Abstract

The thesis engages with the term region as an abstract space and as a concrete place, known as Mysore before 1972, and Karnataka later. The analysis of the editorials of the regional English language newspaper during the period (1958-1983) reveals a connection between a (abstract) people and a (concrete) place ‘Karnataka’. The connection is made through the ideology of development. In the editorials, the people of the region become visible in the building of dams, roads and large industries. Since the newspaper is a non-linear medium and the events are juxtaposed, it is through an act of imagination that the people and the region get constituted.

The editorials are classified under seven thematic categories. The thematic categories are Boundary Disputes, Language Policy, Industrial Projects, Food Policy, River Water Disputes, Communication Infrastructure and Prohibition. The analysis of the thematic categories Boundary and Language Policy disclose the non-primacy of territory and language in the construction of the regional community. The interpretation of the rest of the categories show that capital and community are not antithetical to each other but supplement and complement the idea of Mysore or Karnataka. While the editorials imagine the region as a community, the interests of the region bears a close resemblance to the Nehruvian model of nation building and to the public vision of early twentieth century Princely State of Mysore.

The methodology chosen for this study does not demarcate strictly between theory and data, or vice-versa. Apart from undertaking a textual analysis of 26 years of Deccan Herald, the study also focuses on the status of Kannada print capitalism. The theoretical sampling includes a review of positivistic, Marxist and a postmodernist literature on region. Following a grounded theory approach, the study refraines from mechanically applying theory to data.
The thesis concluded that the region was socially produced and was a product of space rather than history, territory or language. The history of the Princely State of Mysore was invoked only to display its congruence with the Nehruvian model of development. While the nation has been conceived in the discourses of the Upper-Caste elite, the region seems to be a project of Shudra imagination and concern. Since the newspaper owners belong to the subaltern community and display unbridled enthusiasm in consuming capitalist modernity, the region’s career is charted in and through the materiality and ideology of development.