

Chapter II

Trajectories of Development: History and Spatiality

If there is one great moment that turns the provincial thought of Europe to universal philosophy, the parochial history of Europe to universal history, it is the moment of capital - capital that is global in its territorial reach and universal in its conceptual domain.

Partha Chatterjee *The Nation and Its Fragments*, p.235.

It appears safer to argue that the introduction of modern political practices to non-Western societies began as a result of the combination of colonialism, liberalism, and capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rather than attributing it to sole universalizing force of capital

Sudipta Kaviraj *Civil Society*, p.307

2.1 Introduction

The principal aim of this chapter is to suggest the primacy of the role of institutionalized politics in translating a linguistic region into a political region (1948-1983). Against the background of competitive electoral politics at the federal and regional levels, the institutional mechanism of resource transfers between nation and region, regions and sub-regions, the region is shaped and reshaped in the editorials of DH into an interest community. Clothed in the ideology of development, the Indian State strove to reconfigure power, domination and control between nation and region, regions and sub-regions.

In an era of planned economy especially the first two decades after Independence, electoral politics centred on resource allocation and productive or unproductive investment. For the Karnataka politicians, it hovered around the idea of building the Sharavathy Valley Project, Mangalore Port, Hospet Steel Plant, Kalinadi Hydel Project, Kaiga Atomic Power Plant and so on. While region stood for development, electoral politics of the Congress party machine provided legitimacy to this telos.

The post-colonial politics in Karnataka can be categorized into two phases, the politics before and after the Linguistic Reorganisation of States. It is in this context that this chapter deals with the shift of a primarily urban-based Congress system in Mysore state to a more broad based rurally accessible Congress party from 1948-1956.

From 1956 to 1983, the Congress party becomes a party of the newly joined areas and peoples too. This process can be referred to as political integration. Hoas defines political integration as, "a process whereby actors from distinct systems or pre-existing subsystems are expected to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities towards a new center whose institutions demand or possess jurisdiction over the pre-existing units."¹

The selected editorials of the newspaper pertaining to region and chosen in this thesis for analysis has primarily state actors belonging either to the Union Government or the Karnataka Government. State actors include the political executive and the bureaucratic elite as well. It also includes expert authorities like scientists, economists, jurists, planners and engineers. Other interests included bodies like the South Indian Chamber of Commerce, Mysore Chamber of Commerce and more recently, Karnataka Chamber of Commerce. Since the study period is being spread over 26 years and the enquiry is being carried out several decades later, the researcher thinks it is necessary to retrieve the post-colonial history of the region.

Such an exercise provides a background schema to place the newspaper editorials under discussion for analysis and interpretation. This chapter has basically two major objectives. One pertains to charting out a chronological history of political and administrative development of the region (1958-1983). Two, a brief history of the early twentieth century Princely State of Mysore for tracing the journey of the region from enlightened autocracy to popular democracy.

While the other Kannada speaking territories are not taken up for discussion, the study focuses on the erstwhile Princely Mysore State alone because the newspaper (DH) editorially invokes the past selectively and the past of Mysore region exclusively. Moreover, the other Kannada speaking territories were merged into Mysore State after 1947 and before 1956. It is generally recognized that the old Mysore region has played a dominant role in Karnataka politics. The effort of this chapter, partially, is to trace more of the continuities rather than the discontinuities.

¹ Cited in Rubinoff, *The Construction of a Political Community*, Sage, 1998:20

Even as Karnataka state stood to be contested as a linguistic region² the *mediation* of colonialism, rhetorical liberalism and state capitalism in the early twentieth century by a remarkably astute autocracy needs examination.³ While such an examination falls outside the scope of this work, it is pertinent to observe that among other factors, this historical link formed partly, the basis for politics in post-colonial Karnataka region. The historical link lay in the impression that the Princely State of Mysore was associated with the idea of an economic nationalism, with development as a legitimating principle of the autocratic state.

Apart from these two objectives, the chapter consists of a brief description of the contemporary administrative structure of the region. A brief discussion of the public administration of the erstwhile Mysore state is also mentioned. All the three aspects namely the political, economic and administrative are tied to each other and it is possible to argue that they provided an interface to state-society relationship in Karnataka.

2.2 Princely State of Mysore

The standard narrative of the Mysore State begins with the defeat of Tipu Sultan in the fourth Mysore War (1799). The victorious British who were less inclined to rule the territory themselves posted a member of the Wadiyar family as a regent on the throne. When the ruler failed to manage a popular uprising in the Kingdom, the British unilaterally decided to take over the territory (1830). During the next fifty years (1831-1881) of their rule, they laid an edifice for establishing a modern state, especially the bureaucracy. At the time of re-instatement of the Wadiyar family in 1881, they placed efficient Dewans to man the system. The aristocracy very judiciously cultivated an image of an enlightened autocracy interested in material and political advancement of their subjects. They ruled the state for almost half a century without any visible threat to their authority, from the last decade of nineteenth century to the middle of twentieth century.

