

Karnataka

The Karnataka State Legislative Council recently passed the Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill 2020.

December 9, 2020

Relevant to M&M- FES, FaaS

Background

- The Land Reforms Act, 1961 is being diluted by successive state governments in the state to facilitate industrial growth and agricultural land ownership by non-farmers.
- The council had voted out the bill in September, showing the BS Yediyurappa government in poor light for its tardy management skills on the floor of the House.
- The Karnataka assembly has already cleared the bill.

Repealing the Land Reforms Act 1961

- Section 79 A of the Karnataka Land Reforms Act, 1961, which is now repealed, restricted farm land purchase to persons earning below Rs two lakh per annum while 79 B restricted rights to purchase of agricultural land to agriculturists and Section 79 C allowed investigations of violations of Section 79 A and B of the law.
- On July 13, the state government had promulgated an Ordinance with the assent of the Governor to amend laws restricting the sale of agricultural land.

Why is the Land Reforms Amendment Act being opposed?

The Land Reforms Amendment Act became a point of contention due to several changes that were brought to the Land Reforms Act of 1967 outlined below.

- Waiving of section 79(a) and 79(b), which restricted the purchase of agricultural land to only those who had paani i.e. land titles or were agriculturalists with an annual income of less than Rs 25 lakh. Farmers have been opposed to this amendment as they believe that large corporations would be able to buy agricultural land. Farmers fear that they will be coerced and threatened to give up their land.
- Waiving of section 79(c), which upheld the prosecution of those found guilty of buying agriculture by violating the restrictions. Farmers believe that repealing section 79(c),

would mean that those who illegally purchased agricultural land, will not be prosecuted.

- Adding section 109, the amendment now permits persons to own 52 acres of irrigated agricultural land, 80 acres of partly irrigated land, 120 acres of dry land and 216 of barren land simultaneously, which could lead to land hoarding.

For Further Reading

1. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/bjps-karnataka-land-reforms-amendment-act-passed-in-legislative-council-with-jds-support/articleshow/79628643.cms>
2. <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/land-reforms-amendment-act-passed-karnataka-legislative-council-jds-support-139239>
3. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2020/dec/09/land-reforms-bill-passes-council-test-with-jds-backing-2233686.html>