Chapter- One

History of Karnataka Agricultural Policy
Chapter – One

History of Karnataka Agriculture Policy

Introduction

The agrarian records on cropping and landholding patterns, taxation and revenue assessments have become significant in social science research, while analysing political economy of the region. In the Indian context, the agricultural history is mostly available in archives written in the context of colonial administration. The archives provide a glimpse into agrarian past and politics introduced by the British government for the expansion and development of different agricultural crops and commodities. Many British officials comprehensively recorded socio-economic, political, cultural and religious beliefs and practices and gave special recognition for writing down in detail the agricultural crops, practices and approaches of the farming community in India. However, these archives do not provide rich narratives of ‘agrarian past’, in the native voice. Therefore, the Indian history particularly the agrarian past, traditional knowledge and farming practices were incomplete without the strong historical native perspectives, which is now lost forever in the history. The disciplines like history, political science, culture and folklore have attempted to analyse agricultural past of the country, contributed books, monographs and engaged in agrarian historical studies from colonial and native perspectives.¹ The discussion of agrarian history in policy studies have enhance the discourses and connects different state led agriculture policies and programmes that are now embedded in everyday life of the farmers and farming.

In Karnataka, scholars have given more prominence on the economic aspects of agriculture, on production of agricultural raw materials, expansion of market and growth of state led agricultural economy and less on the agricultural history of the state. Of the scholars who have studied the political economy of Karnataka, the focal point of their arguments is that there is a need to analyse the historical or colonial policies to discuss comprehensively the present agricultural scenario of the state (Vasavi 1994, 1999, Janaki Nair, 2006, 2011 and Manor, 1975).

¹David Ludden (1999) in his book’ An Agrarian History of South Asia’ wrote a section on ‘Bibliographical Essay’, it provides detailed overview on the scholarly contribution from different domains to the agrarian history of India.
In India, development as a discourse is still deep-rooted in colonialism. The colonial policies had made major impact on the post-colonial expansions, and development of different sectors in the context of India. Therefore, the discussion of historical, colonial policies to post-colonial development policy-programmes in agriculture such as land reforms, institutionalised cooperatives to more recent organic farming policy initiatives are phenomenal contributions to the Karnataka agriculture. These initiatives are discussed here, to provide an overview about the Karnataka state agricultural and developmental discourses. The new economic policy, social transformation and shift in state agricultural perspectives have brought changes in social, political and cultural life, which created a gap within the state agriculture development.

Next section gives a political background for Karnataka. During the colonial period, it was known as Princely State of Mysore and after independence, the region came to be called as Mysore state and later renamed as Karnataka. The transformation from Princely Mysore to Karnataka was important in the political history of the state. Therefore, this chapter maps the historical roots of agricultural development from colonial Mysore Kingdom and analyse different state led policy-programmes from post independent Mysore to present-day Karnataka. It has narrated in the subsequent four sections. The first section is on, Agricultural Policy Development under the Maharaja of Mysore (1900-1947). During this time, the state experienced transformation in infrastructure, irrigation facility and introduction of cooperative movement under the Maharaja and his Dewans, contributed towards the creation of Modern Mysore. Last section discusses the colonial agricultural policy on land tenure from Dakshina Kannada.

Second section is on the Karnataka Agriculture Development and Policy Initiatives after Independence (1948-1989). I briefly explained the introduction of five-year plans and rural development programmes. Beside these, the section describes as to how state led developments have contributed towards the creation of regional disparity and agricultural imbalance within state after the unification of Karnataka. This section also discusses on Karnataka land reforms policy and its implementation and impact in Dakshina Kannada.

The third segment of the chapter focuses on Karnataka Agriculture Development from New Economic Reforms to State Agriculture Policy (1990 – 2006). This section highlights the agricultural policy shifts that have taken place in the past 15 years in Karnataka. The last section is on my field location, Dakshina Kannada. Here I have
mapped the agricultural history from the South Canara land tenure system and further discussed the implementation of Karnataka Land Reform and narrate the contemporary issues associated with agriculture in Dakshina Kananda district. In the context of Dakshina Kananda, land reform is one of the significant initiatives of Karnataka state, as it laid the foundation for the development modernisation of farming and many present day agriculture related issues could be traced to changes following the implementation of land reforms. Before discussing the Karnataka agriculture under Princely era, I have presented below a brief overview of Karnataka state. ‘Karnataka’ as a term and a political unit is a recent origin with diverse socio-economic, cultural, linguistic, agro-climatic zones, agricultural practices and conditions.

Karnataka State

Karnataka state lies in the South-West part of India situated on a plateau connecting the Western and Eastern Ghats with Nilgiri hills in the South. The state was created on November 1, 1956, through the State Reorganisation Act. Historically, the state was known as Mysore and in 1973, it was renamed as ‘Karnataka’. State has 30 districts, four revenue divisions, 49 sub-divisions, 176 taluka s and 745 hoblies (revenue circles) for administrative purposes. It has 27,028 inhabited and 2,362 uninhabited villages, 281 towns and seven municipal corporations (GOK, 2006). The District Collector (DC) administers the districts and Divisional commissioner is in-charge of divisions. Kannada is the official and widely spoken language in the state.

It is the ninth most populated states of India comprising about 61.2 million population of which 31.1 million (50.8 per cent) are males and 30.1 (49.2 per cent) are females (Census of India, 2011), roughly two-third of them live in the rural area (GOK, 2006). The neighbouring states include Maharashtra and Goa in the North and North-West; Arabian Sea in the West; Andhra Pradesh in the East, Kerala, Tamil Nadu states in the South and South –East respectively. Karnataka’s plains, plateau and coastline cover 191,976 sq kms. It is the eighth largest Indian state as it occupied 5.83 per cent of total geographical area. The coastal zone (Karavali) covers Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada districts. It is a narrow strip between the Western Ghats and the Arabian

---

2 Bangalore Division consists of Bangalore Urban, Bangalore Rural, Chikkaballapur, Chitradurga, Davangere, Kolar, Ramanagara, Shimoga and Tumkur districts. Belgaum Division consists of Bagalkot, Belgaum, Bijapur, Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, and Uttara Kannada districts. Gulbarga Division consists of Bellary, Bidar, Gulbarga, Koppal, Raichur and Yadgir districts. Mysore Division consists of Chamarajanagar, Chikmagalur, Dakshina Kannada, Hassan, Kodagu, Mandya, Mysore and Udupi districts.
Sea. The region is characterised by heavy rainfall - 2500 mm to 3000 mm. Commercial crops like arecanut, coconut, rubber, coffee, coco and paddy are the main crops of the region. The hilly zone (Malenadu) covers the districts of Chikmagalur, Hassan, Kodagu (Madikeri) and Shimoga and some parts of Uttara Kannada. These districts are connected to Western Ghats in the East with abundant natural biodiversity and 43% of the state forest region falls within these districts. Plantations of coffee, pepper, cardamom and rubber are interspersed with dense forests. The plains (Bayaluseeme) or Maidan have open spaces with several large rivers that rise in the Western Ghats and flow towards East and join the Bay of Bengal. This region is often subdivided into the Northern and Southern Bayaluseeme. The northern part is mostly dry and long stretched plateau lying between 300 to 700 meter elevations. It covers the districts of Belgaum, Bellary, Bidar, Bijapur, Chitradurga, Dharwad, Gulbarga, and Raichur. Krishna River is the main source for irrigation along with its tributaries such as Bhima, Ghataprabha, Malaprabha and Tungabhadra Rivers. The Southern part has low rolling granite hills from 600 to 900 meters elevation. It covers the districts of Bangalore Urban and Rural, Chamarajanagar, Hassan, Kolar, Mandya, Mysore and Tumkur. The diverse geographic and physiographic conditions are responsible for climatic variations in the state from arid to semi-arid in Bayaluseeme, sub-humid to humid tropical in Malenadu and humid tropical monsoon in the Karavali belt.

Illustration 2.1
Karnataka Map Indicating Agro-Climatic Zones

Source: Karnataka State Department of Agriculture (KSDA)
Agriculture is the main activity in the state, as it has 10 agro-climatic zones (Refer to illustration 2.1). They are, North-Eastern Transition, North-Eastern dry, Northern Dry, Central Dry, Eastern dry, Southern dry, Southern Transition, Northern transition, Hilly and Coastal Zones. These zones were created based on rainfall pattern-quantum and distribution, soil types, texture, depth and physio-chemical properties, elevation, topography major crops and type of vegetation. The variations in agro-climatic zones have their influence on the crop production and agriculture development. The major agricultural land located in semi-arid, dry zone areas, the constant droughts and temperature variations in these zones are the major threat for agricultural expansion and farmers' livelihood. Based on rainfall patterns, Karnataka has three zones, that is, north interior, south interior and coastal zones. Annually, on an average, the state receives 1,139 mm of rain; however, in the recent past few years the state has experienced changes in the annual rainfall patterns. There are altogether six types of soil found in the state, they are- red, black, lateritic, forest, coastal and alluvio-colluvial soil.

In Karnataka, we find an extensive body of literature on the subject of agriculture. However, in the thesis, it was a deliberate decision not to extensively engage with agriculture, but rather narrate the path of development, which has recently created an interest among scholars over the ‘Karnataka state development model’ (Kadekodi, Kanbur & Rao, 2008). These scholars have discussed that Karnataka model of development has its roots in the Mysore Model, which emerged during the colonial time in the Princely Mysore kingdom. In the early decades of 20th century, Mysore state had established several reformative projects for the socio-economic development with focus on higher education, technology and science. This may be one of the reasons as why Karnataka is even today a leading state in the above-mentioned sectors. The next section will narrate the trajectory of state formation from Princely Mysore Kingdom to the formation of Karnataka.

**Princely State of Mysore to Formation of Karnataka: Historical Accounts**

Karnataka has significant history in the social, economic, cultural and political realms in South India. The geo-political history narrates that different kingdoms have ruled this region. During 16th century, the Vijayanagar Empire established its supremacy and ruled for more than four centuries and patronised economy, trade, art, culture, religion and literature in South India. In 1664, after the downfall of Vijayanagar Empire, different kingdoms and chieftains invaded, divided the region and established their
political supremacy in South India. In 17th century, northern Karnataka came under Bijapur Adilshahi Dynasty and soon Marathas overthrew Adilshahis’ and took political domination. The Hyderabad region came under the Nizams and Princely Mysore state was under the Wodeyars (or Wadiyar). In 1750s, Hyder Ali a commander in Wodeyars army became the De facto ruler of Mysore and after his death, Tipu Sultan – son of Hyder Ali - became the king. Tipu Sultan was defeated in the fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799) by the East India Company and thereafter Mysore Kingdom (Mysore, Malabar and Canara) came under the colonial administration. As per the agreement, Malabar went to Madras presidency and Canara went to Bombay presidency. In 1800 A.D, the East India Company made a treaty with Mysore Wodeyars with an intention to control the Marathas and Nizams expansion in South India (Refer to illustration 2.2).

