Chapter - II
Locale
**LOCALE**

The locale for the present study on the Widows of Farmers' suicides comprises of the three districts of Bangalore division of Karnataka, Chitradurga and Tumkur. An understanding any social phenomenon needs a comprehension of the phenomenon in its socio, economic, ecological and demographical milieu. To gain an understanding of the study the profile of Karnataka in general with the profile of the three districts are provided in this chapter.

During the tenure of Devaraj Urs as Chief Minister Mysore state was renamed as Karnataka in November 1973.

Karnataka has representations of all types of variations in topography. The state is enclosed by chains of mountains to its west, east and south. It consists mainly of Plateau, which has higher elevation of 600 to 900 meters above mean sea level. Plain land of elevation less than 300 meters above mean sea level is to be found only in the narrow coastal belt, facing the Arabian Sea. There are quite a high peaks both in western and eastern ghat section with altitudes more than 1,500 meters.

The topography of Karnataka is largely a reflection of the state. The Sahyadris is covered with evergreen forests. They drop abruptly towards the Arabian Sea, thus forming a natural barrier between the plateau and coastal regions. Four passes provide access to the coast. They are the Shiradi Ghat, Subramanya Ghat, and the famous Agumbe Ghats slope gently towards the Bay.
of Bengal. This is the plateau region drained by the two principal rivers namely Krishna and Kauvery. Jog Falls is the highest plunge waterfalls in India, formed by Sharavathi River.
Karnataka Population Map

Legend
Population between

- Yellow: < 1 million
- Green: 1-2 million
- Orange: 2-3 million
- Blue: > 3 million

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Physical characteristics: Location

The state of Karnataka is eighth largest state in India in both area and population. Karnataka lies between 74 degrees and 78 degrees East longitudes and 11 degree s and 18 degrees north latitudes. It is situated on the western edge of the Deccan plateau and is surrounded by Maharashtra and Goa on the north, Andhra Pradesh on the east, and Tamil Nadu and Kerala on the South. On the West, it opens out on the Arabian Sea. Geographically, Karnataka occupies three natural regions like the Coastal strip, the Sahyadris and the Deccan Plateau. They are known in Kannada as Pashchima Karavali, Malnad and Maidan respectively.

Where the western and eastern ghat ranges converge into the Nilgiri hill complex, the state extends to about 750 kilometres from North to South and about 400 kilometres from east to west and covers an area of 1, 19,791 Sq. km.

DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES:

Area and Population

Karnataka’s total land area is 1, 19,791 Sq. km. It accounts for 5.83 percent of the total area of the country and ranks eighth among major of the country in term of size. According to the 2001 census of India, the total population of Karnataka is 52,850,562.
Tumkur district has a population of 25,79,516 roughly equal to 1/20 of the total population of the state. The density of the population in Tumkur is 243. It is less than the state average of 270/ k.m.

Chitradurga district with 8388 Sq. km of geographical area occupies 4.40 percent of state’s total area. As per 2001 census, its population is 15.10 lakhs which constitute 2.86 percent of the state’s total population. It occupies the 9\textsuperscript{th} rank in terms of area and 18\textsuperscript{th} rank in terms of population size.

Davanagere district occupies 12\textsuperscript{th} place in Karnataka state with a population of 17,89,693 as per the census of 2001.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Kannada</th>
<th>Other languages</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religions</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: mainly Telugu
Note 2: mainly Urdu
Note 3: mainly Marathi

**Sex ratio**

Out of total population of Karnataka, 26,898,918 (50.89 percent) are males and 25,951,644 (49.11 percent) are females. The decadal increase in population stands at 17.25 percent from 1991 to 2001. Population density of Karnataka is 275.6 per km and the sex ratio is 964 females to 1000 males. Nearly 33.98 percent of the people in Karnataka live in urban areas.
As per 2001 census Tumkur district has a population of 25,79,516. Of these 13,11,941 are male and the remaining 12,67,575 are females. About 10,50,297 males and 10,22,539 females live in rural areas. Around 26,16,44 males and 24,50,36 females live in urban areas.