² The Census of India, 1951 shows that Mysore had only 64% of Kannada speakers in its territory.

³ The Mysore state was a tributary state and not an absolutely sovereign state. It allowed the practice of token representative politics. Its state capitalism concentrated on spectacular industries and was less kind towards the much-touted universal primary education

In the early twentieth century, Mysore was the second-largest of India's princely states. It formed roughly the southern half of the linguistically re-organised State of Mysore i.e. today's Karnataka. During the high period of imperialism, when the British reinstated the Mysore rulers in 1881, the rulers adroitly carved an image of being enlightened autocrats. Visionary administrators like Dewan Seshadri Iyer, Vishwesharaih, Mirza Ismail and others ably assisted the rulers. Manor succinctly addresses the image building process as follows:

Only a few months after its reinstatement, the princely government created a Representative Assembly which drew delegates from every taluk to meet as a petitioning body in audience with the princely authorities at the time of the Dasara Durbar each October...The Assembly was less powerful than the small Legislative Councils of British India, but at its inception it was the only representative institution of its size in the sub-continent and hence an important element in the development of Mysore's progressive reputation. That reputation was most impressively enhanced by the Government's ability after 1900 to bring off spectacular entrepreneurial schemes. The state was blessed with rivers that could be harnessed to produce cheap hydroelectric power and Bangalore was illuminated by electric lights before Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. There followed a number of major industries both public and private—a massive gold field, cigarette factories, a railway works, numerous textile mills, an aircraft factory and a major iron and steel works. In 1914, the government introduced a scheme of "compulsory" education, which was to be extended to all children of school going age, and two years later Mysore became the first princely state to have its own university. Enormous sums were spent on public buildings, landscaping and planning in the cities of Bangalore and Mysore, which transformed them into two of the most elegant cities in South Asia. This together with the mild climate made the state a favorite holiday and retirement spot. After sampling its comforts, seeing its industries and model villages, its comparatively free press, its legislative and judicial institutions at work, an endless

line of awestruck visitors described Mysore as a garden paradise beneficently governed.⁴

This narrative of the political scientist seeks to retrieve the image of princely Mysore state as a 'model state', 'the best administered native state' and 'Rama Rajya', so as to provide a historical context to the post-colonial Mysore state's rhetoric of development and progress or the lack of it. There are two important elements that constituted the 'model state'. In one sense, the rulers of Mysore presided over an 'entrepreneurial state' and in another sense, they also purportedly strove for 'the political advancement of their subjects'.

Albeit, an asymmetrical and tenuous relationship existed between the Native state and the imperial state. This became evident when they took over Mysore in 1831 attributing civil strife and chaos. During the next fifty years, through efficient and imaginative British officers, they laid out a modern bureaucracy in Mysore. Special mention is normally made of the resident Commissioner, Mark Cubbon after whom a famous park is named in Bangalore, Bowring, Fraser and others. The rulers of Mysore appeased the colonial power by keeping the Congress from percolating downwards to the rural arena or allowing it to grow upwards to the national arena, there was little interference from the British Raj. Of course, instances are cited where the British were irked by the Mysore rulers' identification with the Congress party. Describing the political system of Mysore, Manor writes:

It included the bureaucratic machinery that was at once the model administration of the princely order and the instrument by which the rulers sought to control affairs within the state-level sphere or arena of politics. It also included the policies of the authorities in raising and allotting government revenues, which reflected both their eagerness at image building and their reluctance to encroach into local arenas. And it included the legislative and local self government institutions which the government had developed to maintain its progressive image, but which were so powerless as to offer Mysore politicians few of the more tangible resources available to their British Indian counterparts.⁵

⁴ See James Manor, *Political Change In An Indian State*, Manohar, 1977:12

⁵ *ibid*

Interestingly, the progressive image itself constituted an important element of Mysore State politics. In some sense, having representative institutions with notional representation formed the strategy of the Mysore rulers. Though there was sufficient cleavage between the image and the actual practice, this image was effectively conveyed both to the colonial power and the Nationalist Congress leaders. Consequently, the British and the National Congress followed a policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of Mysore State.

Since the Princely State of Mysore had less of a pressure to raise resources for carrying out military adventures or pay a huge sum as royalty to the British, its political rationalities focused on the idea of a welfare state. This idea of a welfare state was aggressively marketed to the Congress party. Its leaders like Gandhi were thoroughly impressed and refused to interfere in the internal affairs of the state. Since the authorities managed to rein in the Congress party at the state level, the colonial powers also granted complete autonomy to the autocratic state. Though a notion of ritual hegemony prevailed over its entire territory, the state rarely staked its authority over the rural magnates in the hinterlands.⁶

Apart from the Congress that mainly consisted of several predominantly Brahmin groups, urban notables representing non-Brahmin masses began to speak up for their illiterate brethren from local arenas. They petitioned the authorities for preferential treatment in education and admission to the civil service.⁷ These associations mainly represented the Lingayats and the Vokkaliga communities. Though they initially considered the Congress party as an upper caste party, from the mid-thirties they formed alliances with the Congress party and put up an organised front against the autocratic rule of Mysore state.