Illustration 2.2

Map of the Mysore Kingdom gifted to the Wodeyars of Mysore in 1800

Source: Saki, 2004 (no scaling)
As per the treaty, Mysore went back to the Wodeyars to rule as a regent with heavy subsidy payment. The British Resident was placed at Mysore representing the Company in the administrative affairs of the Kingdom. Krishnaraja Wodeyar III became the ruler at the age of five and Tipu’s Dewan Purnaiah under the watchful eye of Madras presidency looked after state administration.

*Nagar Insurrection.* In the recent times, scholars have given importance to the Nagar Insurrection from anthropological and historical perspectives. The interest in the Nagar insurrection is provoked by the fact that Nagar peasants revolt remained perhaps the most widespread, anti-feudal and anti-colonial struggle not only in the present-day Karnataka but in India during the initial decades of the colonialism. The revolt took place during the rule of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, when Mysore saw a general unrest. For increasing the state income, Krishnaraja introduced the collection of land revenue through contract system, whereby revenue collection was entrusted to officials called the Amuldhars; they gave the task to their agents in the village level who collected more than the stipulated amount. The burden of the revenue ultimately fell on the cultivators who suffered heavy taxation. The peasant suffered in the hands of local officials who were corrupted and extorted money from the people and both Raja and Resident did not pay attention to ryots grievances. Until 1825, Arthur H. Cole, was the British Resident at Mysore Kingdom. He followed an ‘Open House Policy’ whereby he granted audience to everyone, communicated with peasants, and visited the countryside to take stock of farmers’ condition. His approach provided peasants a platform to express their views and register complains against the officials and grievances about the agriculture, revenue and state policy related issues (Fisher, 1991). However, Coles’ successor did not encourage open house policy in the resident and it created a feeling of discontent among the peasants that contributed for the emergence of unrest among public against state policies.

The peasants came out openly and protested against the state for its high burden of land revenues, exploitation which was called as the ‘Nagar Insurrection’ (1830-31) which

---

3 The Wodeyars had to give a huge subsidiary (57 per cent) to the British government in 1799. Among the 198 princely states in British India, Mysore had to pay 50 per cent of the total imperial tribute (Stein, 1993).

4 Dewan Purnaiah, Dewan Ramraya and King himself ruled the Mysore state for 11, 3 and 4 years respectively.

5 The young Krishnaraja functioned well in the beginning. However, when he assumed full control of Mysore he became incompetent in state administration as his personal expenditure was increased and gave royal grants of money and land as royal patronage and this affected the state economy.

6 In 1820s then Madras Governor Thomas Munro observed that the gross revenue collections in Mysore between 1799 and 1823, royal grants nearly doubled from 7 per cent to 13.5 per cent in 1823 (Stein, 1989: 269).
began at Nagar district (present day Shimoga District) in Keladi Kingdom. The Keladi kingdom was spread into present day districts of Shimoga, Mangalore and Goa and included ‘Foujdari’ of Nagar where peasants rebelled against the Mysore Kingdom. In 1831, British army suppressed the Nagar Insurrection. The Nagar Insurrection is an important peasant rebellion against the state, the event did not receive due recognition in the colonial peasant studies of Mysore Kingdom. Nagar insurrection was organised by the ryots in the Shimoga and Chikmagalur. However, it was not unified agitation, but the agro-political conditions may have contributed for the insurrection to spread to other parts of the state. It broke out as a wild-armed struggle in the parts of Uttar Kannada, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Hassan, Mysore, Mandya and Bangalore and it did not assume violent form in Dakshina Kannada and Bellary. In another incident that triggered the unrest in Nagar is the feeling of jealousy among the Lingayat community an influential religious group that comprised 30% of the Nagar region.

In administration, political power was positioned in the hands of Maratha Brahmins. This created an internal tension between the two communities that is Lingayats and Maratha Brahmins (Ikegame, 2012). Nonetheless, Princely Mysore did not show its concerns towards the growing differences in the region. It created political solidarity between the elites, village chieftains and peasants in the region. This had spread out to different layers in the society and assumed shapes in different locations that contributed to the development of general unrest among the public. These two independent movements came together and strengthened their opposition against the Mysore Government. In 1831 when British army suppressed the uprising, the British governor general Lord William Bentinck annexed Mysore to the English East India Company (Stern 1993 and Lind 2004) as the King was considered politically incompetent. Through

---

7 The concepts of private property which are prevailed in the present context have their association with the distinctive land tenure system introduced by Shivappa Nayak. His land tenure system was called Shist, it is the permanent assessment. According to this, the property of the soil was vested with the landholders, while in other parts of Mysore landholding was based on hereditary rights of the cultivation (Rice, 1897: p. 602).
8 Nagar region was situated in two agro-climatic zones Maidan and Malnad. These two are traditionally separated and they are diverse on economic, cultural, ethnic and religious lines. There were dissatisfaction and unrest among peasants as they disapproved the taxation, increased rent, forced labour and exploitations in the hands of Amildars. In August September 1830 peasants dismissed all laws of the land and brought the economy to a standstill as they didn’t pay rent on land, stopped the cultivation, trading and protested against the oppression from the Amildars in kuttam. Kuttam can literally explain as a group, association with similar agenda. Peasants came together in Kuttam in many localities in Nagar and non-violently, by Drums and Flute created mass awakening among citizens and called them to protest against the Mysore government. Buda Basavappa, a local, self-acclaimed Rajah of Nagar, seized the opportunity, agitated against the government and soon insurrection spread rapidly to regions like Chitradurga, Chikka Nayakanahalli and Doddaballapur (Kamath, 1980; Saki, 2004).
Chapter One

History of Karnataka Agriculture Policy

Nagar insurrection, British expanded their territorial acquisition in South. From 1800-1858, Mysore and neighbouring regions revolted against English East Indian Company and Wodeyars of Mysore. The British suppressed these revolts as they were sporadic and spontaneous, isolated and lacked proper leadership. The 1857 uprising in India gave a halt for British ambition of territorial acquisition in India. In 1881, the British brought Mysore under indirect rule and reinstated the Wodeyars in the princely throne. The Wodeyars focused their political rationalities to create a welfare state and craved the image of enlightened autocrats who were interested in the overall development of their subjects. Mysore became the second largest princely state; however, it had uneasy position among the princely states in India (Chandrasekhar, 1985). Although, Wodeyars became the rulers but supreme power was within British hands until 1947.

During independence, Mysore state was divided into two different administrative segments, one region was under Princely Mysore and second territory was under the Colonial rule. The Princely Mysore state had ten districts - Bangalore, Kolar, Tumkur, Mandya, Mysore, Hassan, Chikmagalur (Kadur), Shimoga, Chitradurga and Kodagu. The British government had Bellary, Dakshina Kannada districts under the Madras Province and North Kanara, Dharwad, Belgaum, and Bijapur under Bombay province. After independence, Nehru government realised the difficult task of administering the country, which was very diverse in its character. With the formation of Andhra Pradesh, the Congress government at the centre was forced to appoint a State Reorganization Commission in 1953. Modern 'Mysore state' came into existence by the State Recognition Act (1956) and State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) recommended for amalgamation of 19 administrative units of Kannada speaking regions as one political state. Princely Mysore and its ten districts, North Kanara, Dharwad, Belgaum, and Bijapur from Bombay

---

9Dhondji Wagh in 1800 raised the first revolt against British in Shimoga district. In 1824, the Queen of Kittur Chennamma armed rebellion against the British in response to the Doctrine of lapse, Sangolli Rayanna (1831), Nagar Rebellions (1831). The Canara district witnessed Agrarian uprising of peasants because of heavy Taxation imposed by the British between 1834-1837. In 1857, the Bedas (hunters) of Halagalli took up first rebellion; British passing of Arms act made the Bedas surrender their arms to the British (Bhat, 1998; Saki, 2004).

10 In 1948, constituent assembly appointed a Commission under the chairman of S.K Dhar; commission had to reflect on the radical changes in the thinking of national political elite on the issue of linguistic divisions of the territory. It rejected the linguistic principle as the single dominant principle and suggested the consideration of geography, financial autonomy, administrative convenience and economic development for state recognition and it was greeted with hostility. JVP committee was formed under Nehru, V. Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramiah and they recommended the formation of Andhra state.

11 The 19 administrative units like Bombay and Madras provinces, Princely State of Mysore and Hyderabad, Chief Commissioner province of Coorg, Princely State of Kolhapur, Sangali, Miraj (senior), Miraj (junior), Kurandawad (senior), Kurandawad (junior), Jamakhandi, Mudhol, Ramadurga, Jath, Akkalkot, Aundh, Savanur and Sondhur.
and Bellary and Dakshina Kannada from Madras Province and Bidar, Gulbarga, and Raichur districts from Hyderabad state regrouped as Kannada speaking regions and named as ‘Mysore State’ (Ramaswany, Patagundi, & Patil 2007). The unification movement unified different regions under one political unit for administrative purpose. However, these regions were diverse in their social, economic, cultural, topological, agricultural and agro-climatic conditions and they experienced different political history under different rulers and later colonial administrations. The idea of Karnataka state was constructed with the political interest in favour of the Kannada people and it was achieved by recognising the state through language than socio-economic, political and agro-climatic conditions. From the post unification stage, this has created an uneven economy across the different agro-climatic zones in the state. The state policies and development programmes did not give due credit for the historical agrarian past, economy and cultural knowledge of the region while implementing the policies, programmes at the grassroots. The policies and programmes did not recognise the geographical variations, agro-climatic conditions, regional diversities, their traditional knowledge, practices. The lack of policy and project initiatives by the state government in recognising the traditional knowledge has brought changes in the economy, knowledge and practices that created a situation of vulnerability in arid zones and high degree of economic imbalance and regional disparities, this persists to this day in Karnataka. The various development programmes such as, modernisation of farm sector, new economic policies, biotechnological expansion in agriculture directly influenced the state agriculture and created an uneven economy in the state. A discussion of Mysore agriculture policy programmes from early 20th century (1900 A.D) to Karnataka Agriculture Policy of 2006, will narrate the historical trajectories of development and political economy of Karnataka state agriculture. The subsequent section narrates the history of agricultural policy under the Maharaja of Mysore.

**History of Agricultural Policy under the Maharaja of Mysore (1900-1947)**

In this chapter, I present the history of Karnataka agriculture development from 1900 A.D. The first four decades of the 20th century are very crucial in the agricultural history of Princely Mysore state. In 1902, Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV became the Maharaja and he received the service of Sir. M. Visvesvaraya (1912-1918) and Sir. Mirza Ismail (1926-1941), the Dewans of Princely Mysore state. Both the Dewans gave tremendous scope for planning and implementing various developmental projects and
contributed towards the overall development of Mysore. Under Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV, the Dewans initiated what is now known as the era of ‘Mysore Modernity’ through modern state policies and implementation of different developmental programme for the economic progress of the state. This section discusses the contribution of these Dewans in the expansion and development of agriculture and infrastructure within the state.