The population of the Chitradurga district according to 2001 census is 15.10 lakhs. It comprises of 7.76 lakh males and 7.42 lakh females.

The population of the Davanagere district according to 2001 census is 17,90,952 comprising of 9,17,705 males and 8,73,247 females.
DAVANAGERE DISTRICT MAP
Administrative Divisions

Karnataka has been divided into four revenue divisions:

The Bangalore division comprises of Bangalore (Urban), Bangalore (rural), Tumkur, Kolar, Chitradurga and Shimoga districts with the head quarters at Bangalore.

1) The Mysore Division consists of the districts Mysore, Mandya, Hassan, Chikamaguluru, Dakshina Kannada and Kodagu with the head quarters of Mysore.

2) The Belgaum Division has Belgaum, Bijapur, and Dharwad and Uttara Kannada districts under its jurisdiction with the head quarters at Belgaum.

3) The Gulbarga Division with the head quarters at Gulbarga covers the districts of Bidar, Gulbarga, Bellary and Raichur.

The Tumkur district comprises of 10 Taluks grouped into three revenue sub – divisions, namely Tumkur Sub-division (comprising of Tumkur, Gubbi and Kunigal Taluks), Tiptur Sub division (comprising Tiptur, Chikkanayakanahally and Turuvekere taluks), and Madhugiri sub-division (comprising Madhugiri, Pavagada, Korategere and Sira taluks).

The Davanagere district was conceived in 1997 with six revenue taluks, namely Davanagere, Chennagiri, Jagalur, Harapanahally and Harihara.
Rainfall

Karnataka experiences four seasons. The winter in January and February is followed by summer between March and May, the pre-monsoon season between June and September and the post monsoon season from October till December. Meteorologically, Karnataka is divided into three zones – coastal, north interior and south interior. Of these, the coastal zone receives the heaviest rainfall with an average rainfall of about 3,638.5 (143 in) mm per annum, far in excess of the state average of 1,139 mm (45 in). Agumbe in the Shimoga district receives the second highest annual rainfall in India.

Tumkur district falls in the eastern dry agro climatic zone. The temperatures start rising from January to peak in May, around 40°C is common. Thereafter it declines during the monsoon period. The humidity is lowest during the dry season and highest the monsoon period. The winds are predominantly south westerly during the summer monsoon and north-easterly during the winter monsoon. The annual potential evapotranspiration is over 1800 mm with monthly rates less than 100 mm during December and January and over 250 mm during May.

The year may broadly be classified into four seasons. The dry season is from January to February. It is followed by hot weather from March to May. Over 18 percent rainfall occurs during the pre monsoon season. The monsoon season is from June to September. This season yields around 52 percent of the
annual rainfall. The post monsoon period from October to December contributes around 30 percent of annual rainfall. On an average, annually over 650 mm rainfall occurs in nearly 45 rainy days.

The average rainfall in the Chitradurga district has been 486.57 mm. However, during 2004 the rainfall has been less than the average rainfall i.e. 329.60 mm.

Davanagere district receives average annual rainfall of 644.0 mm and within the district the quantum of rainfall and the average number of rainy days decreases as one move from South to North. During the south west monsoon season 80-85 percent of the annual rainfall precipitates. There are 40 rain gauge stations in the district.

**Literacy**

As per the 2001 census, Karnataka had a literacy rate of 67.04 percent, with 76.29 percent of males and 57.45 percent of females in the state being literate. The state is home to some of the premier educational and research institutions of India such as the Indian Institute of science, the Indian Institute of management, the National Institute of technology Karnataka and the National Law School of India University.

The literacy rate of males in Tumkur district as per 2001 census is 76.88 and the literacy rate of the females is 57.18 percent. In Tumkur district urban literacy is 81.74 percent and rural literacy rate is 63.62 percent.
The literacy rate of Chitradurga district is 64.88 percent which is below both the national literacy rate of 65.37 percent and state literacy rate of 67.04 percent. In addition there is a gender gap of 20 percent in the literacy rate. Female literacy rate in this district stood at 49.97 percent. It is significantly lower than the male literacy rate of 71.77 percent.

