

Reaction paper: comprehensive agrarian reform program (carp)

Government



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

For a long period of time, Philippine land was owned by the private sectors. This started during the Spanish regime when the land was primarily owned by the large landlords and the friars. The Philippine farmers found it hard to acquire land during that time because the only basis for ownership is ancestral domain ship. Agrarian rights were established during the American occupation, but only few initiatives were given and the rich families still continue to own the Philippine land.

The first comprehensive agrarian reform order was attempted in the country in 1972. A month after themartial law, President Marcos issued Presidential Decree no. 27 making the Philippines a land reform nation. This reform order states that an individual cannot own more than seven hectares of land. The remaining area will be given out in portions to individual tenants. The tenant may acquire a maximum of 3 hectares of irrigated land or 5 hectares of unused land in exchange for payments such as royalty taxes, etc. This reform program was unpopular thus making it a totalfailure.

On June 22, 1987, President Corazon Aquino outlined the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) through Presidential Proclamation 131 and Executive Order 229. The law was enacted by the 8th Congress of the Philippines and signed by former President Aquino on June 10, 1988. The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law is the basis of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) which was the centerpiece program of President Corazon Aquino's Administration. The program was said to have an underlying politicalmotivationfor it formed one of the major points against Marcos during President Aquino's Presidential campaign.

The essence of CARP is asset revaluation or redistribution of wealth so that the landless farmers can have access to capital resources in order to promote their welfare. Its aim is the equitable distribution and ownership of land to the tiller and to provide opportunities for a dignified quality of life to the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs). To accomplish these objectives, provisions were made for adequate support services for rural development and economic-size farms were established as the basis of Philippine Agriculture. The program was given a special fund of P50 billion.

The sources of the Agrarian Reform Fund was proceeds of the sale of the Assets of the Asset Privatization Trust (ATP), the sale of the ill-gotten wealth recovered through the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) and other appropriate sources. The CARP has an 8. 1 million hectare scope. The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) was assigned to distribute 4. 3 million while the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was assigned with 3. 8 million hectares to distribute. As of December 2005, it was reported that The Department of Agrarian Reform had distributed 3. 5 million hectares and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2. 93 million hectares.

Even though the DAR and the DENR distributed a large number of lands, it didn't reach the goal set in the program. " Twenty Years later, the Government's land reform effort has woefully short of its goals- by some 1. 3 million hectares of private farmland" (Facts not Slogan, the Business Mirror) The distribution of land to the tiller is below the expected target. It was not accomplished during the first term of CARP which was 10 years.

The government's slowness in land transfer activities is because of the following factors: 1. lack of political will to implement agrarian reform 2. manifest in operational and legal bottlenecks 3. blockades by big land owners who have seats in Congress and posts in the Government bureaucracy But the main reason was the lack of resources to fund the program. The actual requirement estimated by the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) in 1987 was 221. 09 billion to ensure the program's full implementation. However, only P100 billion was given under the law. The fund provided was less than half of what is required.

There were numerous issues concerning the implementation of CARP. The biggest of which is the lack of support services for the ARBs to ensure the productivity of the lands that were distributed to the farmers. “ Then there is the matter of official commitment to the program—or rather, the lack of it. Frequently cited is a study in Negros Occidental, which showed that 97 percent of agrarian-reform beneficiaries (ARBs) have received no government support services, that 41 percent of ARBs have either abandoned or sold the rights to the land awarded to them under the CARP, that 98. percent of ARBs have not paid land taxes, etc.

Moreover, Negros Occidental has remained a hotbed of insurgent activity. ” (Facts, not Slogans. Business Mirror) “ Beneficiaries of land reform also lacked sufficient support to make their farms viable. Ownership is just one step in making a decent living out of farmland. The owner needs agricultural know-how as well as technical and financial resources to plant the right crops at the right time, and use the proper pesticides and fertilizers. At harvest

time he needs access to post-harvest facilities, and then assistance in marketing his crops.

Knowledge of crop rotation could maximize the use of small farmland. ” (The Promise of Agrarian Reform. The Philippine Star, 6/02/09) “ There weren’t enough farm-to-market roads, processing and distribution facilities, irrigation and market support. ” Because of the absence of these minimum requirements, a number of CARP Beneficiaries were prompted to sell their farms, sometimes to “ buyers” hired by the original owners. Without the necessary support, ownership is useless. Another problem is landowner resistance.

The poor implementation of the program is the reason why private agricultural lands remain undistributed. A common carp loophole used by landowners to escape relinquishing their lands is through the reclassification of their land into residential, commercial and industrial lands which are excluded from CARP. Just this year, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo signed the extension of the Agrarian Reform Program, Republic ActNo. 9700 or the CARP Extension and Reform Law (CARPer), which allocated P150 billion for agrarian reform, to be distributed in five years.

Sixty percent of the budget will go to land acquisition and forty percent to support services. “ The new law, a consolidation of House Bill 4077 and Senate Bill 2666, is called CARP Extension with Reforms (CARPer) and extends the program from July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2014. It provides a P150-billion outlay for the acquisition and distribution of 1. 6 million hectares of all

agricultural lands, as well as support services for 1. 2 million farmer-beneficiaries. ” (Booster Shot for Agrarian Reform.

Business Mirror) “ The reforms in RA 9700 include provisions on the sourcing of the funds, which will allow the Department of Agrarian Reform to target the acquisition and distribution of the remaining 1 million hectares or so of agricultural lands covered by CARP at a much faster pace; the creation of a joint Congressional Oversight Committee on Agrarian Reform, or COCAR, to closely monitor the implementation of the new law; the strengthening of the ban on land-use conversion by landowners eager to avoid CARP, by extending the scope of the ban to allow no exceptions, by levying heavier penalties for illegal conversion of agricultural land into non-agricultural use and by mandating the automatic coverage of converted land if the conversion is unimplemented or its terms violated—thus legislating the lesson from the Sumilao farmers’ issue. ” (CARPer, Right and Wrong. Philippine Daily Inquirer)

CONCLUSION

In my opinion, the government focused only on distributing lands and not in the other objectives that were stated in the law. As pointed out in the editorials which I’ve read. It’s not enough to own land in order to become prosperous in agriculture.

A farmer needs the necessary equipment to harvest his crops and also knowledge in marketing in order to sell his crops. A poor farmer even if given rights to own land won’t be able to change financial status because what is

given to him is not enough. As for the loopholes in the CARP, I hope the implementation of the CARPer will resolve the problem concerning the evasion of redistribution of estates.

The revised CARPer should target the weaknesses of the old program and make sure that the implementation would be better this time than the previous program. The Philippines is still far from accomplishing agrarian reform even after 50 years. If they keep it up in this rate, it'll take a very long time to lift our Filipino farmers from poverty.