Though non-official politics was recognized and a sophisticated British style bureaucracy was in place, the administration was solely responsible to the monarchy. Albeit in significant parts of rural Mysore, the native state for strategic and historical reasons contrived not to stake its authority. Its power was exercised mostly in urban

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ *ibid*

areas and towns. According to the truce with the British Raj, the native state paid a fixed sum as royalty to the colonial power. In other words, there was no sufficient pressure on the state authority to penetrate into the rural areas and raise revenues. Also, the Wadiyars of Mysore who belonged to the numerically minority community 'Arasu', had no links with the influential groups at the hinterlands known as Vokkaligas and Lingayats. With the fear that these groups may rise in revolt and the colonial power would use that as an occasion to take over the territory, the Royal house rarely interfered in the traditional prerogatives of the powerful rural magnates.

Unlike other British India provinces, the Congress party emerged only in the early twenties and grew at an unrecognizable pace till the forties. In the early years, the Congress party's penetration was confined to only urban spaces and its contact with the National level party was absent. Its lack of influence in rural Mysore along with its insulation from the national level Congress party made the Mysore rulers invincible till the forties. Also, the effort of the rulers to seemingly acquiesce in the larger programme of the Congress party led the Nationalist Congress leaders to approve of autocracy in Mysore. For instance, the Maharaja of Mysore took to Charka and introduced Harijan reforms in the twenties.

As elsewhere in South India, the phenomenal success of (Mysore) Brahmins in using opportunities in education and employment that had spawned in the urban sphere in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century provided an impetus for the growth of Non-Brahmin Movement among the Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities. In order to pose a challenge for the Brahmins and plead for the advancement of the dominant communities, the urban Lingayats and Vokkaligas formed the 'Mysore Lingayat Education Fund Association' and 'Vokkaligara Sangha' in Bangalore, as early as 1906 and 1907 respectively. Praja Paksha and Praja Mitra Mandali were two political outfits of the Non-Brahmin Movement in Mysore. These corporate groups managed to influence the Maharaja to appoint Kantharaj Urs as Dewan of Mysore. The Dewan in turn constituted an enquiry committee under Miller to suggest the feasibility of providing 'reservations' to non-Brahmin communities in public employment. It raised a huge controversy and the issue ran aground. In the mid-thirties, a new generation of urban Lingayats and Vokkaligas formed ties with the Congress party in Mysore, which was until then mainly a Brahmin party.

Mysore state began to be addressed as 'model state' 'best administered native state' and Gandhi spoke of it as 'Rama Rajya' in the early twentieth century. But even as early as 1895, a hagiographic verse titled *Chamanrupachandra* composed by a non-elite, literary bureaucrat, Sreekantesh Gowda, hails the Mysore ruler Shri Chamaraja Wodeyar for patronizing art and literature, providing electricity and drinking water through pipes to Mysoreans, setting up hospitals in every taluk, carrying out irrigation works like building canals and tanks, starting of modern banks, founding of Kolar Gold fields, inaugurating the Representative Assembly, to have established in office 'the Chief Court' and other institutions including the archaeology department.⁸

The verse appears to be an acknowledgement of a moment of departure and an insertion of Mysore into the prose of modernity. This seems to be a narrative of 'Mysore's modernity', symbolizing an impulse to modernize its polity, economy and society. While acknowledging Mysore to be 'one of the best administered states' in the latter half of the twentieth century, Menon writes:

Mysore, more than any other State, led the way in industrialization. The most important industrial development in the State has been gold mining. Several other industries, such as iron and steel, porcelain, silk, oil and soaps, sugar and electric equipment have also been developed. Mysore was a pioneer in the field of hydroelectric projects. As early as 1900, Sir K.Seshadri Aiyar initiated the scheme (subsequently extended) by which the Cauvery Falls at Sivasamudram were harnessed for the generation of electric power for transmission to the Kolar Gold Fields, a distance of ninety-three miles. It was during the administration of Sir M.Visveswarya that the Bhadravathi Iron and Steel Works and the Jog (Gersoppa) hydroelectric scheme were initiated.⁹

⁸ Raje Gowda *Sri Sreekantesh Gowdara Kritigalu* M.S.Sreekanteshwar Gowda Memorial, Mysore 1974 Translation Tharakeshwar.

