CHAPTER VII

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Since historical times agriculture has been a primary occupation of Indian villages. In fact, agriculture is the mainstay of rural economy. Hence, the basic means of the villagers is agriculture and allied occupations. As many as 74 per cent of the villagers are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Therefore, substantial improvement in the living conditions of the rural people in general and peasants in particular can be expected only by bringing about agricultural development. However, though India has been experiencing planned development since the last four decades, it has not succeeded in bringing significant change in the socio-economic conditions of the rural people. The development model adopted by the Government since the beginning of the second plan has resulted in a dualistic kind of development of the Indian economy. The modern industry, commerce, transport, communications etc., constituting the modern sector of the economy have flourished, benefiting only top 20 per cent of the population. On the contrary, agriculture and other rural economic activities have been left far behind their urban counterparts in the development process. This has created wide disparity in the living standards of rural and urban people. This is one of the significant causes of simmering discontent found in the rural India.

The number of programmes like the community development programme (C.D.P.), integrated rural development programme (I.R.D.P.),
Green revolution, co-operative movement, land reforms, etc. have utterly failed to achieve their respective objectives. In fact these government measures and policies have led to the pauperization of the majority of rural population. The agrarian sector in particular is facing numerous problems. The excessive pressure of population on land, fragmentation and sub-division of land-holdings, lack of irrigation, costly agricultural inputs, unremunerative prices etc. are some of the serious problems of Indian agriculture. Of course, there are innumerable other problems like poverty, unemployment, starvation, illiteracy, ignorance, ill-health and so on. As a result the discontent and unrest has been developed among the peasants. This simmering discontent in recent years has led to the unprecedented peasant agitations in India. For over a decade or so a new peasant movement has been developed in the country. This new peasant movement comprising agitations of unprecedented size and militancy have been well sustained and have enjoyed a fairly wide base among the peasants. The peasant movements primarily in the states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab have held the attention of the academicians, politicians, governments and of the people in general. The social scientists belonging to diverse disciplines have turned their attention towards the study of peasant movements sociologists are not an exception to this. They have made an attempt to study the peasant movements that have occurred in India. The Karnataka State under the leadership of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha has been an offshoot of the peasant movement in India.

Karnataka State like other states has also seen unprecedented peasant movements led by the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha. This
Sangha has played a major role not only in these movements but has also made some impact on villages as presented by data in earlier chapters. Therefore, an attempt has been made to study the various aspects of the Raitha Sangha.

Throughout this study, an attempt has been made to explain with special reference to Dharwad taluk and the KRRS, how the background of the movements was conducive for any type of revolt, and also how the KRRS exploited this situation. We have tried to answer certain questions like who are the main participants in those movements? Why the sangha became so popular in the study area? What are its achievements and failures? What are the implications of the entry of the KRRS into politics? and so on. We have also made an attempt to understand the mobilisation of the peasants, membership of the KRRS and voting pattern in the context of the caste, class, age and education. The important findings of the study are as follows:

A. **Findings Regarding the Demographic and Economic Characteristics of the Peasants:**

1. With regard to the educational level of the peasants, the findings reveal that a significant majority of them are illiterate. Even among the literates about 30 per cent are very marginally educated. Thus widespread illiteracy continues to be one of the characteristics of Indian peasantry.

2. The findings pertaining to the income of the peasants reveals that, the income of the peasants from all sources is quite low. As high
as two-third of the respondents have an annual income below Rs.14,999. The income particularly from land is too less. About 48.5 per cent of the respondents get an annual income below Rs.14,999 from land. Only 15.6 per cent of the respondents obtain an annual income between Rs.15,000 to Rs.24,999 from land. The highest annual income of Rs.25,000 and above is obtained only by 37 respondents.

3. Regarding the type of accommodation of the peasants the findings indicate that nearly three-fourths of the peasants live in their own houses. However, the data pertaining to the type of house reveals that no peasant has pucca house. The three-fourths of the peasants live in semi-pucca houses, and one-fourth of them live in kachcha houses.

4. With regard to the type of family, the study reveals that the nuclear families which were unknown to the villages are becoming common in the villages. As many as 41.7 per cent of the peasants belong to the nuclear families. The joint families, though still common, are giving way to the nuclear families. The small family norm is developing in the villages.

