Indian Economy · GS - III

How did land reforms in some parts of the country help to improve the socio-economic conditions of marginal and small farmers?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2021	GS - III	Indian Economy

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Abolition of intermediaries, tenancy reforms, land ceilings, redistribution of surplus land, security of tenure, ownership rights, agricultural productivity, rural inequality, Kerala and West Bengal, limitations of land reforms

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Model Answer

Introduction

Land reforms aim to restructure land ownership and tenancy relations to promote social justice, reduce rural inequality and improve agricultural productivity.

Contribution to Small and Marginal Farmers

- **Abolition of intermediaries:** Reduced the exploitative role of landlords and strengthened the relationship between cultivators and the state.
- **Tenancy reforms:** Measures in states such as West Bengal, particularly Operation Barga, improved the security of sharecroppers and their bargaining power.
- **Redistribution of land:** Land ceiling laws enabled surplus land to be redistributed to eligible landless and marginal households, although implementation varied considerably.
- **Ownership security:** Greater security of tenure encouraged cultivators to invest in soil improvement, irrigation and better farming practices.

- **Social empowerment:** Land rights improved the status of disadvantaged rural communities and strengthened their participation in village institutions.
- **Improved livelihoods:** In some regions, reforms increased access to agricultural income and reduced dependence on exploitative credit and labour arrangements.

Limitations

Fragmented holdings, benami transfers, legal loopholes, poor land records and uneven implementation restricted the overall impact. Many beneficiaries also lacked irrigation, institutional credit and modern inputs.

Conclusion

Land reforms improved security, dignity and bargaining power where implemented effectively. Their benefits can be strengthened through digitised land records, tenancy protection, affordable credit and collective farming institutions.

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