⁹ V.P.Menon *Integration of States*, Orient Longman, 1956: 292-293

While the gold mine at Kolar was established as early as the 1890's by Dewan Seshadari Iyer, the giant Bhadravathi iron and steel works was started up by the most famous Dewan of Mysore, Shri Mokshagundam Vishwesharaih. Seshadri Iyer was also responsible for the construction of the Vani Vilas Sagar dam near Hiriyyur. It was during his time that the Archaeology Department under the famous scholar B.L.Rice was set up. Science, engineering and technology provided tools for exploiting the abundant natural resources of Mysore. With perceived change in modes of production and organization of the state, capital was seen as necessary for fashioning community. A new division of labor supposedly urban in form and engineered through technology and state capital created an aspired community was interest based.

A department for Industry and Commerce was established in 1913 along with the Bank of Mysore for providing financial assistance for industrial activity. In the same year, a survey of natural resources was carried out under the instructions of Vishwesharaih for the purpose of mapping the industrial potential of the region. The establishment of the giant public sector firm, Bhadravathi Steel and Iron works was an outcome of the survey. The firm became operational in 1923. Vishwesharaih is also known as the father of Indian Planning. He adopted a three-pronged strategy towards industrialization. His policy consisted of promoting private enterprise, public sector enterprise and equity participation and managerial directorship.

This image of rulers of Mysore as being successful entrepreneurs continued to serve as markers for the post-colonial journey of Mysore state. A Feb 1st 1960 editorial (DH) relating to the proposal of converting the two big state enterprises of Mysore State namely Kolar Gold Fields and Bhadravathi Steel Works into autonomous corporations exhorts gently by remarking, "It should be possible to evolve a sound system of management and at the same time preserve their essential character as Mysore institutions". Both these enterprises were started by the princely state.

The key words are 'its essential character' and 'its institutions'. The first modern textile mill was set up in Mysore state in 1884. The generation of electric power from Shivasumadram Hydro-electric station in 1902 marked the beginning of a new epoch in the industrial development of the State. Distribution of power to Bangalore and Mysore gave rise to a number of industrial firms in these two cities.

The commitment towards a 'welfare state' coupled with engineering spectacular entrepreneurial projects apparently forms the 'essential character of Mysore institutions'. It is invoked in the post-colonial newspaper of the region to precisely establish a connection between the post-colonial Mysore State with the erstwhile Princely Mysore State so as to suggest a continuity of social, economic and political structures.

2.3 Administrative Divisions

For administrative purposes, Karnataka has been divided into divisions, districts and taluks. It comprised of 175 taluks grouped into 20 districts (with effect from 1st August 1986). These twenty districts were further divided into four divisions. The details of the administrative regions along with their respective population are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 : Administrative Divisions in Karnataka

Mysore	11954	6.23	25.96	6.99
Mandya	4961	2.59	14.18	3.82
Kodagu	4102	2.14	4.62	1.24
Hassan	6814.08	3.55	13.57	3.65
Dakshina Kannada	8441	4.4	23.77	3.65
Chich Magular	7201	3.76	9.12	2.46
Belgaum	54513	28.42	93.99	25.31
Belgaum	13415	6.99	29.8	8.02
Bijapur	17069	8.9	24.02	6.47
Dharwad	13738	7.16	29.45	7.93
Uttar Kannada	109291	5.37	10.72	2.89
Gulbarga	45574	23.76	63.5	17.1
Gulbarga	16224	8.46	20.81	5.61
Raichur	14017	7.31	17.84	4.8
Bidar	5448	2.84	9.96	2.68
Bellary	9885	5.15	14.89	4.01
TOTAL	191791	100	371.36	100

Source: Madaiah and Ramapriya *Karnataka Economy* 1988

While this informs the contemporary setting of Karnataka, Mysore state during the period between 1917 and 1936 was divided into eight districts, which were administered by a Government official called a deputy commissioner. Further, each district was in turn divided into seven to seventeen taluks each of which came under the jurisdiction of an officer called an amildar. The other twelve districts have been added to Karnataka after the Re-organisation of States in 1956.

2.4 Economic Profile of Karnataka

In the following section, a brief review of the program of the Reorganised Karnataka state will be undertaken. The details are taken mainly from two texts written by economists. One refers to the edited volume by V.K.R.V.Rao titled *Planning In Perspective, Policy Choices in Planning for Karnataka* (1978) and the other authored by Madaiah and Ramapriya with the title *Karnataka Economy* (1988).

The program of the state can be classified into two categories. The economic indicators prior to the Urs regime and the indicators post-Urs regime. The economic profile of the state during the pre-Urs regime will be dealt with first to be followed by the post-Urs regime's profile of the state. There are significant differences between the two periods in terms of economic performance. The regional state strove to effect structural transformation through re-distributive policies and de-centralised planning.