5. The findings with regard to the size of the family reveal that a majority of the respondents are having small families. The data reveals that 55 per cent of the respondents come from the families having members between 15-9. This suggests that a small family
norm is developing in villages. Only 4.1 per cent of the respondents come from the families with more than 20 members.

B. Findings Pertaining to the Agrarian Discontent:

1. The greater number of peasants do not get good quality seeds and pesticides. This has resulted not only in low yield but has also caused loss to the peasants. The data pertaining to this indicates that as many as 42.8 per cent of the peasants have incurred loss due to bad quality of seeds and pesticides. While 20.0 per cent have incurred loss of Rs. 5,000/- and above, 21.4 per cent are put in loss between Rs. 1,000/- to Rs. 4,999/-, due to bad quality seeds and pesticides.

2. With regard to the chemical fertiliser, the findings reveal that the majority of the respondents do not get fertiliser of good quality, required quantity and at fixed price. This suggests that the peasants face one or the other problems with regard to fertilizer. No fertilizer shops in villages, prohibitive prices, adulteration and no effect on crops etc. are some of the significant problems with regard to fertiliser.

3. The study regarding agricultural problems suggests that the peasants are facing countless agricultural problems. The most important among them are: lack of irrigation, unremunerative prices, costly agricultural inputs, agricultural market problems,
agricultural disasters like drought, diseases of crops etc, low yield and the like. These problems have caused great hardships to the peasants, which in turn has led to the simmering discontent of the peasants.

4. The study further reveals that a greater majority of the agricultural labourers are also facing many acute problems. Low wages, lack of alternative work during rainy and summer season, substandard housing conditions, acute shortage of money, old age difficulties etc. are some of the most important problems of the landless agricultural labourers. These problems have caused greater agony among the landless agricultural labourers.

5. The problem of indebtedness is severe. As high as 76.7 per cent of the respondents have taken loan from one or the other source. Majority of the peasants have borrowed loan to meet the expenses connected with marriage and other ceremonies, and also to meet the expenses on necessities like food, clothing etc.

6. The study reveals that a majority of the respondents (55%) faced problems in getting loan from the banks in particular and other financial institutions in general. The significant among them are; complex and expensive procedure, lack of banks in villages, non-co-operative and corrupt officials, non-availability of loan at required time, required quantity and at one instalment.
7. With regard to the opinion of the peasants about the officials, the findings suggest that more than three-fourth's of the peasants do not have a good opinion about Government and other officials. The peasants are very much concerned and unhappy about the corruption, non-co-operative nature, biased attitude etc. of the officials.

8. The data pertaining to the working of the Mandal Panchayats shows that nearly three-fourths of the peasants are extremely unhappy with the Mandal Panchayat system and its working. Imbalanced growth of villages, more inconvenience and difficulties as peasants have to go to Mandal Panchayat village to get work done, increased corruption and rift in the villages, are some of the important evils of the Mandal Panchayat System.

9. With regard to the opinion of the peasants about whether urban India is biased towards rural India, the findings suggest that the urban-rural relationship shaped by planning and the Government policies is perceived by the rural masses as biased in favour of the industrial-cum-urban sector of the economy and adverse to the rural-cum-agriculture sector. The peasants now want the existing relationship to be redressed so that they get equitable treatment in the distribution of gains from development under planning. They have developed a feeling of relative deprivation that they are deprived of all the facilities and benefits enjoyed by their urban counterparts. They have come to an understanding that the
urban India is developing at the cost of rural India. This has created deep discontent and unhappiness among the peasants.

C. **Findings Pertaining to the Organisational Structure, Ideology, Aims and Objectives and Mobilisation Pattern of the KRRS:**

1. The findings relating to the organisational structure reveals that the KRRS is very loosely organised. This is particularly so in case of village level units of the organisation. Neither all the posts are filled up nor meetings are held regularly by the village level units. The membership registration is also not maintained. No doubt large majority of the posts in the organisation are held by the high caste members but big landholders do not hold a majority of the posts in the organisation. Most of the posts of the organisation are held by the medium and small peasants.

2. The findings with regard to the decision making clearly indicate that the decision making on all important matters is highly centralised. The local or subordinate units are highly dependent on central units for any decision, guidance and direction since they have little or no power in any respect.