In Davanagere district, the literate persons constitute 66 percent of total population in 2001 as against 55.96 percent in 1991. This figure is close to the state average of 56.04 in 1991 and 64.04 in 2001. However, during the past few years there has been a steady and substantial increase in the proportion of literates in the district. Educational Institutions: As of March 2006, Karnataka had 54,529 primary schools with 252,875 teachers and 8.495 million students, and 9498 secondary schools with 92,287 teachers and 1.384 million students.

There are 481 degree colleges affiliated with one of the universities in the state, viz. Bangalore, Tumkur, Gulbarga, Karnataka, Kuvempu, Mangalore and Mysore Universities. In 1998, the engineering colleges in the state were brought under the newly formed Visweshwaraiah Technological University headquartered at Belgaum whereas the medical colleges are run under the jurisdiction of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences.

Agriculture

Characteristics of Karnataka agriculture have changed over the past couple of years. It changed from non-capitalist path to agrarian capitalist path.
Karnataka agriculture needs to be located within the larger framework of uneven capitalist development. Although some sort of capitalist development was introduced long back during the colonial period, however, agrarian capitalism received a boost with the introduction of Green Revolution, implementation of land reforms, establishment of institutions such as cooperatives measures during the post-independence period. Interestingly this path of development also allowed large number of new categories to emerge and enter in to the large number of domain of agrarian capitalism.

The agrarian capitalism can be viewed in the increasing use of new technology- seed or fertilizer, fragmentation of lands, increase in the landlessness or labouring class, linkage of local with the national or international market, depeasantisation of categories etc.

The land in the Tumkur district under cultivation is 1,72,634 hectares. Dry land agriculture surpasses the wet and Horticulture. Agriculture is the backbone of the economy of this district. About 1/3 income accrues from agriculture.

The major tanks in Tumkur district are Kadaba, Irakasandra, Mavathur, Mallaghatta, Kunigal, Kallambella, and Madalur. Recently Hemavathi canal is constructed for feeding the barren land of Turuvekere, Gubbi, Tumkur and Kunigal taluks and also for drinking water supply to Tumkur city. Bore wells and public wells are dug throughout the district. The yield in the district is
fairly good. There are potentials for the wetland agriculture. The dry crops grown in the district are Raggi, Jowar, Bajra, Millets, Pulses, oil seeds like caster, ground nut; cotton – sugarcane, paddy in the wet land; coconut, areca nut, elachie plantain, mulberry in the gardens. Apiculture is taking roots recently.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people in Chitradurga district. Out of the total workforce in the district, about 72 percent are cultivators and agricultural labourers. Agriculture including animal husbandry accounts for about 35 percent of the district income. The total geographical area is 7.71 lakh hectares and the net cultivable area is 4.18 lakh hectares of which only 0.65 lakh hectares (15%) area is irrigated. Further 85 percent of the area irrigated is by bore wells. Therefore, agriculture is predominant in Chitradurga district. In view of this, promotion of new agricultural technology for improving productivity is essential.

Kharif, Rabi and summer are the three seasons. During Kharif season major crops like Jowar, Maize is grown. During Rabi season Ragi, Jowar are grown. In summer season crops like Groundnut and vegetables are grown with the help of irrigation. Sugarcane and Cotton are the cash crops in the district.

Davanagere is predominantly an agriculture district and cultivable land is the backbone of its economy. Since the district covers the total geographical area of 597597 hectares and has a population of 17, 9052 (2001 census) the
average extent of land available per capita is 0.33 hectares. According to the latest land utilization statistics, out of the total geographical area 64 percent is the net area sown.

