations in case they possessed more than 12000 PIUs at any time between March 1, 1967 and December 20, 1971. In view of the well-publicized views of Bhutto on land ownership, and with the rising star of Pakistan People's Party after the elections of 1970, apparently many landlords transferred land among relatives to reduce the possibility of confiscation if indeed a land reform program was carried out.¹⁵

Resumption of Excess Land and its Redistribution

A landowner was allowed to retain the area of his choice as long as it was in compact blocks of not less than an economic holding (50 acres in the Punjab and 64 acres in Sindh); this condition was similar to the provision in the Regulation of 1959. The most important departure in the Regulation under Bhutto was that the excess area was to be resumed by the government without compensation for the resumed area: the Bhutto regime was carrying out one of its most important ideological points on the traditional property rights of landlords. However, resumption of land without compensation greatly affected the quality of land the landlords surrendered to the state. The principle of confiscation was extended to all other forms in which land was held, like orchards, stud and livestock farms, *shikargahs*, and trusts of charitable and religious institutions.

For the redistribution of resumed land vested with the government, the Regulation established the following priorities:

1. The landless tenants, cultivating resumed land for at least one season during 1971-72, were to be given without charge on area not exceeding a subsistence holding (12.5 acres in the Punjab and 16 acres in Sindh).
2. On the untenanted resumed land, where no tenant was cultivating it during 1971-72, resumed land was to be redistributed. Without charge to those small owners/tenants who possessed an area of less than subsistence holding, so that they could upgrade their holdings to the size of a subsistence holding.
3. The resumed lands of orchards, livestock and stud farms, *shakargahs*, and trusts of charitable or religious institutions were to be used by the government at its discretion. In case these lands were to be leased, the former owners would have the first option on the lease. This condition was evidently to accommodate those owners the government (or the PPP key position-holders) wanted to favour or penalize. There is indeed evidence that their lands were used for this specific purpose in some areas of the Punjab and particularly in Sindh.¹⁶

While the landless tenants and small owners/tenants were to get land without charge, there were specific terms and conditions, which they had to meet to retain their ownership or possession of the redistributed land. The new Regulation also stated that any peasant who still owed the government a part of payment for purchased land under the repealed Regulation would not be required to complete his payment. The balance area under the repealed Regulation would be available for redistribution without charge to landless tenants and small owner/ tenants. The principle of redistribution of land without charge to the peasantry of course reflected the promise that PPP repeatedly made to the peasants. Also, it followed from the socialist principles that the party and its leaders espoused. The possibility of acquiring a piece of land without cost represented to tenants a hope which had not existed earlier. The activation of PPP workers, with the rhetoric of their leaders, reinforced this feeling and indeed made it pervasive in the countryside. Actually, the general impression was that almost every peasant, and certainly the landless tenants (*haris* and *Muzarraeens*), would become the owner of land they were cultivating¹⁷

Security of Tenancy Rights

While the PPP may have proffered a system in which most cultivators were also the owners, the 1972 Regulation clearly admitted that the landlord tenant system was to stay in Pakistan. In view of the long history of failures of provincial tenancy acts, which had been legislated supposedly to improve the condition of landless tenants, the Regulation introduced some changes in the existing provisions. The landlord-tenant relations were to be regulated by the following provisions.

1. There would be no change in the principle of rent payment in kind: the *batai* system would remain unchanged. This was retained despite the demands for introducing cash payment on behalf of the tenants.
2. Tenants would no longer bear any responsibility for land revenue, water rate and cost of seed. They would, however, share the cost of fertilizer and pesticides on equal basis. Landlords were prohibited from levying any cess or charge, *abwab* or *haboob*, and from using free labour, *bejaar*, of their tenants.¹⁸

Since the Regulation set no new limit on the *batai* share of the landlord in the gross produce, but shifted some of the expenses to the landlord, there would now be inducement for him to secure a higher share in the produce to compensate for his additional expenses. There were two additional provisions in the Regulation which did not exist before: a) tenants would have the right of pre-emption on land they were cultivating in case the landlord decided to sell it; b) tenants could not be evicted without clearly establishing in a revenue court that they had (i) failed to pay the rent, (ii) failed to cultivate the land according to prior arrangements, (iii) rendered the land unfit for cultivation, and iv) sublet their tenancy.¹⁹