Prior to the discussion of agricultural policy of Princely Mysore, I have briefly narrated the background of the state economy from 1875 to 1900 A.D. In between those 35 years, the Princely Mysore had undergone drastic changes in the social, economic, political and administrative divisions as they played an important role in the creation of Mysore State. In 1875, famine broke out in the Princely Mysore Kingdom and constant famine in the next two years (1876-78) seriously affected the state economy and agricultural condition. The severity of the famine was such that, more than one million people lost their lives; Mysore population fell from 50 lakhs in 1871 to 41 lakhs in 1881, nearly 19 per cent fall in the state population (Sampath, 2008: 550). Famine in Mysore created unemployment and the state witnessed a decline in the Mysore city population from 13 to 11 per cent and agriculturally dependent population increased to 17 per cent (ibid.: 550). The total annual revenue of the state between 1856-57 was Rs 89 lakhs and raised to 110 lakhs in 1872-73; but, next two years between 1876-78 it could collect only 82 and 69 lakhs, respectively, and Mysore state treasury went under the debt of Rs 80 lakhs, which was due to the British government (Mysore Gazetteer Vol IV, 1929: 339). At this difficult time, Dewan Rangacharlu played the political diplomacy and he reduced the government machinery as the money saved from these efforts was used to pay off the debt. Rangacharlu through his diplomacy reduced the interest rate on the revenue arrears taken by the Mysore government during famine years from five per cent to four per cent and this was paid through 41 annual instalments of Rs 4 lakhs each. During the post famine economic crisis, Mysore government gave prominence to the socio-economic development through the introduction of public works to provide employment to the unemployed peasants and for moving the public loans and monetary funding in the economy for the smooth function of state finance within the Princely State of Mysore. In the post famine period, Princely Mysore state focused on developing irrigation facilities, as only 15 per cent of the agricultural land was under cultivation and large part of the state agricultural lands were depended on tank irrigation. In Mysore until 1873, there were more than 37 thousand large and small tanks within in the princely state (Singh,
2005: 73), but the British did not encourage tank irrigation, which required regular attention for restoration and maintenance.

The lack of policy initiatives led to the collapse of traditional tank management system. Traditionally, villagers managed the public utility work collectively. The state government recognized their works and provided different inams and rights to farmers. The British however did not continue with this system of patronage; it gave contract to two people in each village for the maintenance of tanks. The earlier system of maintaining the tank was abandoned as its maintenance became an individual responsibility of the two persons who were appointed for the same.

The policies of the British government slowly created a theory of individualism in its state development and contributed towards the decline of communal feelings among the villagers in society. After the ‘Rendition of Mysore’ in 1881, Princely State of Mysore witnessed socio-economic and political development within the State. Mysore introduced the quasi-peoples’ body namely, ‘Mysore Representative Assembly’ which was first of its kind in India. After Rendition, Chamarajendra Wodeyar government introduced a new irrigation policy (1886). It distinguished between a few tanks that were looked after by the Public Works Department with the Revenue department as in-charge of the tanks, and those that were left totally to the farmers for maintenance (cited in Sampath, op.cit.). After the transfer of power to the Wodeyars (1881), the Princely State of Mysore was able to focus on the socio-economic development and brought changes in the government revenue. In between 1880-1890, Mysore government proposed policies for the expansion of irrigation facilities through canal system from Kaveri River to inland agricultural lands of Mysore and Hassan districts.

The last decade of the 19th century witnessed agricultural prosperity in the state and due to the expansion of irrigation facility. In the year 1886, the office of Director of Agriculture was separated from the Inspector-General of Police and Forest and Plantations. A separate Department of Agriculture was established with the duties of collecting the statistics relating to rainfall, cultivation, breeding of stock, promotion of innovation and experience in agriculture, trade and manufacture. In 1888, Mysore conducted its first Agricultural and Industrial exhibition during the Dasara festival. In

---

12 From 1831 to 1881, the Mysore Kingdom was under the direct rule of British. In 1867, British government announced that the political administration of the state would be returned to its own royal dynasties. In 1881 (under the Instrument of Transfer), British restored the political autonomy of administering the Mysore to Chamarajendra Wodeyar.
1890, agricultural scholarships were introduced by the Princely Mysore government to encourage the Mysore students to take up the agriculture studies in the Madras Agricultural College on the condition of carrying out agriculture on their own farmland after the completion of their course. The government gave special encouragement for arecanut, betel nut production, encouraged Malanad region farmers for the preservation of existing garden and expansion of the arecanut cultivation in new agricultural fields. New departments such as geology, agriculture and archaeology were created as a part of state administration (ibid, 2008). Shayam Rao’s (1998) account on the Areca growers’ condition during the last decade of the 19th century is still similar to the present day farmers in the regions of Dakshina Kannada, Uttar Kannada and Shimoga where he has explains the problems associated with agricultural productivity, lack of transport facility, difficulties in accessing the market for purchasing or selling of livestock.

Despite this, colonial rulers had a political interest in creating economic development of Mysore state in line with the UK economy. Mysore state set up the Kaveri power scheme specially to transmit the hydroelectric power to the Kolar Gold Mines. In 1799, Mysore had Rs 50 lakhs revenue and it rose to Rs 101 lakh at the time of Rendition. With the discovery of gold in Kolar, Mysore revenue figures jumped to Rs 247 lakhs in 1910-11.\textsuperscript{13} After the Rendition land revenue was increased from Rs 60 lakhs to Rs 106.5 lakhs, excise duty saw a hike of Rs 10 to Rs 67 lakhs and forest revenue increased from Rs 7 lakhs to Rs 21 lakhs in the state (ibid, 2008: 551). From 1881 to 1911, State observed a rise in its revenue; but state expenditure too rose accordingly from Rs 101 lakhs to 223 lakhs. This period became important in the development of modern Mysore as it laid the foundation for the infrastructure development that contributed to the development of Mysore in the subsequent thirty years (1911-1941). In 1881, railways were introduced, as it became an easy means of transport for the British between Mysore and other parts of the country; railways became the facilitator for the trade activities and contributed to the development of the state economy. Within 30 years (1881-1911) railway lines were expanded from 50 miles to 411 miles and the state received capital investment of Rs 250 lakhs in the end of 1911 (ibid: 551).

\textsuperscript{13} The discovery of the gold mine in Kolar contributed towards the expansion of the state economy as Dewan Rangacharlu through his statementship signed a treaty with the John Taylor and company; as per the treaty, the company had to pay five percent of profit to the Mysore treasury as a royalty. British commissioner encouraged the expansion of extensive plantation crops to boost the trade economy thereby the state revenue increased. Dewan K.C. Sheshadri Iyer continued the developmental activities of the state and he gave prominence for the development of small-scale industries, especially cotton industries in the state (Sampath, 2008).
At the end of 19th and early 20th century, Mysore economy was developing and expanding. For economic development of the Mysore Kingdom, Dewans such as Visvesvaraya and Mirza Ismail under a visionary ruler Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV, introduced policies and programmes for the development of state and its economy. Krishna Raja Wodeyar in the religious festival of Dasara gave scope for the economic progress of the people and the state. He held an Industrial and agricultural exhibition (1907) to encourage agricultural and industrial activities. While inaugurating the exhibition, he expressed as follows,

‘it is not to be expected that exhibitions of this kind should have an immediate and revolutionary influence on the agriculture and industries of the country. But they offer to all classes an opportunity of seeing what their neighbours are producing; to craftsmen they are of special use in indicating the direction in which their skills must be most useful directly; whilst distributors may learn from them of new markets on the one hand and on the other of new sources of supply. [...] I attach great importance to the policy that we propose to follow of holding these exhibitions annually. [...] exhibitors are apt to remember this disappointments and the trouble and expenses incurred rather than benefits gained and the results is, inexperience on the part of the executive and misdirected energy or apathy on that of the exhibitors [...]’ (ibid: 360 from Josyer book 1929).

Krishna Raja Wodeyar made a remarkable observation, which is noteworthy even in the contemporary world about the importance of conducting an exhibition, workshop to create a collective feeling and cooperation. He pointed out that state policy needs to be focused towards understanding the constraints of development and progress rather than percentage of growth in the society. In British India, Mysore recognised itself as a 'model state' for its industrial expansion and development. The growing vigour of the nationalist movement in 1909 has made the imperial government to introduce laissez fair policies to secure the support of native rulers. This policy provided "greater political autonomy" to Princely state (Jeffrey, 1978). Dewan Visvesvaraya exploited this policy for creating and developing Mysore state as a modern, industrial state within British India. Below I present a brief profile of Sir. M. Visvesvaraya and Mrirza Ismail who provided their vision for the development of Mysore state in early 20th century. Their vision laid the foundation for further trajectory of development of Karnataka in post independent India.

**Sir. M. Visvesvaraya.** Visvesvaraya took the Dewanship in 1912 with the strong philosophy towards the industrialisation of Indian economy. He gave the famous clarion call for India to ‘Industrialise or Perish’. Visvesvaraya did not give prominence for the development of agriculture and rural economy in his policies and programme. The poverty ridden rural childhood had given him an outlook that India exists in her villages and over dependency of the rural masses on agriculture is the factor for the low per capita
income of the country. He believed that poverty could be reduced through economic
development of the state through the expansion of industries, which will contribute in
maintaining equilibrium in the economy of the country. The path he took for the
expansion and development of agriculture was education and rural industrialisation and
encouraged the promotion of grassroots initiatives and community programmes for the
development of rural masses. In 1912, he introduced village committees, agricultural
committees in the Princely Mysore for socio-economic development of the people and for
making the village a self-sufficient society. Village activities were divided into six broad
heads; agriculture, subsidiary occupation, education, industries, manufactures, and trade,
village communal work including the settlement of disputes and village administration
(Visvesvaraya, 1920; Sampath, 2008). The programmes were implemented through the
village committees and villagers actively participated in the development of the society.
He introduced a free weekly half day community work in Mysore state; which has
contributed in the collective cooperation of the community, villagers in the
implementation of the state projects and programmes in different regions. For achieving
the autonomy of village economy, he entrusted the villagers themselves to construct inter-
village communication, road, maintenance of tank, rural water supply, village forest,
planting of trees on either side of the road and managing the village sanitation etc. At the
end of two years, the village committees had covered almost 79 percent of the villages in
the state as there were 7,745 village committees constituted for 13,360 villages and it had
increased to 8,171 village committees at the end of three years. Visvesvaraya introduced
the concept of village committees, village courts and panchayat prior to the Indian
Independence. In 1914, the Maland improvement committee was set up to improve the
hitherto neglected regions of the state. Narayan Rao expresses that 'his rural development
scheme is forerunner of the National Extension and Community Development Project
Scheme' (1973: 50). Government of India after Independence used the same model of
Rural Development programmes for the development of Indian villages. For the
economic advancement of rural areas, Visvesvaraya prepared a Rural Industrialisation
Scheme and submitted it to the government of India in 1949. The scheme was revised and
published in 1952, although this scheme was circulated to all the states; Mysore
considered the Scheme and it was taken up for implementation in 1951 during the K.C
Reddy government.
Visvesvaraya was uncomfortable with the over dependency of the economy on agriculture. In 1913, while addressing the Mysore Economic Conference he expressed that 'No country so largely dependent as ours on agriculture can be said to be prosperous' (Rao, 1973: 51). He highlighted that there is a narrow margin between the standard of living and economic distribution in the society. He soon realised that over dependency of the farmers in the rural society will affect the poor farmers as the failure of rain, scarcity of resources affect their economy. He highlighted many defects of rural society such as extensive pressure of population on land; primitive methods of cultivation, wastage of the farm manures, irregular hours of labour, and uneconomical utilization of women's service and lack of finances have created an imbalance in the rural economy. According to him, illiteracy was the main cause for the backwardness of Indian agriculture as it kept the Indian farmers ignorant of the scientific knowledge, practices and modern methods for increasing production and income. He opposed the practice of indebtedness among the farmers and put forth the constructive suggestion for the formation of rural credit cooperative society in the rural economy to mitigate the economic concerns of the farmers. Encouraged the development of credit cooperative society to stock, provide seeds, manures, agricultural equipments; as main motto behind credit cooperative was to provide scope for the development of agriculture in India. He was concerned about the agricultural economy based on the selling the grains and raw materials and pointed out that such country will always remain poor. Disagreed with the rural household structure, as it entirely was dependent on agriculture for livelihood and pointed out that rural households need to have a subsidiary occupation to provide the members the means of livelihood when agricultural operations are slack or stopped during scarcity or famine. He considered agriculture as a part of manufacture, as a channel for the development of industry in the country. The contribution of Visvesvaraya to Indian economy in general and to the Mysore economy in particular is very vital, as he achieved the economic progress of Mysore within the context of World War-I when resources from the British India were diverted towards the war. During this difficult time he was still able to create a path for the development of Mysore economy.