Karnataka accounts for 5.84% of the geographical area of India. It had 5.4% of the population but its share in the national income in 1973-74 was only 4.53% at the then current prices.¹⁰ Its per capita income was only Rs 704 against Rs 850 for all India. The levels of consumption indicated by the National Sample Survey (NSS) covering the period July 1970 to June 1971 clearly indicated the presence of almost 50% to 60% of the population of the state under poverty line.¹¹

The production of food grains increased from 57.46 lakh tonnes in 1970-71 to 72.76 lakh tonnes in 1983-84. Of cash crops, sugarcane increased from 81.06 lakh tonnes to 143.90 lakh tonnes in 1983-84. While the share of the primary sector in 'state's domestic product' declined from 54.7% to 42.94%, the secondary and the tertiary sector during the same period rose to 29.80 and 27.30 percent from 23.1% and 22.6% respectively. Since the decline of primary sector is associated with development, it is possible to suggest that the Urs period registered economic growth vis-a-vis the pre-Urs period. A decade later, the profile had changed for the better.

¹⁰ V.K.R.V. Rao (ed.). *Planning in Perspective, Policy Choices for Planning in Karnataka*, Allied Publishers, 1978

¹¹ Cited in *ibid*

In the early eighties, the state had already implemented five Five Year Plans, three annual plans and one medium term plan. Its economy being primarily dependent on agriculture accounted for 45% of the State Domestic product. The area under irrigation rose from 7.25 lakh hectares in 1955-56 to 25 lakh hectares in 1984-85. The consumption of fertilizers increased from 1.5 lakh in 1970-71 to 6.0 lakh tonnes in 1985-86. Likewise the area under High Yielding Variety grew from 5.4 lakh hectares in 1970-71 to about 27.40 lakh hectares in 1985-86. The production of food grains increased from 57.46 lakh tonnes in 1970-71 to 72.76 tonnes in 1983-84. Factors inhibiting rapid growth of food production are "uneven and unequal spread of irrigation facility in the state alongside the restricted spread of the application of agricultural strategy, comprising the high yielding variety seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc".¹²

Between the years 1969-70 to 1984-85, in the field of power, the number of villages electrified increased from 9340 to 22670. On the industrial front, the state achieved a respectable growth rate of 5.6% between 1970-71 and 1980-82. Till the eighties, the state's economic performance was on par with that achieved in the country at large. At the beginning of the eighties, 14 major projects and 24 medium irrigation projects were to be completed. The most important uncompleted projects were Upper Krishna project Stage-1, Malaprabha, Ghataprabha, Harangi and Hemavathi.

In 1956, the total length of roads in the state was 43,182 km consisting of 21,917 sq km of surfaced and 21,265 km of un-surfaced roads. In 1983-84, the total length of roads stood at 1,12,610 km comprising of 68,105 km of surfaced and 44,505 k m of un-surfaced roads. Not surprisingly, the southern region of Karnataka representing the old Mysore state stood out prominently as developed area in road communication.

Table 2.2 given below indicates Karnataka's economic performance in relation to other states and the nation at large.

¹² Madaiah and Ramapriya, *Karnataka Economy, Growth, Issues and Lines of Development*, Himalaya Publishing House 1989:39

Table-2.2: Selected Economic Indicators

Indicator Reference Year	Unit	Karnataka	India	Minimum Value State	Maximum Value State
1971-81 Growth rate of population (1981 Census)	Percent	26.8	25	17.2 (T.Nadu)	50.4 (Sikkim)
Density of population (1981 Census)	Persons Per sq.km	194	216	44 (Sikkim)	654 (Kerala)
Literates as proportion to population (1981 Census)	Percent	38.5	36.2	24.1(Rajasthan)	69.2 (Kerala)
Number of hospitals per 1000 sq.km. of area	No.	9.3	8.8	1.00 (Sikkim)	16.5 (Tripura)
Proportion of urban to total population (1981 Census)	Percent	28.9	23.3	7.7 (H.Pradesh)	35.0(Maharashtra)
Per capita Income at current prices (1984-85)	Rupees	2047	2344	1369 (Bihar)	3835 (Punjab)
Road length in kms 100sq.kms of area (1982-83)	Per in kms	59	47	5 (J&Kashmir)	275 (Kerala)
Per capita power consumption (1983-84)	KWH	166	154	13 (Manipur)	354 (Punjab)

Source: Madaiah and Ramapriya *Karnataka Economy* 1988

On the flip side, at the end of 1984-85, out of the 425 large and medium industrial units in Karnataka, over 200 units were concentrated in Bangalore city alone. The population of Bangalore city grew at an alarming rate of 76% during the decade 1971-1981. The growth exerted pressure on the infrastructure and contributed to regional disparities within the state.

2.5 Structure of Karnataka Polity

In the following narration of events, three political personalities stand out in the making of the region. These political actors namely Kengal Hanumanthiah, Nijilnagappa and Devaraj Urs have contributed to politically integrating Karnataka at different levels. In the pre-organised Mysore State, Hanumanthiah more than anybody else was instrumental in linking the urban based Congress party with rural Mysore and thus making it the only broad-based state level party in Mysore. Nijilingappa extended the reach of the Congress party to the National Party at the Centre. In some sense contributing to the erosion of the autonomy of the state level Congress party for the first time. Devaraj Urs primary success has been in the area of dislodging the

hegemony of the two dominant communities and making the polity more broad-based. His policies too were people oriented and they were perceived to be radical.