The main food crops are paddy, maize and ragi while the unimportant commercial crops are Sugarcane, chilly, onion and Cotton. The net sown area of 3.84 lakh hectares constitutes about 64 per cent of the geographical area which is far higher than the state average of 55 per cent.

Of the total geographical area, forest area accounts for 15 per cent (0.90 lakh hectares) and waste land 6 percent. The total cultivable area is 3.87 lakh hectares (65 per cent). The net irrigated area is 1.13 lakh hectares, which account for 29 per cent of net sown area. Source-wise, canal irrigation covers 65 per cent, followed by wells/ bore wells 28 per cent, while remaining 17 per cent is by tanks and other sources. Harihara (60 per cent) and Davanagere (39 per cent) taluks have the highest irrigation facilities, whereas Jagalur (11 per cent) and Harapanahally (16 per cent) have lowest irrigation facilities.

The gross cropped area is 4.81 lakh hectares. Cereals occupy about 76 per cent followed by pulses 6 per cent, oilseeds 12 per cent, and commercial crops 6 per cent. Paddy, ragi, maize and Jowar are grown in all the taluks. About 82 per cent of the total cropped area is under food crops. Cash crops such as sugarcane, onion, chilly, cotton and plantation crops i.e., areca nut and
coconut are also grown in 18 percent of the total cultivated area. Fruit crops and sericulture is gaining popularity in the district.

It is in with the above geographic, demographic and topographic profile of the three districts of Bangalore division of Karnataka State that the present study on the widows of Farmers’ suicides in Karnataka is carried out.

Karnataka has a recorded forest area of 38,720 km2 (14,950 sq mi) which constitutes 20.19% of the total geographical area of the state.

Soil Type

Major types of soils observed in the Tumkur district are 1. Red loamy soil, 2. Red sandy soil and 3. Mixed red and black soils. Red loamy soil is seen in eastern central part of the district covering Korategere, Tumkur, and eastern parts of Madhugiri and Kunigal Taluks. Red Sandy soil covers rest of the area except very small area in the North western part of C.N. Halli Taluks where Mixed Red and Black soil occur.

The soil of Chitradurga District is formed by the mixture of black soil and red soil.

The Davanagere district consists of mainly 3 types of soils, viz., black alluvial soil, red soil with shallow to medium depth gravel and clay soil. The black soil has high water retaining capacity, is self aerating with small to medium depth and rich in clay. It is suitable for crops like cotton, paddy,
sugarcane etc. Both black and red soils found in the district are generally fertile.

The dawn of the last decade of the twentieth century unfolded changes that swept the societies across the globe with far reaching consequences. The incidence of farmers' suicides in India is an indicator of the state of agriculture swayed by the vicissitudes of globalization and its ramifications in various sectors of society in unforeseen trajectories.

It was reported that during the years, 1997-2007 that 1,82,936 farmers have committed suicide in India. Of these, two thirds suicides have occurred in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. Karnataka in particular has reported 3000 suicides during 1998-2006. India being predominantly an agricultural nation, this pathological phenomenon of farmers' suicide is a social malady, which needs to be researched empirically in depth for evolving effective interventions.

The present study is carried out in the three districts of Bangalore division of Karnataka State-Chitradurga, Davanagere and Tumkur districts. The incidence of farmers' suicides in these three districts during the research period is presented here below.
Table No. 2.1
Farmers' suicides in three selected Districts of Karnataka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Tumkur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Before 2001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The incidence of Farmers’ suicides in the three districts of Bangalore division of Karnataka is during the period 2001-2007 is presented in Table no. 2.1 which reveals that Farmers’ suicides are very high in Chitradurga district compared to the remaining two districts. Moderate suicide rates registered in Tumkur district. And lesser farmers’ suicide rates are in Davanagere district.

The general impression about Karnataka state is that it is a well irrigated state but the incidence of suicides in this state in all regions drives home the point that the far reaching changes precipitated by globalization and its ramifications have far reaching repercussions for the farming community who are in predominant numbers in rural India. It is in the geographic, demographic and ecologic setting that the present study is carried out.

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