

For Favour of Publication

The Law Commission of Goa proposes to submit a Draft Bill called "Goa Land Conservation and Management Bill" for consideration of the Government. The salient features of this Bill are as follows:

- 1) **Conservation of Agricultural Land on the lines of Conservation of Forest, Heritage sites and buildings, etc.** This is being proposed because of large scale urbanization at the cost of fertile lands in Goa. Exemption to this clause will be available under laws enacted by the Assembly.
- 2) **Prevention of sale of Agricultural lands to non agriculturists-** In Karnataka, Maharashtra and most other states non agriculturists cannot purchase or even hold agricultural land. In the absence of such a law in Goa agricultural lands specially orchard lands are being purchased by rich non-Goans who keep such land fallow and unproductive for obvious speculative reasons. It is proposed to define "agriculturist" as one who resides in a radius of say 10 kms from the concerned land and who has an approved plan of agricultural development. This may help save Goan land for Goans.
- 3) **Prevention of Fragmentation and Consolidation of Agricultural properties-** Farm holdings in Goa are not only small, they are also fragmented into tiny pieces scattered in different locations. Partition of land holdings between co-owners often results in uneconomic holdings. It is proposed to prevent fragmentation and enable consolidation of land holdings.
- 4) **Joint responsibilities of land holders with regard to farm access, protective bunds, fisheries, etc-** This provision prescribes the ambit of joint responsibilities of landholders benefiting from irrigation facilities, water channels, bunds, dykes roads, etc including, protection, maintenance and repairs of such facilities and right to fisheries, etc.
- 5) **Standards of cultivation and prohibition of leaving any land fallow or unproductive-** Large tracks of agricultural lands are being increasingly left fallow by land holders many of whom are protected tenant purchasers. No standards for cultivation are prescribed. No attempts are also made to reclaim agricultural lands inundated by saline waters. This Bill seeks to penalize agricultural land holders if they keep their lands fallow or do not cultivate as per prescribed standards of cultivation.
- 6) **Contract Farming-** Some lands are left fallow or cultivated below standard norms for genuine reasons like sickness, advanced age, poverty, etc. Such landlords would be permitted to give their lands on contract basis for the purpose of farming without creating any permanent rights in the farm land.

- 7) Co-operative farms, Farming Estates- New technological inputs involving considerable costs cannot be undertaken by small landholders. This provision will enable formation of agricultural estates, co-operative farms, etc by more than 10 farmers holding contiguous land in one or more villages.

Draft Land Conservation and Management Bill may be accessed from www.goalawcommission.gov.in or from Law Commission Office at **B/S 1, 3rd Floor, Paraiso de Goa, Porvorim, Goa.**

Public is hereby invited to send their comments within 10 days from the date of publication on chairman-glc.goa@nic.in or rdkhalap@rediffmail.com or the above mentioned office address.