Following James Manor, it can be argued, that the political system of the region became homogenized roughly during the late fifties. He pointed out that the local arenas of the region and the national arena were not integrated into the state political system prior to Independence. With the demise of the Princely State of Mysore and a decade long transitional Congress system, which ruled the Mysore State, the political system of the region became well integrated into the national system and the local arenas into a state system. The effort of this section is to briefly deal with the structure and program of this State System.

Caste has been an important factor in the region's electoral politics. The Lingayats and Vokkaligas are recognized as important actors in deciding the fortunes of institutionalized politics in the state. Both these communities dominated and occupied the center-stage of Karnataka's politics from 1948-1971.

While the Vokkaliga community dominated the political scenario from 1947-1956, the Lingayat community came to the fore from 1956 to 1970. The Urs regime effectively dislodged the monopoly of these sections from the seventies till the early eighties³. For the sake of convenience, the three periods can be categorized as the Vokkaliga Raj, the Lingayat Raj and the Urs Raj. The phrase 'Lingayat Raj' has been borrowed from Manor.¹³ Prior to the Urs regime, the Mysore State had only a program of economic growth and in most socio-economic indicators the State was lagging behind the National average, till the late seventies. With Devaraj Urs as the Chief Minister, the State also aspired for a certain amount of structural transformation.

Between 1947 and 1949, the Congress set up an interim cabinet with the Vokkaliga Congress leader K.C.Reddy as the Chief Minister. This was a prelude to electing a new Constituent Assembly to draw up a constitution for the State. With the

¹³ James Manor "Structural Changes in Karnataka Politics", *EPW*, Vol. XII (44), 1977: 1867

merging of the Mysore state with the Indian Union, the Constitution of the Union was adopted.

Subsequently, the Congress Working Committee constituted the first cabinet for the post Independent Mysore state. It consisted of two Vokkaliga's, two Lingayats, one Brahmin and one Harijan and one Kuruba. K.C.Reddy continued to be the Chief Minister till 1952. Among the other factors responsible for selection of Ministers, high standard of education, a fair representation in geographical terms and caste considerations mattered. Important legislations of symbolic value included the Temple entry bill, Prohibition, reforms in labor legislation and local self-government.

Hanumanthaiya was elected as the next Chief Minister in 1952. Unlike his predecessors, he had actively cultivated local level leaders and he was perhaps the first mass based Congress leader of Mysore. The earlier Congress leadership had influence only among the urban professional middle class. It was during his period that the local arenas became integrated into the state system and the state system into the national one. In other words, it was the Congress party that provided the glue for integrating various parts of the state system into a single homogeneous whole. The famous Vidhana Soudha, housing the Legislature of Karnataka was conceived and built during Hanumanthaiya's tenure.

The discontinuity between the state and the local arenas disappeared for other reasons too. Public sector expenditure in health, education and agriculture percolated into the local arena. The penetration of cash economy into rural areas led to the decline of legitimacy and respect for hereditary rural leaders. Previously, those Lingayat and Vokkaliga entrepreneurs who invested at the local level looked for opportunities at the state level. Further, hundreds of Lingayat and Vokkaliga families sought marriage alliances with their caste fellows across large distances within the region. This rural elite realized that tangible rewards existed for participating in the only state level party namely the Congress party. It was in this context that Manor described Hanumanthaiya as "a new leader had taken control of the machinery of state who recognized the importance of creating structures for the distribution of patronage

and of taking decisive executive action to integrate all important interest groups - both urban and rural - within the state's political system and the Congress system".¹⁴

Political observers have remarked that the 1950s and the 1960s represented a period of keen struggle for power between the numerically largest caste groups in the state - the Vokkaligas and the Lingayats. While the Vokkaligas represented the single largest caste group in the old Mysore state, the Lingayats marginally had a higher percentage of population in the enlarged Mysore state. It is for this reason that some Vokkaligas opposed this move to unify Kannada speaking regions. For instance, Congress leaders like Veerana Gowda, Shankare Gowda, Huchmasti Gowda and other Vokkaliga leaders pleaded for two Karnatakas. As mentioned earlier, the three Chief Ministers prior to Nijilingappa from 1948-1956 belonged to Vokkaligas whereas all the Chief Minister prior to Devaraj Urs from 1956-1972 belonged to Lingayats. Apart from Nijilingappa, the other Lingayat Chief Ministers include B.D.Jatti, S.R.Kanthi and Veerandra Patil. Between 1956-1971, the Lingayats dominated the political scenario in Mysore. This period has been appropriately termed as 'Lingayat Raj'