Implementation of the Regulation of 1972

The land Reforms Regulations of 1972 established a Land Commission in each province and a Federal Land Commission to assist the federal government in implementing the provisions of the Regulation uniformly and equitably throughout the country. The Provincial Land Commission staff was drawn from the Revenue services of each province. There was to be no representation of peasants or any other group to make the staff of Land Commissions accountable for their actions or decisions. The new Regulation followed the administrative measures used by the Ayub government in 1959. The logic was that now PPP, through its elected representatives and workers, represented the interests of the peasantry and would work as a watchdog on the bureaucracy at each administrative level. The impact of a redistributive land reform program, such as the 1972 Regulation contained, depends mainly on the amount of land, which changes hands. This, in turn, depends on (a) the area in excess of the *de jure* ceiling (resumable land), and (b) the effectiveness of implementing the program. The upper limit of resumable depends on the definition of ceiling and on the additional allowances given to a landowner. Like the Regulation of 1959, the new Regulation applied the concept of ceiling on individual holdings. Also, like the former Regulation, it defined the ceiling in terms of quality of land, which would allow the size of holdings to differ between various areas. While the ceiling was defined both in area and PIUs, it was the larger of the two, which a landowner could retain. Further, the exemptions and allowances for transfer within a family were defined in PIUs as well; the most serious problem of defining the ceiling in PIUs was that their values had remained unchanged, while almost everything affecting their value had changed drastically in most areas of the Indus basin. The produce value of an acre of land was being grossly underestimated in the Indus basin, thanks to changes in prices, cropping intensities and patterns, irrigation, etc: The values of PIUs, which the government chose to use, for a particular class of soil did not represent these changes.

With the allowance of 12000 PIUs for an owner who did not own a tractor or tube well, the size of the ceiling far exceeds the limit of 150 acres irrigated or 300 acres un-irrigated; estimated it was about 400 acres irrigated in the Punjab and 480 acres irrigated in Sindh. For an owner of a tractor or tube well, the ceiling in these provinces increased by about 66 and 80 acres. Now if an owner took advantage of the provision for interfamily land transfer, up to a maximum of 14000 PIUs, he could retain within the family up to 28000 PIUs; this would create a ceiling of about 932 acres irrigated in the Punjab and 1120 acres in Sindh.²⁰ Using the quality of land as the basis of defining the ceiling was in itself discouraging those with productive land. It must be remembered that the values of PIU were still based on the revenue settlements of the 1940s. If the PIUs had been revised upwards, as changes in prices, irrigation, cropping intensity warranted, the allowance area would have been reduced considerably and the ceiling on individual holdings would be close to 150 acres irrigated.

The effect of the higher ceiling, defined in PIUs, is clearly seen in the data on area of land resumed from owners of 'excess' land at the end of *kharif* 1971. The 1972 Regulation required everyone wanting more than 12000 PIUs to submit declarations in the Punjab and Sindh was 12, 925, of which 47 percent were in the former and 53 percent in the latter province. According to the revenue records, there were at the end of 1971 almost 18000 persons in the Indus basin (11000 in the Punjab and 7000 in Sindh) who had holdings of 150 acres and above, and they owned 3.9 million acres (2.2 million in the Punjab and 1.7 million in Sindh); of these owners only 56 percent in the Punjab but almost all in Sindh submitted their declarations.²¹ The discrepancy between the two provinces may be explained by two factors. First, joint holdings have a substantial share in farm holdings in the Punjab. Second, the exemptions on intra family transfers and on ownership of tractor/tube well must have affected a substantially larger number of owners in this province than in Sindh.

Not all the declarants were 'affected' in that their lands were not subject to resumption. The affected declarants were 1064 in the Punjab and 690 in Sindh, or only about 10 percent of all owners with holdings of 150 acres and above. It should, however, be noted that a higher proportion of declarants were affected in the Punjab (17 per cent) than in Sindh (10 per cent).²² The total area reported by these affected declarants was 1.2 million acres, of which 55 per cent was in the Punjab and 45 per cent in Sindh. This area was only 31 per cent of the reported area owned by persons with holdings of 150 acres and above. The overage area per affected declarant was 778 acres in Sindh and 615 acres in the Punjab. However, since these declarants were allowed to retain 601, 194 acres (380, 740 acres in the Punjab and 220, 454 acres in Sindh), the *de facto* ceiling on land works out to 358 acres in the Punjab and 320 acres in Sindh. The result was that each of the effected declarants had to surrender 458 acres in Sindh and 257 in the Punjab.²³ That the *de facto* ceiling was somewhat higher in the Punjab than in Sindh may reflect the fact that irrigated lands are far more dominant in Sindh than in the Punjab. More significantly, difference in the average surrendered area per affected declarant in the two provinces reflects the higher concentration of land ownership in Sindh.