Sir Mirza Ismail. When Mirza Ismail became the Dewan of Mysore in 1926; he emphasised on the role of the state in the economic development and simultaneously encouraged private entrepreneurs to start new industries in the state. He used 'Mixed Economic Approach' (Hettne, 1978) which brought a shift in the political system of state
administration from authoritarianism to responsiveness in the economic development of the state. Mirza's approach was designed to promote the economic nationalization and indigenous industrialisation. Mirza Ismail had an ambition to create an economy where the state and private capital made a joint contribution to promote industrialisation. During his term, he took the irrigation works in Mysore, which Visvesvaraya had initiated. Second Stage of work finished in 1931 and construction of canals over the river Kaveri provided the irrigation facilities to the farmers in Mandya.

During this period, Alfred Chatterton, the director of the department of industries and commerce favoured the cultivation of sugar cane in the fertile region of Mysore state. In the economic Conference 1929, he explained the significance of sugar cane product and highlighted that India had a market for 80 thousand tonnes of sugar, which India was importing at that time from Java (or Jawa) island and Mauritius. He promoted the cultivation of sugar cane and manufacture of sugar within the country. In the beginning, ryots did not favour the production of sugar, as they had to convert the fertile paddy lands (present day Mandya); it was the political diplomacy on the part of the British government to reduce the cost of construction of irrigation canals, as they introduced the commercial crop (sugar cane cultivation) in the region. With the Cauvery Water irrigation, the dry Mandya regions were converted into wet fertile lands and sugar cane was introduced on large scale as a commercial crop and sugar cane were purchased from the farmers at a fixed price (Dsouza, 1937: 23). However, the Mysore Representative Assembly under the leadership of Okkaligas criticised the government's policy. They opposed the economic exploitation of the poor while marginal farmers did not have any choice but to cultivate sugarcane in the region. In 1933, Sugarcane factory was set up in Mandya and government took the responsibility of managing the industry. The cultivation of sugar cane in the fertile region of Mysore was a trade strategy of the British administration. Mysore region became the ground for the production of sugar with the local natural resources and were exported and sold across the British colonies in the world. Throughout colonial history, we can observe that, British government introduced and promoted market-oriented agricultural commodities, which uprooted the traditional knowledge system from the society. As on today, the introduction of commercial mono-crops by the colonial government in the fertile regions of Mysore and Western Ghats (Kodagu with coffee plantation) experienced direct consequences of commercial market fluctuations in the state.
Mirza Ismail, along with the economic progress gave attention for education, rural development and expansion of cooperative movement in the state. Through his progressive reforms gave scope for the development of village economy as he encouraged the Khadi industry, provided sheep, and established sheep rearing centres in different parts of the state and introduced schemes under village panchayat. He encouraged the introduction of handicraft industries in rural areas to subsidize agriculture. He also gave scope for the consolidation of cooperative movement in the state. From the historical context, the introduction and development of cooperative movement in India is a milestone as it contributed towards agricultural expansion in the country.

**Cooperative Movement.** On March 25th 1904, the British government passed the first Cooperative Society Act to enable the formation of agricultural credit cooperatives in India under the government sponsorship (Goel, 2005). The main objective of the cooperative movement was the establishment of cooperative societies, legalising the existence of the society, control of the registrar and providing financial loans to the members. The Cooperative movement can be defined as a voluntary movement of people carried through democratically by pooling together of resources to carry out activities with the purpose of achieving desired change that people cannot acquire individually. The purpose of promoting cooperatives was to achieve certain virtue and values such as self-help, mutual help, and self-reliance in society. In 1912, the British government introduced another Act on cooperative society; here it gave the permission to start non-credit supplying societies, classification of their responsibilities, utilization of profit, special rights to the societies and concession to the cooperative societies. From 1912 to 1918, the movement gave scope for the expansion and there were no proper guidelines followed for the effective implementation of the cooperative programmes. The next ten years from 1919 to 1929 has witnessed unplanned rapid development of cooperative organisations across the country. The passing of the cooperative Act in 1919 boosted the cooperative movement in different regions and increased the number of societies that provide credit facilities. The movement gave focus for the quantitative growth rather than the qualitative development of these societies. Mirza Ismail gave scope for the expansion of cooperative societies in the state. His mixed economic approach indirectly contributed to the development and expansion of cooperative movement in the state. Government wanted to use it as an effective instrument for socio-economic uplift of middle and poor farmers in the state. The agricultural cooperatives granted loans for purchase of agricultural
implements, seeds, manures etc. The 1929 to 1939 decade underwent the consolidation and re-organisation of the movement and during this time, priority was given for the development of cooperative societies in the different sectors. It was introduced with an intention to strengthen the agriculture credit, finance and farmers indebtedness in the rural society. Over time, co-operative societies moved out of agriculture and spread to other areas such as sericulture, Housing, Malnad co-operative societies etc. However, the world economic depression affected the co-operative society and later decade, experienced slow recovery of the co-operatives (Madan, 2007).

After independence, cooperative movement was promoted in the planned economy of the country. Then congress government gave priority for the development of the cooperative movement, as it recognised the movement as an effective approach for the economic development of the village economy and progress of the socio-economic conditions of the farming community in the society. Cooperative during its inception was considered as a movement, but during the post independent phase it became one of the main government policies in its rural development programmes. From 1950 to 1970, central and state governments encouraged the development of cooperative societies, which directly contributed for the diversification and establishment of cooperative societies across different agricultural allied sectors. During this period, different types of the cooperatives were established such as production cooperatives, which looked after farming, industrial production and processing units for the agricultural raw materials such as sugar cane and cotton. Government in its third five year plan (1961-66) gave special attention for the development of processing unit in agriculture (Dwivedi, 2005).

Cooperatives became important yet again in 1970s when the country observed many farmers, new farmers’ movement across the regions against the developmental path of the state and central government. Many of these agitations, which were focused towards finding a market for the agricultural commodities. It contributed towards the development of farmers’ co-operative societies, or collective collaboration of farmers in the state. One of the cooperatives, which emerged in Dakshina Kananda, during 1970s, through collective mobilisation of farmers and financial allocation from Karnataka and Kerala governments, is the Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Co-operative Limited or CAMPCO, the significance of which I discuss later in the thesis (Chapter-5). However, from late 1990 onwards, the co-operatives in the country are facing new challenges. The introduction of free flow of trade relations, emergence of
global multinational markets in the Indian market have became a direct threat towards the
development of the local market. In this direction, today many farmers, especially organic
farmers are collectively forming local co-operative societies, farmers’ associations to face
up collectively the challenges of globalisation. In the local level, these associations are
working towards developing their brands, distribution network channels, improving their
standards and quality of the product to export the organic products in the global market.

Karnataka Agriculture Development and Policy Initiatives after
Independence (1948-1989)

Soon after independence, different policy programmes were introduced by the
central and Karnataka government for the promotion and development of agriculture in
the state. The first part of this section explains the rural development programmes that
were implemented in Mysore state for the agriculture development. Karnataka
government introduced policy and programmes in relation to agriculture and allied
activities for the expansion of agriculture in the state. The state and central governments
have introduced agriculture related policies in relation to land, industry, rural
employment, irrigation, food distribution, technology, trade, credit and subsidy policies
for the growth and development of state agriculture. In this section, I have discussed some
of the policies that have influenced the growth, expansion and development of Karnataka
agriculture.

Rural Development Programmes for Agricultural Development. The Government of
India in March 1950 set up the Planning Commission with the aim of promoting a rapid
rise in the standard of living of the people by efficient exploitation of the resources of the
country, increasing production and offering opportunities to all for employment in the
service of the community. Jawaharlal Nehru was the first Chairman of the Planning
Commission. Rural Development is a strategy to improve the economic and social life of
the rural poor. It implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social
transformation. After India’s independence, the country was undergoing various
constraints in society such as poverty, uneven distribution of land, lack of proper
infrastructural facilities like transport and communication, electricity, irrigation; social
problems such as population, financial constraints, unemployment, illiteracy, technical
backwardness, lack of storage houses, improper agricultural marketing facilities and these
have directly hindered the economic growth of the society. Under the Planning
Commission, an organisation known as the Community Projects Administration was set
up on 31st March 1952 to administer the programmes relating to community
development. The community development programme, which was inaugurated on
October 2, 1952, was an important landmark in the history of the rural development.
Rural development was launched with a view to provide the rural people better prospects
for economic development, increased participation in the rural development programmes,
decentralisation of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to
credit facilities. The policies and programmes were designed with the aim of alleviation
of rural poverty, which has been one of the primary objectives of planned development in
India. The main thrust of first two five-year plans focused on the development of
agriculture, industry, communication, education, health and allied sectors.

In administration, the Princely State of Mysore lost the political sovereignty, when
it merged and espoused the Indian Constitution. In Mysore, Congress became the single
largest political party as it enjoyed the political supremacy and brought political
integration of Congress in the national and regional political system (Manor, 1978a and
1978b). In the political front, caste became a dominating factor for determining the
regional, electoral power and politics in the state. In Karnataka, Lingayat and Okkaliga
communities dominated and institutionalized state politics from 1948 to 1971 through the
Congress party.14 Kengal Hanumanthaiah became the Chief Minister of Mysore State in
1952 and during his term, the first five-year plan was launched in the country. The five-
year plan provided the political leaders an opportunity to frame their own vision for the
future of the states. The plan gave maximum priority for achieving the self-sufficiency in
production of food grains to tackle hunger and poverty of the people. In the first five year
plan, the Mysore state received 47.58 crore and was able to spend 40.51 crore. However,
the first five-year plan increased the state income from Rs 199 crore in 1950-51 to Rs 247
in crore in 1955-56 and per capita income of Rs 103 in 1950-51 to Rs 127 in 1955-56
(Thimmaiah,1997:71). Hanumanthaiah gave importance to state public development
department as he allotted 33 per cent for irrigation and 29 percent for the power
development and pre-percolated public sector expenditures in health, education and
agriculture in rural areas.