Table 2.3 : Selected Castes and Communities of Karnataka

Caste/Community	Percentage of State's Population
Brahmin	4.23
Vokkaligas	11.82
Lingayat	14.64
Kuruba	6.77
Beda	5.06
Arasu	0.79
Scheduled Castes	13.14
Scheduled Tribes	0.7
Idiga	2.25
Muslim	10.63
Christain	2.09

Source: Karnataka, Backward Classes Commission, 1975, Volume 11

Along with the constitution of the enlarged Mysore State in 1956, Nijilingappa, a Banajiga Lingayat Congress leader from Bombay Karnatak region was made the Chief Minister of the Mysore State. In fact, it was Nijilingappa who

¹⁴ James Manor *Political Change in Indian State Manohar* 1978: 178

spearheaded the Unification movement from Bombay Karnatak region and the effort was principally aimed at providing the Lingayat community an opportunity to extend their domination to the other regions of Mysore as well. By this time, rural interest groups became well entrenched and they emerged as dominant features of political life in Mysore. Nijilingappa remained subservient to such interests and state level politics lost its autonomy to local level pressures. Similarly, it was during Nijilingappa's tenure that the state Congress was increasingly drawn into the factional squabbles of the national party and consequently it lost its degree of autonomy from national influences too.

Notwithstanding such temporary setbacks, Nijilingappa has been considered as one of the most influential Lingayat Congress leaders. Even after he left state politics, he had the power to place his protégés hailing from his caste as Chief Ministers. It was during his regime that important projects like the Shrivathi Power and Irrigation project, the Ghataprabha and the Malaprabha projects were launched. With the Congress split in 1969, Nijilingappa chose to part with Indira Gandhi. The former along with Morarji Desai formed the Cong (O) and the latter formed the Cong (R). Most Congressmen in Mysore chose to remain with Nijilingappa except for Devaraj Urs and a few others. At this juncture, Indira Gandhi was cultivating leaders who belonged to numerically minority communities so that they remained more dependent on her.

Taking over the mantle of Cong (R) in Mysore, Urs managed to cause defections in the ruling Cong (O) party. Due to this, Veerandra Patil's ministry was dismissed and President's rule was imposed in Mysore. In the 1972 elections to the Karnataka Assembly, Urs carefully chose candidates from numerically small and backward castes, the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes, the minorities and candidates from the newly merged regions. After his party obtained an overwhelming majority, Urs picked a limited number of candidates from the dominant community for forming his ministry.¹⁵ He drew as many candidates from the non-dominant communities.

¹⁵ Srinivas and Panini *Politics and Society in Karnataka* pp 69-75, 1984.

Unlike his predecessors who belonged to either one dominant community or another, Urs belonged to a numerically insignificant community. It provided an unusual advantage to Urs in that he could simultaneously remain aloof from the politics of dominant community and lay the groundwork for broad-basing the Congress party in Karnataka. More importantly, he announced several policies and schemes, which gave him the image of being the champion of the non-dominant castes, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and the minorities. This is not to suggest that he completely antagonized the Vokkaligas and the Lingayats. He courted those Lingayats who had been neglected during the Lingayat Raj, namely the Sadar lingayats of Chitradurg districts. In a similar manner, he patronized Vokkaligas from districts where they were not numerically dominant.

Urs' policy on positive affirmation for Backward Classes has been hailed as the most radical statement on structural transformation. His government constituted the Backward Classes Commission under L.G.Havanur, a lawyer by profession and a social activist. The Commission produced a voluminous report in 1974. Though the government broadly accepted the recommendations, Urs modified it in some politically important senses. It excluded the Lingayat community and included reservations for minorities and for the economically backward without reference to their caste. Finally, the reservations included 18% for the scheduled castes and tribes, amounting to 68% for seats and 66% for jobs. This legislation went against the advice of the Supreme Court, which held that reservations should not cross 50%.

Criticizing planning in India as being urban biased, Urs decentralized planning and apportioned plan funds exclusively for district level projects. He made each one of his colleagues managers for each of the districts. The provision of minimum or basic needs to the masses as part of the Central Governments 'Garibi Hatao' policy was effectively implemented in Karnataka. Programmes like Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourer's Programme, Drought Prone Areas Programme, Intensive Rural Development Programme (IRDP), were sincerely delivered to their target constituency. Apart from enforcing the programme effectively, the Urs Government extended the programme to districts, which were not covered by the Central Government.