The result was that the government resumed only 589, 499 acres, with 273, 109 acres in the Punjab and 316, 390 acres in Sindh. It is significant that the resumed

area was about 42 per cent of the declared area in the Punjab and 59 per cent in Sindh. Of the total area owned by persons with holdings of 150 acres and above, the resumed area was 12 per cent in the Punjab and 19 per cent in Sindh. It is also interesting a feature that resumed area was less than one acre in the Punjab and less than 3 per cent of 11.4 million acres in Sindh. Further, about 59 per cent of the resumed area in the Punjab was uncultivated; while the number of the proportion of uncultivated area in Sindh could not be found. Thus, as a result of the foregoing data analysis, it is not difficult for one to conclude that, despite the much publicized differences between the 1959 and 1972 land reforms, the area resumed in 1972 was not larger, if not smaller, than in 1959.²⁴

It now becomes clear that the 1972 land reforms did not create a dent in the concentration of land ownership in the Indus basin. It should have done far more to match the pre-election rhetoric. The major notable difference between the 1959 and 1972 land reforms was in the fact that the new owners, in the latter, did not have to make payments for their allotted plots.²⁵ Since the ceiling was on individual owners and was to be redefined in PIUs, the resumable area was greatly reduced (the fact Mubashar Hasan conceded when interviewed by the writer); it was further reduced by exemptions and transfers allowed to landlord, so most of the landlords retained far more land than they were expected to have done.²⁶ From the limited amount of area resumed, it also follows that its redistribution could not have benefited a substantial number of landless or small peasants because landlords surrendered mostly their uncultivated lands.²⁷

Any assessment of the effectiveness with which the land reforms were implemented is made difficult by the fact that, unlike the official documentation after the 1959 land reforms, we have no direct documentation for the 1972 Land reforms. However, we can use the best available, though, indirect, evidence on events to analyze the implementation process. Actually, the political program of the PPP was made public during 1967-1970 and its victory in 1970 elections in West Pakistan had signaled to land owners the danger of confiscation of their lands. Some large landowners joined the PPP in its formative phase, partly because they felt aggrieved, especially in Sindh and some areas of the Punjab, by the centralized power of the Ayub regime in which they did not participate to great advantage. Many of these landlords—as Bhutto himself— were from Sindh; others, mostly from Punjab, joined the PPP obviously for opportunistic reasons because they had sensed the mood of the peasantry in response to the populist appeal of this party.

In the aftermath of the civil war of 1971, by which time Bhutto had emerged as the undisputed leader in the Indus basin, more landlords joined the PPP bandwagon. The announcement of the Land Reforms Regulation in 1972 increased greatly the expectations of landless tenants and small peasants as it also increased the fears of landlords, especially among those opposed to the PPP. Since in several regions many *Zamindars* and *Jagirdars* had already joined the PPP as ‘friends’ of the poor, the land reforms measures created pressures mainly on those who did not belong to PPP.

The task of implementing the reforms was given to provincial Land Commissions, whose field organization consisted of the revenue bureaucracy at each

administrative level. While there was no change in the structure and function of revenue officials, the new political climate in the country created increased sense of insecurity among civil servants at all levels. The leaders of PPP, followed by their workers, were engaged in a highly publicized campaign of 'accountability' of public servants to the representatives of the people. In many regions of Sindh and in the Punjab, where most landlords had prudently joined PPP, the process of accountability became a convenient instrument to determine the outcry of land reform measures in their cases as well as for those landlords who remained recalcitrant towards PPP or Bhutto.