14 Political scholars remarked that the 1950s and 1960s represented a period of power struggle between
Okkaligas (1947 to 1956) and Lingayat (1956 to 1970) over the political hegemony of the Karnataka state.
The Okkaligas represented the single largest caste group in the old Mysore state; the Lingayat had a higher
percentage of population in the Mysore state.
**Regional Disparities in Karnataka Agriculture.** Modern ‘Mysore state’ came into existence by the State Recognition Act (1956). Hanumanthaiah (1952-56) the first Chief Minister of Mysore state, approved for the regions to regroup with the Princely Mysore state which was the largest unilingual Kannada speaking region and State of Mysore was formed on November 1st 1956 and Bangalore became the state capital.\(^{15}\) Since 1956, the geo-political marking of the states based on vernacular languages created inter-regional and intra-regional disparities. The regional disparity was prevailed in the Mysore state because of integration of backward regions into Mysore state from the neighbouring provinces. From the colonial time, these regions were not given prominence to improve their socio-economic condition leading to backwardness and after independence similar situation continued under provincial governments.\(^{16}\) In five year plans, the planners and policy makers gave greater importance to the regional perspectives, looked into regional needs and development potentials of the backward regions. Government prepared indicators to measure development and accordingly, all the districts were ranked based on the degree of development. Soon after, government shifted its approach to sectoral development to bring overall progress. However, here the policy makers provided less preference for regional planning (Patil, 2002). Although, state undertook specific measures to improve the quality of life and equality in the development of backward regions, due to lack of regional policy or programmes have resulted in uneven regional progress.\(^{17}\)

Karnataka does not have its own agriculture history, as the region was socially and politically dispersed during pre-colonial and colonial times. Interestingly, other than a few accounts by the colonial administrators in the pre-colonial time, the historians, economists and agriculturists did not give attention to research, study and consolidate the agrarian history of Karnataka in the past 60 years. Janaki Nair makes an interesting argument that;

> ‘There is a respectable body of work on the period of Tipu and Hyder […] there have been full-length studies of the economic history of the region. Indeed, a basic account of Karnataka’s agrarian history remains to be written. The political history of the early twentieth century has

\(^{15}\) Naming of the newly formulated state as Mysore symbolically connoted as the enlargement of the unit rather than the new amalgamation of different units to Mysore. State was named after Mysore city to win the hearts of the ‘Mysoreans’.

\(^{16}\) The only exceptional case was Dakshina Kannada where the Missionaries introduced modern education in 1830s that contributed to the development of the people and their economy.

\(^{17}\) It introduced programmes such as Drought-Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Command Area Development programmes, Western Ghats Development Plan, Tribal Sub plan, Two-tier Planning and Block Level Planning.
been recounted through the efforts of the political scientist and a development studies scholar, James Manor and Bjorn Hettne and is yet to be matched or challenged' (Nair, 2006: 335)

As rightly pointed out by Nair, James Manor due to his interest in Karnataka political history, explored and rewrote the political transformation of Karnataka from Princely Mysore State to enlightened, advanced and democratic state in India during 1970s and 1980s. His account gives firsthand, in-depth insights about the politicians, the character of their governance, political processes, public policies and the relations between the state and society in Karnataka. Government of Karnataka did not show its interest in understanding the history of agriculture in the state. It appears that, early developmental policies and programs in agriculture did not give attention to the regional disparity and cultural diversities and this aspect of the state government contributed in the poor performance of the state agriculture. In agriculture, the market failure, fragmentation of the landholding, shift in the farming patterns, introduction of land reforms, and fragmentation of family has decreased the size of landholding. The large agricultural lands were replaced by the medium and small land holding. The shift to non-agricultural sector, commercialisation of agriculture has collapsed the system of inter-dependency of farmers-labours and hierarchical system of agricultural production. The urbanisation and commercialisation process have influenced the rural community and its economy has neglected, forgotten the traditional regional practices like jajmani system. 

The collapse of the jajmani system changed the practices of villages as today crops are produced for self-consumption and marketing.

Commercialisation changed the mode of transactions at the farm level; farmers started paying daily wages for the agricultural workers and payment in kind for the work slowly vanished. These changes in the agrarian society have created problems of lack of self-sufficiency among agricultural workers and issues of food security among poor families, agricultural workers and farmers. The implementation of the pragmatic land reforms in 1970s directly and indirectly contributed towards social and economic changes. Understanding the importance of local government in the development and introduction of state programmes in village gave importance for democratic

---

18 In 1956, Karnataka State economy was predominantly agrarian, but today this has been altered. The primary sector contributed about 60% of GSDP in 1960-61 comprised only about 18.9% in 2006-07. At the same period, the secondary sector increased its share from 15.2% to 26 within last 30 years. The tertiary (service) sector has moved from 24.8% to 55.1% within last 20 years. Today, more than 50% of the state economy has received through the service sector and agriculture has been neglected in the past 20 years.

19 Jajmani system is the traditional agrarian social relationship between the different caste groups. In village, different caste are specialised in a specific occupation and they exchanged their service in society through a system of division of labour.
decentralisation of power at the local levels. These two policies have changed the agrarian and political history of the state as they brought changes in the rural economy. The next section gives a glimpse into the Karnataka Land Reforms Act as it has created new social, economic, political stratification and divergences in Karnataka agriculture.

**Karnataka Land Reforms.** Land reform is a package of measures introduced to eliminate the obstacles of economic and social development issues arising out of agrarian structure. In the 1960s, many states in India have shown their interest in the implementation of land reform. However, according to scholars and officials Karnataka land reform considered as a prominent, as it was considered to be implemented most successfully as more than 60 percent of tenants in the state benefited from its implementation. However according to Damle there were no immediate changes that can be observed in the agrarian class structure and relations in the state (1989). According to him, tenancy was not a major problem in the state and tenancy laws were favourable to the dominant class tenants in Karnataka.

Before the formation of Mysore state, all constituencies (Bombay, Hyderabad, Mysore, Madras and Coorg) had maintained efficient land records; they formulated and implemented tenancy reforms (excluding Coorg) of their own in these region. The biggest challenge for the newly created Mysore (later Karnataka) was to draft a comprehensive, uniform state policy for accommodating and uniting all local problems and variations. In 1957, then Mysore state formulated a land reforms law with the appointment of the Mysore tenancy and Agricultural laws committee or Jatti Committee. Land Reforms Act of 1961 brought into force from 2nd October 1965. Damle questions in his study as why the act which came in 1961, did not implemented immediately and what was the reason for the 8 years (1957-1965) delay on the part of the state to implement it. The land reforms of 1961 were designed in such a way as transactions made between 1961 and 1965 did not come under the enforcement of act.

The state introduced other major laws like, Karnataka village officer (abolition) Act (1961), brought it into force in 1963. The state abolished hereditary and traditional

---

20 ‘The Karnataka Land Reform Act-of 1961’ has replaced the acts such as The Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act(1948); The Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act (1950); The Mysore Tenancy Act (1952); The Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection Act (1955) and Madras Cultivating Tenants Act (1956); and The Coorg Tenants Act (1957) (Karnataka Land Reform Act 10, 1962).
21 It abolished the key village revenue officer [present day Village accountant (V.A)] or Gramakaranika with the title of shambhag, Parwaris and Patels who had the hereditary possession of office.
rights over the holding of agricultural land. Karnataka Land Revenue Act of 1964, Karnataka Land grants Rules of 1969 were amended periodically to sustain the focus on land reforms. Karnataka measures of land reforms could be demarcated in three phases. The first phase was initiated in late 1950s and early 1960s. During this time, Karnataka had an *inamdari* tenure system and *inamadors* were largely from upper caste (Brahmin) families. The new political class emerged during the princely Mysore Kingdom were the Okkaligas and Lingayats’ who were land owners in Mysore Mandya region and in North Karnataka especially in Bombay - Karnataka and Hyderabad region respectively and however majority of these class members in Karnataka had worked as tenants of the *inamadors*. When Okkaligas and Lingayats came into political power in Karnataka, they laid policies against the *inamdaris* and later abolished. The second phase began from late 1960s, and it focused towards providing security of tenure and fixation of fair rents. In the third phase, which is during Devaraj Urs regime, state saw the awakening of new political ideology that sought to curb the political and economic power of the dominant castes in Karnataka (Manor, 1980). He exposed the ideology with the political slogans of bringing the radical reforms in the political and social structure, through legal abolition of tenancy by passing of the Land Reforms Act 1974 in Karnataka. Radical implementation of the land reforms began in the late 1970s and continued until early 1980s. Here the scope was given on providing the ownership rights to the tillers or cultivators of the soil and distribution of surplus land among the landless. In his regime, Karnataka introduced another powerful pro-poor legislation; the Karnataka Schedule caste and Schedule tribe (prohibition of transfer of certain lands) Act 1978.

The land reforms legislation reduced the size of agricultural landholding. Before the land reform (1970-71) average size of the agricultural holding was 3.2 ha (7.99 acre); however, state legislation reduced the size of landholding to 2.4 ha (5.98 acre) in 1985-86. It made a big difference in the number as large operational holdings decreased by 30% and marginal holdings increased by 66%, reducing their average marginal land holdings to 0.48 ha (1.19 acre) in 1985-86 (Thimmaiah, 1997). Then abolition of tenancy created uncultivated land as owners who inherited small land areas could not lease out as they would lose their land according to the new laws and they could not do agriculture as

---

22 Land held by the holders of various religious, charitable, service, personal, miscellaneous inam was abolished with the specific legislation, and land ownership was assigned to the inamadors on permanent basis.
23 One hectare is equal to 2.46 acre.
they engaged in non-agricultural occupation as this led land to become barren and useless. The amalgamated ‘State of Mysore’ (now Karnataka) had different regions with different agrarian systems and leading to a little progress in the actual implementation of land reforms in Karnataka.²⁴

The land reforms were introduced in the backdrop of the prevailing social-economic conditions of large feudal ownership of land, extreme and extensive poverty, and exploitative economic orders in the countryside. During this time, country had low level of literacy and socialistic pattern of economic development at state and central levels. Karnataka land reforms focused on three areas; conferment of occupancy rights to tillers, ceiling on holding of agricultural land and distribution of the ceiling surplus land among the rural poor specifically with Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes in Karnataka. The land reforms legislation of 1970s was the preoccupation of most Indian land reforms legislation and tenancy reforms and implementation of land ceiling (Rajan, 1997). Karnataka land reforms act has reduced the ceiling limits from 27 to 10 acres of agricultural land. Damle study actually makes an interesting point that, large-scale eviction of tenants from the land has happened already during the pre-land reform (1961 to 1965) phase. Damle emphasises that the “tactics of power politics and bureaucratic lethargy” have weakened the potentials of bring a social change in the agrarian social structure and relations in Karnataka (1989: 84). Damle evaluated the impact of land reforms on Karnataka and expressed as,

In conclusion, it can be said that the land reforms measure in Karnataka have failed to achieve the avowed ideal of creating an egalitarian agrarian society. The legal measures could hardly sabotage the wasted interest in land. On the contrary, the loopholes in the laws were aides in disguise to the landlords to maintain the status quo in the agrarian social structure’. (Damle, 1989:1905)

In Karnataka, land reforms have been implemented with the aspiration of moving status of peasants from cultivators of the land to owners of the land. In this regard, land reforms has reduced the rent, provided the tenancy rights to the peasants and facilitated in securing better standards of living for them. In India, land reforms came into effect in a liberal democratic fashion and Myrdal referred to this as ‘a soft state’.²⁵ According to

²⁴Coastal region had an agrarian structure that was related with the Zamindari System. Small cultivators with a few tenancies dominated in Mysore. Northern Karnataka had a system with a very large rural population being landless agricultural workers. In Chapter 3, I have discussed in detail the Land reform of Dakshina Kannada.