3. Regarding the aims and objectives there was much ambiguity and confusion from the very beginning. This was mainly because of the opposing and upholding of different issues simultaneously and also due to the juxtaposition of the interests of two or more areas and categories at a time. However, the remunerative prices and
the loan waiver were given primary importance among the aims and objectives of the Sangha. The KRRS has largely neglected the interests of the low caste people and the agricultural labourers in its aims and objectives.

4. With regard to the ideology of the KRRS, the findings show that inspite of initial controversy and confusion the Sangha has finally accepted the Gandhian ideology. But the Sangha has failed to effectively reach this ideology to the peasants. The peasants are completely ignorant about the ideology of the KRRS. The peasants in general are not aware of the ideology of the KRRS.

5. The study reveals that the sangha having adopted the Gandhian ideology, the model of peasant mobilisation is also Gandhian. However, it has not strictly adhered to this model of mobilisations as it has used, at least to some extent, the caste and coercion to mobilise the peasants. The important means used to mobilise the peasants are, the socio-economic issues, deprivation, classes, caste, electoral politics and to some extent coercion. The Sangha has largely failed to mobilise low caste members, agricultural labourers and women.

6. With regard to the membership of the KRRS, the findings suggest that although a majority (55.3%) of the peasants have become the members of the KRRS, a significant number (44.7%) of the peasants have not opted the membership.
7. Chi-square analysis indicates the significant association of membership with caste, land holding, income and education but it indicates insignificant association of membership with age.

8. The findings with regard to the reasons for opting the membership of the KRRS reveal that a majority (31.7%) of the members have opted membership since they found the aims and objectives or demands of the sangha most helpful in solving their problems. The 'We feeling' or the feeling that they all belong to peasant community has also influenced the peasant while taking membership of the KRRS.

9. Similarly the data pertaining to the reasons for not opting the membership of the Raitha Sangha shows that a majority of the non-members have not taken membership as they thought that the Sangha is politically motivated. Many have not become members because of an understanding that the Sangha can not solve their problems. This kind of thinking was largely noticed among the agricultural labourers and the low caste members.

D. Findings Regarding the Achievements and Failures of the KRRS:

1. The KRRS has largely failed to bring any appreciable and far reaching changes in the socio-economic and political field. Its achievements in the form of concessions, benefits etc. were short-term gains and were not of primary significance. Apart from
this, the benefits or gains achieved by the Raitha Sangha were more in favour of rich peasantry. It has failed to bring any qualitative change in the countryside or in the system that it thought exploitative. Its major demands like remunerative prices, cheap agricultural inputs, treating agriculture as an industry, pension for the peasants, crop insurance etc. have remained unattained. It has done nothing appreciable to remove the exploitative nature of the agricultural markets. In general, the KRRS has failed to transfer the agrarian status of the peasants. It has totally failed to do anything significant for the welfare of the low caste members, and for the agricultural labourers.

2. The only one significant achievement of the KRRS is the creation of awareness among the peasants. They have become relatively more aware of their rights and dignity or self respect. They are relatively less docile and submissive than they were earlier. The Sangha has largely motivated, activated and educated the peasantry.

3. With regard to the participation, the findings reveal that a majority (55.0%) of the respondents have participated in the movements. However, the percentage of the non-participants is also quite high (45%). The reasons for this high percentage of non-participation of the peasants are many. A majority of the non-participants stated that they have not participated in any
movement since such movements will not help to solve their problems. Non-representation of interests of certain sections, political character of the movement and poverty are also important causes of non-participation of the peasants. A large number of participants have taken part in movements occurred in more than one place of the movements, and a large majority of them have participated voluntarily in these movements.

4. The results of chi-square tests on the association of participation in movements with caste, landholding, income, education and age reveal that there is significant association between participation and caste, landholding, income and insignificant association between participation and age and education.

5. The findings with regard to the participation of women in movements and other activities indicate that the KRRS has largely failed to mobilise the women folk of the rural society. Out of 360 households, it is only from 22 households women are participated. The highly responsible causes for this are; non representation of the interests of the women, and male domination.