Like the 1959 Regulation, the new Regulation vested Land Commissions with the ultimate authority in all disputes arising from its implementation; all matters had to be directed to the officials of these Commissions. They were supposed to be the final arbiters in the triangle i.e., landlords, state and peasants. The reason for transferring the ultimate power of arbitration in landlord-tenant disputes (especially in cases of evictions) from the revenue officer to the revenue court was to protect the weaker party (it meant that the tenant or small owner had to sustain a process of litigation for which he was less equipped. To begin with, his case was often weak from the time a field officer made entry into official records affecting the peasant. For the peasant to prove the official wrong in revenue court involved not only a substantial financial burden but more trouble with the landlord as well. In this system there was no organization, which could represent him inexpensively without fear or favour. The PPP had effectively destroyed the base of peasant organization through threats, jails and favours soon after the promulgation of the 1972 Regulations. Peasants were disorganized but face to face with the government they had themselves elected; there was no longer need for anyone to play a broker's role between peasants and their government. However, the widely reported clashes between peasants and landlords in several areas of Sindh, Punjab and NWFP (presently Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). The summer and fall of 1972 exhibited the nature and extent of hopes, frustrations and fears in which the PPP leaders and their workers played no small part.

The protection of tenancy for the landless tenants was supposedly among the major objectives of the measures taken by PPP in 1972.²⁸ However, the handicaps of landless tenants were more numerous than of the recipients of resumed land because the former were still entirely dependent on their landlords. The insecurity among tenants and causes of evictions increased in the mid-seventies also because increasing number of landlords were expanding self-cultivation. This was partly to take advantage of the favorable conditions of prices of crops and of inputs, especially capital inputs. But it was mainly to preempt confiscation of their lands in the future. The landlords did not necessarily resort to eviction, for the alternatives were often more attractive to keep the tenants under pressure. They increased instead their demands in the *batai* shares, especially to offset the loss due to new expenses, which they were supposed to bear themselves.

The political rhetoric of PPP (mainly due to the discourse provided by Bhutto's leadership) remained powerful, but its policies inspired less confidence each day. The leaders of the party had consolidated by mid-seventies their hold on the machinery of state in every province (with, of course, varying degree) and at every administrative level in the country. In this process, the landlords increasingly

swarmed the party ranks with visible enthusiasm and vigour. Their rewards were often very handsome; they included at least increased loans, supposedly for agriculture development, channeled through the state-owned banking system. The hold of the landlords on power in the rural areas had in fact increased and not decreased. The feudal elements were by this time among the major and powerful groups in the PPP. To sustain the new power arrangements in the country, the PPP leadership resorted to increased use of force against real or perceived detractors. This became quite a regular feature in urban areas. In rural areas, problems for PPP were less serious; mainly because the peasants were not an organized force. Also, they had little political alternative for the political parties made little if any commitment to alleviate their problems.

The Land Reforms Act of 1977

The Land Reforms Act was promulgated on January 9, 1977. There were three notable facets of this Act. Firstly, it reduced the ceiling on individual holding to the equivalent of 8000 PIUs, or 100 acres irrigated or 200 acres of un-irrigated. The newly set limit was two-thirds of the ceiling allowed in the 1972 land reforms. The second aspect of the new act was that landowners were to be paid compensation (Rs. 30 per PIU in bonds which were heritable and transferable) for the surrendered land. The third aspect was that the resumed land would be distributed without change in exactly the same way as prescribed in the 1972 Regulation. The new measures on ceiling and land redistribution were calculated to have their desired impact on peasants, reflecting the resolve of PPP to eradicate feudalism and build a healthy peasantry. To reinforce the effect of Land Reforms Act of 1977, Bhutto legislated changes in the land revenue system as well. Land revenue was abolished for all owner-cultivators with holdings of 25 acres or less, and an agricultural income tax system was introduced to replace the flat rate system for large landowners.²⁹

Conclusion:

The reforms by Bhutto suffered from the same irregularities in their implementation as the 1959 land reforms. In many instances the landless were made land owners of resumed areas in name only. In other many cases fictitious transfers were entered. Ironically, the reforms encouraged the Punjabi landlords to enter the PPP ranks to safe guard their lands. Thus the purpose behind these reforms—to bring about shift in the balance of power in the favour of tenants—was compromised. As various sectors of economy are inextricably inter-related, reform in one sector cast profound impact on the other. Pakistan's industry too had been agro-based and import substitution industry since decades. Bhutto's simultaneous attempts at nationalization of industries and land reforms met with mismanagement soon. People became disoriented with Bhutto's policy and when PNA started protests it attracted public in large because the regime had hit hard people's purchasing power. Discontented and disappointed people took to the streets and they expressed their displeasure over the performance of Bhutto regime for the last few years.

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