²⁵In countries like Japan, Russia and China the land reforms were taken up by the external force and they ruthlessly enforced it on landlords.
scholars, the coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Uttar Kannada have different story as compared to rest of Karnataka, here, tenants claimed the ownership on the leased in land. I would be narrating the case of Dakshina Kananda land reforms later in this chapter. Post land reforms were accompanied by the green revolution that went on to change the very core agricultural practice in India. In Karnataka as in other parts of India, the green revolution was introduced through the rural development programme.

**Green Revolution in Karnataka.** Green revolution was launched as a part of the community development programme in 1952. In 1953, central government introduced the National Extension Service, which appointed Extension workers routed through the state agricultural department (Umita, 2000). The applicants were mainly from Agricultural universities with a degree in Bachelor of Science (BSc) or Master Science (MSc) in agriculture. The appointees were given the responsibility to introduce and disseminate the green revolution programmes and technology in the country. These extension workers for next 20-30 years taught modern technologies in agriculture to farmers. Farmers across the country have accepted these modern technologies of agriculture and adopted them in their land. The agriculture department along with the allied sector such as Horticulture, Sericulture, Fishery, Animal husbandry have focused on developing agriculture in the state by undertaking the outreach and extension activities in the local region and propagated the introduction of new technologies in agriculture. The Karnataka government followed the same route.

The green revolution was introduced in Karnataka in its second phase. In the second green revolution which emerged during 1970s and 80s, when central government gave preference for its implementation in the paddy growing areas and other crops in the country. In the policy level, green revolution programmes for the state were introduced through University of Agriculture Science, (UAS) Bangalore and its scientists were involved in the process. Karnataka State government created Agricultural Extension offices in each district; Agricultural workers in each Taluka and Grama Sevaka in each hobli or Mandal panchayat. They were responsible for educating the farmers on the new methods of farming. Along with extension work, the central government introduced programmes across the country for developing particular localities or areas through its Area Based Special Programme, such as Intensive Agricultural District Programme.

---

26 In 1960s, the first green revolution was introduced in the wheat growing regions of North India, especially in Punjab region. It improved the agricultural productivity of the state.
(IADP, 1960), Intensive Agriculture Area Programme (IAAP, 1964) and High Yielding Varieties Programme (HYVP, 1966). Along with these programmes, it introduced Farmers Training Centers (1967) to train farmers on how to use high yielding varieties of seeds in farming.

The training programmes organised by the extension workers also included visits to agricultural farms where they demonstrated new methods of farming, technology, manure irrigation facilities and distributed high yielding variety of seeds to farmers. These developments have contributed greatly in orienting farmers to green revolution technologies and for modernising agriculture in the country. The careful planning and effective implementation of programmes by extension workers, introduction of subsidies for manures and seeds through cooperatives, nationalisation of banks and easy access of loans to farmers and use of chemical fertilisers in the local level ensured the successful implementation of the green revolution across the country.


The historical background of the economic reforms explains that since independence, the government has taken an interest in the planned economic development and state took an active role to stimulate the economic development through the utilisation of human and physical resources. During post-independence time, India has witnessed slow economic growth at a rate of 3.6 percent (1950 to 1980). Slow development has its constraints as the country had to increase foreign borrowings to manage the economy; gradually foreign debt increased and the country found it difficult to repay International debts.27

From 1980s onwards, there was a shift in government policy, as private sector was given greater role in the economy. This shift was accompanied by the prominence was given to industries such as cement, steel, aluminium and power generation over agriculture. Sudden expansion in the industrial production created the consumer boom, and between 1980 to1990 the country witnessed an economic growth rate of 5.4 percent per annum (Sharma, 2011:5). By 1990, the country was facing fiscal deficit (expenditure exceeds the revenue); and by 1991, the central government, at the behest of the World

27Foreign debt was increased from US$ 23.5 billion in 1980 to $63.40 billion in 1991. Significantly, more than 28% of the total export revenue went towards the debt servicing.
bank and IMF, introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme which is also known in India as the New Economic Policy (NEP). The purpose of this new reform was to take the country out of the economic crisis and speed up the economy through industrial development. NEP focused on industry, tax reforms, foreign trade and investment, banking capital, and, markets. In the international level, it brought the free flow of technology, labour, capital, established trade relations with different countries across the globe, and reduced the international trade barriers. This policy had a drastic impact on the Indian economy as county saw increased GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth rate, foreign direct investment and foreign exchange.

The sudden boom and change in the economy, introduction of policy measure by the government in education has improved the percentage of people graduating and supply of labour more than the demand has created problems associated with unemployment. In the process, Karnataka provided opportunity for the private sector to develop and reduced its investment especially in infrastructure and agriculture. It emphasis on the industrial growth and expansion of service sector by the government especially in the urban centres has increased the urban-rural disparities. For the progress of state, government although withdrew public investment from infrastructure; however it gave importance for its development in urban areas to attract international investors to the neglect of the agriculture sector.

In 1994, the Karnataka government introduced the New Agricultural Policy (NAP). The policy was criticised for being anti-farmer and anti-labour, and scholars like Assadi, and KRRS attributed the policy to be the direct result of the pressures put by the World Bank on the Karnataka government to liberalise the agricultural sector. With vision of creating a new market economy and for effective implementation of agriculture and allied sectors in Karnataka and achieving a developed status within India, the state government introduced many allied policies for the development of rural areas. The 73rd amendment passed the Panchayat Raj Act (1993) that reserved 33 per cent of seats for the representation of women in the local, district and state assemblies. The Act gave state government a political responsibility of instating local self-government; the power and authorities were vested with the local elected representatives at the district, taluka (block) and village levels. It has contributed to the progress of the region, as it became the

---

28 In 1983, a law was passed in Karnataka that reserved 25 per cent of the local seats in the panchayat election for the participation of the women. (Mathrew, 1994)

65
responsibility of the panchayat to introduce the central and state government programmes at the local level. With a view to increase the food security and reduce the poverty of the country at the national, local and household levels, central government introduced the Public distribution system (PDS). Karnataka has implemented the PDS in the state from 1997 onwards and main objective was to provide food to the below poverty line (BPL) families in the rural and urban areas at a subsidized prices. The introduction of PDS was also to control the price rise of essential commodities in the open market. Through PDS, the State government tried to reduce the traders’ practice of hoarding of food grains away from the market, however there are problems associated with the quality, and distribution of food grains to the people in the local level.

From 2000 onwards, the S.M Krishna government in Karnataka and later the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government in the centre showed interest in the commercial diversification of agriculture. The central and state government from time to time have proposed policies and provided different incentives for farmers to shift their agriculture from subsistent crop based to market oriented commercial farming. The introduction of liberalisation polices, decline in state patronage for agriculture and allied sector, decline of infrastructural facilities for agriculture, shift in land use pattern, decline of agriculture productivity, crop failure are some of the factors that have contributed towards the farmers crisis in the India as well as in Karnataka. H.D Kumaraswamy then Chief Minister of Karnataka on 1\textsuperscript{st} November 2006 introduced the Karnataka Agricultural Policy 2006 where he expressed it as a farmer centric policy. In the policy document forward, he clearly highlights the government interest as in setting up of a ‘Committee of Agricultural Experts to undertake a comprehensive study of our agricultural systems and to make recommendations on reorienting and modernization of our agriculture.’

Modernisation and diversification have become the main interest of the state government as under the National Horticulture Mission, government is promoting for the introduction of commercial, plantation-based crops in Karnataka. In Chickmagalur, farmers use to grow rice and ragi which were the traditional crops and in hilly areas of the district people had coffee plantations. In the recent time, many farmers have switched over to sugarcane and sunflower cultivation. It is due to the support and incentives provided by the Horticulture Department. As per the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry or FKCCI report in past decade the contribution of agriculture to the state economy through GSDP has declined from 16 per cent in 2004 to 12 per cent
in 2011-2012 (NDTV: 29 June 2012). According to the FKCCI, one of the factors for the
decline of agriculture performance in the state can be associated with the emergence of
agriculture-based industries in the peripheries of rural Karnataka. The discussion highlights that,
Karnataka state government was more interested in developing agriculture as an industry in the
state. Last section of this chapter gives the image of Dakshina Kannada agriculture from
historical land tenure system to the present concerns of the farmers due to the transitions
that have taken place in the state agricultural policies and programmes.

**Dakshina Kannada Land Tenure System**

During the colonial and pre-land reform phase, paddy cultivation was the
dominant crop in the West coastal belt and interior plains of the district and hills; valleys
of interior and Eastern part of the district practiced plantation farming of arecanut, cocoa,
cashew and rubber. From the time of Vijayanagar to Nayakas of Keladi, and other local
chieftains, there was a practice of donating *Inams* as recognition of exceptional valour in
war and service to the state. Many Bunts and Brahmins were recipients of such grants.
This explains the emergence of absentee landlords in the region. The upper caste became
the absentee landlords or proprietors, who did not cultivate the land, and peasants who
until then had cultivated those lands became tenants and the rent was fixed by the new
proprietors. With this, South Canara landlords practiced ‘leasing in’ and ‘leasing out’ of
the agricultural land for cultivation. The district had private properties, but did not have a
fixed land rent. Brahmins and Bunts enjoyed a higher position in the caste hierarchy, and
in agriculture, Bunts dominated as the landowning and cultivating class.