The Amendment of the Land Reforms Act of 1961 by the Urs Government has also been cited as symbolic of his radical postures. The amendment allowed tenants to become owners of the land they were cultivating. The legislation also allowed for lowering the land ceiling and the distribution of the surplus to the landless labourers. The Act set up land tribunals for expediting the transference of land from non-cultivating owners to tenants. Evaluating the policies and the person, noted social scientists Srinivas and Panini remarked:

One of the successes of Urs was that he forced the opposition to concentrate on the issues he had selected, viz, poverty eradication, and the uplift of the backward classes. All that the opposition could do was to protest that the programmes were not being implemented effectively. Urs grew in stature as the years went by. Understandably, his policies roused opposition from various affected sections but that did not deflect him. The exclusion of Lingayats from the backward classes list was deeply resented by them especially as their political rivals were included in the list. Despite such opposition, or perhaps because of it, Urs emerged as the champion of the underdog. ¹⁶

Even the otherwise luke-warm treatment of the National Congress party, Central Government, Planning Commission and other Central institutions during the 1950s and 60s towards Mysore state changed with the arrival of Urs. The Cauvery water dispute took a new turn. One reporter writes:

The softening of the Centre's stand on the "unauthorized" projects in the Cauvery basin fits in with the new pattern of Bangalore-New Delhi relations. It may be recalled that in the last months of the Cong (O) Ministry and in the halcyon days of DMK's honeymoon with the new Congress Mysore was under pressure to halt work on the Hemavathi and other projects objected to by the Tamil Nadu Government. Now the situation has radically changed and Chief Minister Urs is hopeful of evolving a *modus vivendi* for securing Centre's assistance for the completion of the three projects, namely, Hemavathi, Harangi and Kabini on which the state had so far spent over Rs 26 crores. Thanks to

¹⁶ *ibid*

the good offices of the Centre, Tamil Nadu has decided to withdraw its case on this issue (use of Cauvery waters) now pending before the Supreme Court.¹⁷

The old pattern of Bangalore-New Delhi relations had worsened during the tenure of the Cong (O) Chief Minister Veerandra Patil (1968-70). Many of the centrally initiated projects had come to a standstill. During the years 1977-79, Urs remained the unquestioned leader of Karnataka. He began to believe and act as if he was an equal to his party leader Indira Gandhi. That proved to be his undoing. Finally, he broke away from the party and founded his own party. When his party lost the Parliamentary elections in 1980, he resigned and dissolved the Assembly.

Between 1980-81, the 'farmers movement' spread to several districts and their list of demands included the abolition of water tax, better procurement prices, abolition of agricultural income tax, cheap fertilizers and the cancellation of all debts owed by farmers to banks and co-operatives. Their ideology was based on town *versus* the village.

Since Devaraj Urs demoted Sanskrit to a third language status in schools, soon after assuming power the Brahmin Chief Minister, Gundu Rao wanted to reinstate Sanskrit as a first language. This move was popularly perceived as an anti-Kannada move. In order to mollify such feelings, Gundu Rao constituted a committee chaired by an eminent scholar V.K.Gokak to address the issue of introducing Kannada as a first language in schools. While notionally accepting the recommendations of Gokak Committee, the Government did not accord Kannada the status of a first language. This led to demonstrations and later on became a movement when Raj Kumar, the popular film actor, joined the lot of notable litterateurs including Patil Puttappa, Gokak and others. The government yielded to the pressure and accorded the status of first language to Kannada.

Interestingly, a few years earlier Basavalingappa, an important leader of the Scheduled Castes and a cabinet colleague of Devaraj Urs, roused the wrath of the

¹⁷ The Centre Smiles EPW, Vol 7 (28), 1972: 1307

Upper Castes when he dubbed Kannada Literature as *Boosa* (rice bran used for cattle feed). He advocated that the scheduled castes should have access to English language. Characterizing the movement in nineties, one scholar notes:

Today's Kannada movement is led by the rural hinterland with an agricultural surplus and has the characteristics of an emerging bourgeoisie. This section is predominantly from South Karnataka and mostly from the dominant castes-Okkilagas, Lingayats and Brahmins. It still has strong links with the land...the Mysore Odeyar kings gave impetus to developing irrigation facilities and it was this that was continued after Independence; this region is also a major recipient of the Green Revolution.¹⁸

In conclusion, the actors in Karnataka politics have changed, some resisting and some welcoming change. The shift from Vokkaliga Raj to Lingayat Raj and the dislodging of these groups by Urs marks the politics of Karnataka during the first three post-Independence decades. Urs' introduction of newer groups into institutionalized politics along with radical policy measures aimed to alleviate the poverty and destitution of most marginalized communities in Karnataka broadened the social base of the polity in the region. However, the re-invention of these dominant groups as important players in the Farmers movement and the Kannada movement in the eighties and nineties needs to be explored.

This analysis throws some light on the manner in which the region was reproduced through transfer of capital, technology and political mobilization during the period of study. The ideology of development provided a garb for the practice of caste hegemony and ironically for the production of resistance against caste hegemony. The instrumental character of Kannada movement and the Farmer's movement reveal the region as an exclusive rather than as an inclusive community.

¹⁸ Bairy Ramesh *Competing Construction of Kannada Identity*, Unpublished M.Phil Thesis, University of Hyderabad, (1996)