

The Social Property in Mexico

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Census of social property in México is a large scale, periodic statistical operation for the collection of quantitative information on the structure of the social property; it is denominated “Censo Ejidal”.

Land tenure in México is conformed by private property, social property and public property. Social property is composed of two modalities “ejidos” and “comunidades agrarias”

Social property is established through endow of lands, superficial and underground water or forests, to a group of peasant population to usufruct in order to develop productive activities.

“Ejidos” and “comunidades agrarias” are different between them due to the fact that first were settled down since the Agrarian Law of 1915, meanwhile “comunidades agrarias” were founded since the prehispanic stage and remain up to now keeping some traditional practices of organization and agriculture production.

Beneficiaries of social property, as a form of land tenure, are “ejidatarios” and “comuneros”, who usufruct lands, forests or water that belongs to the agrarian nucleus.

The first “Censo Ejidal” was carried out in 1935 and the second in 1940, since then, it has been carried out each ten years and until 1981 it has been conducted on years ended in 1.

The number of “ejidos” and “comunidades agrarias” registered by the census has evolved historically in a notable way. In 1935 the amount was of 7 000 and in 1950 increase to 17 600. In 1970 were accounted 22 700 and in 1990 was registered a little less than 30 000. As a result of the 2001 Census were accounted 30 305.

Social property is very significant in México since its percentage , related to total land of Mexico, represent 53% and in where there are carried out different kind of productive activities as agriculture, livestock, forestry, and additionally fishing, handcraft, aquiculture and tourism, among others.

Statistical unit for the “Censo Ejidal” are “ejidos” and “comunidades agrarias” existing in the entire national territory along the period from November 26th to December 19th. Data are collected by interviewing authorities of each social property.

Meanwhile “ejidos” and “comunidades agrarias” are object of the “Censo Ejidal”, agriculture holding’s data are subject of the Agriculture Census.

Ejidal Census provide statistical information about number of “ejidos” and “comunidades agrarias”, its geographical distribution; total area; number of “ejidatarios” and “comuneros”, demographic and social characteristics, land use, economic activities, buildings and other structures, vehicles, machinery and equipment; infrastructure of communication and public services available to human settlements located in social property surfaces, among others.

The major number of “ejidos” is located in the south of the country, particularly in the states of Veracruz, Chiapas, Michoacán and Oaxaca also in Guanajuato there is a considerable amount, which, as a whole, concentrates 35% of social properties in the country.

Regarding to the surface of social property, the states with the highest concentration of “ejidal” surface are located in the north of the country. They are Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila and Zacatecas, meanwhile, in the south stand out Oaxaca and Michoacán.

From the point of view of the “ejidal” surface of each Mexican state, as a proportion of total surface of the entire national territory, the states that stand out are Oaxaca (85.2%), Baja California (84.8%), Nayarit (82.5%), Morelos (80.1%) and Guerrero (79.6%).

The total surface of social property reaches 105.1 millions of hectares, of which 66% is surface that it does not allocated to ejidatarios individually and where the most important activities developed are forestry, collection of wild products and grazing. The 1.5% of the total area is used by human settlements, reserves to settlement growth, paths, roads and irrigation channels. And the 32.5% are parceled areas, where the main activities developed are mostly agriculture and livestock.

Population linked to social property, “ejidatarios” and “comuneros” basically, are 4.8 millions of persons, which 83% are men and 17% are women.

Regarding principal activities developed in “ejidos” and “comunidades agrarias”, 98% report agriculture, livestock and forestry Accordingly to that percentage, 95% are involved in agricultural activities; 75%, in livestock; 19%, in collection of wild products and 10% in forestry. Therefore, a significant number of social properties combine different kinds of productive activities.

The number of nonresidential buildings is an important indicator about the support to economic activities. 52% of “ejidos” and “comunidades agrarias” have this kind of buildings and the most frequent are ponds water to irrigate and provide water to animals (48), wells to irrigation (32%), warehouses (28%) and tick baths (23%).

Furthermore, social property is organized in order to get benefits derived from joint efforts. Regarding to organization, 41% of the social properties practices some way of organization to increase productive potential, trading and get some kind of benefit. The most frequent way of organization is the union of "ejidos". 51% registered some way of organization.

With respect to the private societies that form between "ejidatarios" or between these and the private producers stands up the groups of production (35%), rural production societies (17.5%) and social solidarity societies (14%).

Another group of relevant indicators linked to the social welfare of the population in agrarian nucleus are related to the availability of communication and public service's infrastructure located on the human settlements of social properties. The information from the "Censo Ejidal" shows that more than 85% of human settlements dispose of basic school or paths. Approximately 80% count on with kindergarten. The 68% of human settlements have public telephonic service and 60% public transport service. Around 45% of human settlements in social property count on with health centers or secondary schools.

The information of the "Censo Ejidal" is an indispensable tool that allows knowing the situation of a significant group of rural population and an important reference to the national agricultural sector.