From pre-British time, the district practiced 'Ryotwari system of land tenure'
(Selected letters of the Munro May 11, 1800 Para-5 as in Damle, 1993:29). During this
time, ‘Varga’ (Warga) was the term used for the Mula estates and ‘Vargadar’ or
Wargadar (owner of the land) was the term used for Muladar. The tenants had to pay
‘Geni’ to the Vargadar and he paid the taxes known as ‘Kist’ to the rulers. With the defeat
and death of Tipu Sultan in Mysore, 1799 the regions came under the administration of
the British East India Company. Sir Thomas Moore, a British officer, was appointed as
Head of the Administration in South Canara region to Sonda Kingdom that was situated
in Northern part of Malabar and Malabra (situated north of Travancore Kingdom) situated

---

29 Muladar means Zamindar or owner of the land. Jamin or Zamin is agricultural productive land and
signifies the ownership and Muli means root, origin, therefore Mulardar mean the root or original owner
of the land.
in the West Coast of India. Under Madras Presidency, Thomas Moore continued the Ryotwari system of land tenure in the region (Kamath, 1980).

British administrators observed that land had not been surveyed correctly and only the owners could substantiate on their holdings; therefore, land revenue was directly imposed on farmers or ryots who in return had to pay taxes to the Revenue Collectors. The landowners of Kannada (Kanara) and Sonda areas were asked to pay double the amount than before. The extra amount was a new tax known as Shamil and collected in addition to the existing Kist. Later, two taxes were combined and an average rate known as Sarasari Geni was fixed. Muladars and Mulagenidars had to pay Sarasari Geni tax for land in their possession; along with this, Mulagenidars had to pay the nominal rent to the Muladars as before. While tenants had to pay, more than 50 per cent of the rent on the net produce to Muladar (owner), this actually increased the poverty among the peasants and land related disturbances took place in Sullia, Puttur region. In the end of eighteen century agrarian societal structure ' was a curious blend of peasant proprietary system and a system of sub-infeudtion with landlords, tenants, sub-tenants and bounded labour representing different layers of interest in land' (Damle, op.cit :31). Ryots were the proprietors of the land with rights to sub-let, mortgage and transfer of land through sale or as a gift. The introduction of Ryotwari settlement legislation in 1850s let the moneylender to recover the agricultural loans from the farmers by securing the landholding. Ryotwari system of land tenure appeared democratic, but proved oppressive for the farmers as they had to pay the taxes for the government and that has created high indebtedness and dispossession of land, ultimately resulting in rising tenancy. Tenancy agriculture, over the decades, has disturbed economic stability, as land became unequal and society polarised into landlords and rich peasants against tenants and agricultural labourers.

In Dakshina Kannada, the caste structure and agrarian class is divided into landlords consisted of Brahmins, Bunts and Gowdas, tenants from cultivating caste such as Mogaveeras, Naiks, Patalis, Ganigas, Billavas ad Devadigas and agricultural labourers from SC and ST communities such as Madivalas, Nalike, and Koragas (ibid,1989). From colonial times, two systems of land tenure were practiced - Mulageni and Chaligeni - as per the nature of their leases. Muladar enjoyed the ownership of land and Mulagenidars are tenants with perpetuity, who possessed certain restricted saleable interests in lands

---

30 In village, Khata means the book of land revenue as it is a document that contains the details of land and building that provide revenue to the village and a village accountant who is called as Karanika, maintain it.
leased to them. According to the colonial land revenue system, Mulagenidar had the power to transfer the land to another Mulagenidar without the permission of the owner. The owner could claim the rent in arrears and had no access to the land. The rent payable by the Mulagenidar to the Muladar was always been nominal. This was because the land was not developed by the Muladar but by the Mulagenidar. The Mulageni was practiced in the Eastern parts where region was under arecanut or commercial plantation farming. Here, tenants had the right to shift from paddy to plantation without changing rent of the land. During land reform, it was easy for the Mulagenidar to claim their ownership rights over the land.

Chaligenidars are the tenants-at-will who, on condition of payment of annual rent obtain a yearly lease of land for the purpose of cultivation (Sturrock 1894: 194). The Chaligeni system of tenancy was practiced in the Western part where paddy cultivation was the main activity of the region. The land was leased for a years and tenants had to pay 50 to 70 per cent of the produced crop as rent. The tenants were poor and during off-season, they worked as agricultural labourers (Damle, op.cit). The Mulageni system was not abolished by the British, or by the independent Indian government. The passing of the Karnataka Land Reforms Act of 1973 has abolished the tenancy system and in Dakshina Kannada, it provided a chance for Mulagenidars to acquire and become the owners of the agricultural land. In the next section, I would briefly explain from Damles’ account as to how Karnataka land reforms Act was implemented in Dakshina Kannada.

Karnataka Land reforms Act - The Case of Dakshina Kananda. The first step in the land reform measures was the passing of Madras Prevention of Ejectment Act of 1954 and amendment of the same in 1956. The act reduced the land leasing practiced and provided a chance for the landlords to reclaim their rights over the leased out land. Within a year in Dakshina Kannada, there was a sudden decline in the number of tenants from 589 thousand (1951) to 490 thousand (1957). Projecting the introduction of land reform in Karnataka during 1950s, many landlords across the state have evicted the tenants and delay in the implementation of the act has given much needed time for evicting of the tenants from the land. However, this was not the case in Dakshina Kananda.

In Dakshina Kananda, landlords were not alert like their counterparts in the rest of the state, and on occasions they were not able to evict the tenants from the land, as many owners were worked in the cities. The tenancy system, which was practiced in the region, was oral and informal until the 1961 Act. As per the act of 1974, tenants had to fill an
application where they had to declare the ownership rights on the leased in land before the Land Tribunals. More than 176 thousand applicants filed the declarations; this outnumbered the reported declarations during the 1971 census (70 thousand tenants). The significant feature of the Act was that it not only gave security to the tenants over the leased in holdings, but also ownership rights over the land. This feature of the Act attracted many ex-tenants, and they filed for their rights over the land. The Act recognised those tenants who worked as tenant-at-will with only oral lease holding arrangements and provided a chance to them to file declarations for claiming ownership rights on the leased in holding. In comparison to 1971 figure of 70 thousand tenants, by 1987, more than 136 thousand tenants received ownership rights through Land Tribunals. Therefore, Dakshina Kannada was recognised as a very progressive district, in the effective implementation of the land reform. According to Damle, as per the state records, 77.7 per cent of the tenants benefitted through land reforms by 1987 (ibid, 1989).

However, Damle is suspicious of these figures. As per the data of 1957, in Dakshina Kannada there were more than four lakh tenants. However, by 1987, only 130 thousand tenants claimed for their land ownership rights. According to him, small percentage of (27.9) tenants received the benefits of land ownership under the tenancy law and more than three lakh tenants were evicted from the land by the landlords to circumvent the land reforms. In areas such as Dakshina Kannada, where land reforms did succeed, he attributes its success to raita-sanghas (farmers' organisations) which had different political affiliations. The raita-sanghas gave the support to tenants (who were without lease documents) to demand for their ownership rights over the land.

In the process of Dakshina Kannada land reforms, the dominant classes faced crisis as large landholdings were transferred from absentee landlords to tenants. Bunts and Brahmins took the initiative to diversifying their farm, and in the process, farmers shifted their paddy lands to arecanut plantation. However, farmers realised the need to establish a steady arecanut marketing unit within the district. Farmer leaders took the initiatives; established market oriented co-operative societies in agriculture, and allied sectors. Green revolution was introduced in the district during the same time, which gave greater scope for the practice of plantation farming in the region. Farmers were able to receive subsidies for the chemical and synthetic manures, high yielding variety of seeds and incentives were given to farmers for planting and developing commercial crops in the region. During this time, the state supported commercialisation of agriculture through
green revolution and the establishment of co-operative society for marketing of the produced agricultural crops in the region. Post liberalisation, the agricultural conditions have become unfavourable to farmers, as they have encountered many different problems associated with crop failure due to pest attack, farming and marketing of crops. In the past two decades (1990 to 2010), drastic changes have observed in the philosophy and practice of agriculture, crop patterns etc in the state, which ultimately contributed towards farmers’ committing suicides in dry and semi-arid regions of Karnataka. To deal with the problem of agrarian crisis in the state, government introduced Karnataka State Policy on Organic Farming 2004. In the case of Dakshina Kananda, we do not find cases of farmers’ distress in the form of suicides; however, there are different kinds of farming issues in the district. Presented below are reflections on the recent changes or shifts that have taken place in agriculture in Dakshina Kannada.

Contemporary Agriculture Concerns from Dakshina Kananda. In the present context, Dakshina Kannada is facing many concerns within agriculture. The major concern is the migration of youths to non-agricultural occupations. Even school or college dropout youths prefer to work in non-agriculture occupations in the nearby district (Puttur) or a city (Mangalore). A majority of the younger generation are working in Mangalore, Bangalore, Mumbai, and the Middle East. The New Economic Policy (NEP) has opened up job avenues in various sectors within the cities and towns; people have shifted their families from villages to cities in search of better salary and modern comforts of the city life. Farming requires continuous engagement with farm activities, and there is less freedom or leisure activity in the village. The continued participation in the farm activity makes it a dull and boring profession for the youth. Many farmers do not want their children to practice agriculture; as many are interested to work in cities than in their farmland.

Farmers expressed their anxiety about the future of agriculture in the region. They are worried about food security, declining paddy cultivations, agricultural practices and concerns about the future of their ancestral property in the village. For example, Rajanna, a farmer in his late 60s expressed that, ‘I can do farming until I have energy in the body, and I am not aware what will happen to my land once I am old’ (Field notes, 2008) Many people have permanently migrated from the village. Lack of interest or disinterest in farming is a major factor for migration to urban areas. In India, generally, farmers are not considered as professionals, although they are continuously engaged in farming; instead,
it is seen as a way of life. The younger generations’ new aspirations towards life edged out the traditional, family occupation of agriculture. According to Srihari Bandari, a farmer from Bettadka, farmers have developed a feeling of disinterest towards farming. ‘The nature of farming requires an active participation of farmers, adoption and development of innovations in farming, but presently farmers are going through nirliptha manobhava (lack of enthusiasm)’ (Field Notes. 2008). During various discussions, farmers have highlighted that the fluctuating national and international market for commercialised export oriented products, imbalance in demand and supply, lack of availability of manures and daily wage labourers, inaccessibility of big machineries in hilly areas of plantations and farmers dependency on external inputs etc are some of the factors for this disenchantment with agriculture. Moreover, the decreased returns and increased cost of production in agriculture do not provide an opportunity for farmers to generate profits in agriculture, and small financial returns are insufficient to invest in agriculture. Lack of returns from agriculture has adversely affected their standard of living. It would be interesting to observe as how changes in cropping pattern and agricultural practices have brought shifts in the farming approaches of the society.

Dakshina Kannada District is a land of cash crops and spices. The variations in the arecanut market prices are a concern to the farmers. For farmers, during 1997-1998, arecanut fetched Rs. 80-90 per kg. Because 40% of the crop failed, the prices went up, and in 1999, prices of arecanut were Rs. 140-170 per kg. In 2000, areca prices came down, and challi (a category of arecanut made after post harvest in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Districts) sold between Rs. 65 to 80 per kg (Field notes, 2008). Since then, arecanut prices have not crossed two digits with slight variations depending on the market. Although Dakshina Kannada District has not witnessed the severity of farmers’ suicide, it was still going through a major economic crisis. The price variation in arecanut is affecting the entire economic situation of small and marginal farmers, because the buying power of farmers depends on ‘arecanut’. The market variation in arecanut, the difficulties associated with farming, labour issues have created apathy towards agriculture in the region. Increasing availability of new job opportunities outside the agriculture sector and high demand for farm labour has actually weakened the farmers hold over the farm workers in the region.

Traditionally, members of the joint family, and kins were connected with land and farming and each family member had an important role in the agriculture production.
system. During pre and post independent phase the family was self-sustainable with the locally available resources, and food security was never a concern for the farmers, although poverty, social, economic issues, religious and cultural practices were found in the family. Post land reform saw the changes in the cropping system as farmers shifted from paddy to plantation farming, and along with it, community farming which was associated with the paddy cultivation lost its significance. Traditionally, subsistence farming has its foundation in the collective conscience as each one (excluding big landowners and Brahmins) including farmers, labourers, and neighbours worked together in the paddy cultivation. Over the years, farmers found it difficult to sustain the labour intensive traditional farming, because labour has become expensive, and it was not easily available; hence, they slowly shifted to commercial farming. Many youth from rural areas have migrated from agriculture into different sectors to find their source of livelihoods. The fragmentation of traditional joint family ties, migration of the people and shift to plantation farming have become common and this has affected agrarian, socio-economic and cultural practices (narrated in Chapter 3). The fragmentation of land within families have changed the traditional agriculture social order and brought changes in agriculture crop, productivity, and the market. These developments in agriculture contributed towards the emergence of individual farmers.

Dakshina Kannada from pre-colonial time had paddy and plantation farming. Geographically, housing settlements are dispersed in the region and it has abundance of forest areas, which has created geographical isolation within the village. Land reforms and fragmentation of landholding has provided social status as 'farmers' to the tenants and has reduced the caste character of land distribution. However, it has contributed to the emergence of class character among farmers, especially during the post green revolution phase. The Green Revolution phase has brought the social division between farmers in terms of their access to the modern agriculture practices, mechanisation of agriculture, the use of chemical manures and between those who grow food and cash crops. Secondly, green revolution and technologies became an immediate solution for labour shortage and intensive workloads of the plantation farming. The commercialisation of agriculture has changed the way farmers now approach farming. Family and community farming practices have given way to individual farming practices, particularly with the conversion of paddy lands into plantations in the region. Lack of availability of farm labour and high-cost farm labour, adaptation of Green Revolution technology, commercialisation of
agriculture have led to this transformation. The market oriented plantation farming has created ‘individual spaces’ for the farmer, and it further diluted social relationships, interconnections and collective collaboration of community and farmers’ knowledge within farming.

The farm mechanisation in individual farmlands has brought greater diversity in agriculture practices and traditional caste based village occupations. It changed the farming practice and approach of ploughing the paddy land areas (wooden ploughs have been replaced by power tillers), and it brought greater changes in the traditional caste based social occupations in the region. Modern farming discarded caste based occupations in agriculture that gradually led to the decline of caste occupations. Many artisan castes in the villages turned to agriculture labour in search of work. Mechanisation replaced bio-manures prepared locally to chemical manures purchased from the market. Farmers preferred chemical manures, as it required less number of workers in comparison to traditional manures from the farm, which was labour intensive and involved a higher cost since labour was required for the preparation of manure and laying it on the agriculture land. The modernisation of farming has also shifted the traditional farm practices such as constructions of Katta or barrage for river, stream within the locality of the agriculture plantations. However, with the introduction of modern mechanisation of agriculture, practices such as construction of Kattas were replaced by sprinklers, drip and borewell irrigation options. The decline in the traditional practices of water conservation in the district had led to the water crisis in many parts of the district.

Although the district has not experienced drought condition, however from 1999 to 2003, the district received less rainfall as compared to the annual average rainfall of the region. The underground water table is depleting with the overuse of water for irrigation. The decline in paddy cultivation and negligence of tank management has adversely affected the water resources. Authorities declared Sullia and Bantwal taluka s as ‘dark areas’ and Belthangady as ‘grey area’ with regard to the underground water resources (The Hindu, June 2004). Although the entire belt of Dakshina Kannada is situated in the high rainfall area, farmers still face water scarcity for irrigation purpose during the summer. Summer in Dakshina Kannada is long and very hot, and the demand for water in plantation farms is high. However, the depletion in the underground water, delay in the monsoon seasons, global warming concerns have reduced the water availability for farming. Water depletion has affected agriculture, and the shift from paddy to cash crop
cultivation has augmented the problem, as farmers have opted for bore well irrigation thereby reducing existing water table levels further.

In the village, farmers construct Katta or barrage across the stream in November. From January onwards, farmers use water from borewell, barrage, and tank and they irrigate the land through pipes, sprinklers, and drip irrigations. As the months pass, the water availability becomes difficult from March onwards depending on the available water resources in the agriculture land. April, May and June until the next rainy season, farmers face the water crisis in their agriculture land for irrigation. The lack of sufficient water for plants would attack plants with diseases and eventually the plants die. Lack of water availability within the agriculture land has made the farmer insecure about introducing new crops, and new approaches to farming. Many farmers do not venture into the vegetable farming in the summer due to lack of water availability in the paddy fields. I do acknowledge that many farmers’ (case of Rajanna Naik discussed in Chapter 4) with all hardships were able to achieve innovations in their farms. The table 2.1 provides a brief summary of the state policies that brought changes in the Dakshina Kannada agriculture.

### Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Central State Policy/ Programme</th>
<th>Changes in the Region (DK district)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990-1990</td>
<td>New Economic Policy</td>
<td>Market Fluctuation - Areca, Coco,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1990</td>
<td>Migration - Education&lt;br&gt;Modernisation of Agriculture</td>
<td>Decline in Labour&lt;br&gt;Intensified Chemical use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1980</td>
<td>Green revolution</td>
<td>Commercial Crops&lt;br&gt;Emergence and Establishment of CAMPCO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1970</td>
<td>Karnataka Land reforms Act</td>
<td>Migration of landowners to city led to absentee landholding&lt;br&gt;Agricultural shift- Decline in Paddy land and emergence of plantation farming&lt;br&gt;Commercialisation of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-1950</td>
<td>Rural Development Programme&lt;br&gt;Intensification of Agriculture</td>
<td>Agricultural shift from paddy to Arecca plantation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-independent</td>
<td>Traditional Agriculture,&lt;br&gt;Colonial policy restriction on the practice of shifting cultivation</td>
<td>Practice of traditional methods of farming&lt;br&gt;Shifting cultivation - Kumeri Cultivation Declined by 1930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field Notes 2009
Chapter Conclusion

The agriculture history of Karnataka clearly demonstrates a pattern, wherein from the beginning of the 20th century, the Princely Mysore showed its interest in the modernisation of the state. During Princely Mysore regime, the state development was rooted within the colonial policies, which focused towards modernising agriculture through the introduction of market-oriented agricultural crops through introducing sugar cane fields and coffee plantations in the fertile belts of Mysore and Western Ghats region respectively. In the context of Mysore agriculture history, Visvesvaraya and Mirza Ismail contributed to the Mysore economy by introducing policies for the diversification of agriculture and its allied activities in Mysore Kingdom. Visvesvaraya used ‘expansionist model of development’ while introducing agriculture and allied policies in Mysore Kingdom. His policies focused on the introduction of infrastructural facilities in rural areas for developing agriculture sector and reducing the risk associated with farming. For reducing the risk, he gave prominence to the introduction of co-operative societies, and diversification of agricultural crops. As a visionary, he projected the importance of having an additional occupation along with farming in each household to sustain in times of distress. In the present context, his insight holds true as only those farmers who have taken up an additional occupation besides farming, has been able to survive within agriculture. Visvesvaraya created a blue print for Mysore’s development, which Mirza Ismail accomplished with the introduction of mixed economic approach, which contributed to the development of industries in Mysore and promoted the growth of the village economy by introducing policies on education, rural development and co-operatives.

After independence, the unification of the Mysore state based on Kannada language has impacted the regional agricultural knowledge, practice and farmers’ cognitive innovation in the agriculture. The unification movement has united the Kannada speaking regions as a one administrative unit but brought an imbalance in the economic and social development of North Karnataka, and Hyderabad regions. State policies and programmes have neglected these regions until recently (HD Report, 31). State although achieved political unification however, socio-economic and cultural diversities remained among its subjects. Within the state there were five sets of people with wide variations in economic, cultural, administrative and educational system. Linguistic undertones and dialects were different between Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad, and Mysore as bilingualism, and biculturalism were prevalent in all regions excluding Mysore.
Karnataka, 1999). The regional imbalances can be seen in the education, infrastructural development like health, drinking water, works, and social conditions of women such as marriage, land inheritance rights, and social status (ibid: 4). In past 56 years, many programmes have been introduced in Northern part of Karnataka state in various fields of social, economic and infrastructure development. However, these regions are still deprived of many basic facilities and it has created a huge socio-economic imbalance within the state.

Another drawback of Karnataka unification and post unification development was that state policies did not consider the ‘regional past’ and specific socio-economic aspects of the region, which were diverse in their character in policy matters. The introduction of state policies in a standardized manner in Bombay-Karnataka and Hyderabad-Karnataka created an uneven development and regional disparities between the North and South Karnataka. The uneven development of the region has various implications, such as the wastage of resources, increase in public cost expenditure, social injustice, threat to national integration and political instability.

The trade relationships of Vas Co Da Gama and later European traders had opened the costal belt to trade and commercialization of agriculture. The commercialization of agriculture in the coastal belt changed the socio-economic pattern of society; the introduction of education by the missionary and well-developed ports by the colonial rulers for trade gave an opportunity to people from the coast to migrate to different parts of world. Given its history of being a commercial centre, the district has been active in terms of its response to scientific and technological change.

In conclusion, the concept of development emerged in Karnataka much before the formation of the modern Indian state and India’s independence. The concept emerged under the Mysore elites, the Maharaja, who was fascinated by the Japan model of development. It was Dewans Visvesvaraya, who with his economic policies actually laid the foundation for the emergence of ‘economic development’ in Mysore. In his speech, Chandan Gowda highlighted the image and perspective of Mysore elites on agriculture. From an evolutionist vision, the Mysore elite viewed ‘agriculture as a sector that should become marginalised in future and this was shared across the Indian National economic thinkers’ (APU-INET Workshop; 2012). From the above quote, it becomes clear that, Karnataka from the time of Mysore regime has followed the path of modernisation and agriculture was part of this vision. In this sense, post 1990s liberalisation policies and
programmes do not break away from the system of agriculture proposed by the state government. From the perspective of Karnataka agriculture, the government focused on the growth and diversification of the economy. The introduction of the organic farming policy, which emerged as a critique to the modernisation of agriculture, becomes an even more interesting site for public policy research to explore the present state perspectives on organic farming.