6. The data pertaining to the green and white boards reveals that they have brought not much change in the villages. The purpose for which they were erected has largely failed

7. The Nyaya panchayats established by the KRRS in villages have failed to deliver justice at the village level. Even though large
majority of the respondents are aware of these Nyaya Eanchayats, very few have taken help from them to resolve the disputes. The partial and corrupt members and other malpractices of the members is greatly responsible for their failure. Thus the very purpose for which these panchayats were established has failed.

8. The use of green towel by a larger number of peasants and impact felt by considerable number of them suggests that green towel has made significant impact not only on the peasants but also on the officials and others in general. It has created feeling of brotherhood, exacted respectful dealings and less arrogant and less high-handed approach from officials. This is one of the positive achievements of the Sangha.

9. With regard to the awareness of demands, the findings indicate that the awareness among the peasants about the demands of the KRRS is very high. As high as 85.6 per cent of the respondents are aware of the demands. The peasants are highly conversant with the demand of loan waiver. The demands of the Raitha Sangha like remunerative price and cheap agricultural inputs are also well known to the peasants.

10. Regarding the reaction of the peasants towards the KRRS, the data indicates the mixed reaction of the peasants towards the KRRS. While 31.1 per cent of the respondents opined that the KRRS has helped people, if not to the expected level, at least to some extent, 15.8 per cent of the respondents reported that the Sangha
has brought some change in rural areas. However, 27.6 per cent of the respondents opined that the entry of the KRRS into politics has ruined the organisation. Again, 12.8 per cent of the respondents said that there is absolutely no help from the Raitha Sangha.

E. **Findings Relating to the Electoral Politics:**

1. The reaction of the peasants to the entry of KRRS into politics is mixed one. However, for the larger majority (66.6) of the peasants the entry of the KRRS into politics is an unwelcome action of the leaders. Only 31.3 per cent of the respondents are in favour of its entry into politics. By and large, peasants are opposed to the entry of the KRRS into politics.

2. Entry of the KRRS into politics has led to the deterioration of the Sangha. The electoral politics has created antagonism and rift among the peasants. The attention of the leadership has also diverted from fulfilling the aspirations of the peasants to the politics. Consequently, the Sangha has lost its earlier stronghold and importance.

3. With regard to the voting pattern, the findings suggest that a majority of the peasants have voted for the KRRS in the last assembly elections. This was basically due to initial enthusiasm and hope that the Sangha will usher in new era. It was also due
to the feeling that the KRRS represents peasants community. The Sangha failed to keep up that initial enthusiasm and hope of the peasants as it is indicated by its miserable failure in the Lok Sabha elections.

4. Chi-square analysis indicates the significant association of the voting pattern with caste, landholding, income and education.

5. Eventhough the electoral politics of the KRRS has succeeded in the study area, it has failed totally at the State level. Its politics has failed to achieve anything substantial to its credit. The peasant movement could not become a political movement.

**Major Findings:**

1. The agricultural sector is facing many acute problems. There is widespread discontent and dissatisfaction among the peasants.

2. The peasant movements which occurred in Karnataka under the leadership of the KRRS are not the movements of the rich peasantry alone. In fact, all the landowning peasants belonging to big, medium, small and marginal category are involved in the movements.

3. The KRRS has generally failed to mobilise the low caste members, landless agricultural labourers and women in general.
4. The KRRS has largely succeeded in creating consciousness among the peasants.

5. The KRRS and policies and the stir initiated has lost most of the sting. The initial enthusiasm and commitment of both the peasants and the leaders is slowly disappearing. Therefore, the movement is slowly faltering.

6. The KRRS is bedevilled by internal factions. Within this organisation there are those who feel that it was right on the part of leadership to launch a political party while others do not agree.

7. The KRRS is dominated by regional leaders. The success of organisation has been marred by local leadership in the different regions of the State, particularly North Karnataka consisting of the former Bombay-Karnataka region, as opposed to the Shimoga faction and those from Mandya region.

8. Lack of charismatic leaders apart from prof. Nanjundaswamy who can convenience the people of the aims and objectives of the KRRS and its political wing.

9. One of the greatest weaknesses of the KRRS is its ambition to project itself as a regional party. By entering into the electoral politics, it caused its own deterioration.
SUGGESTIONS:

In this study it was found that the discontent and dissatisfaction, and also feeling of deprivation was widespread among the peasants. This is basically due to a dualistic kind of development of the Indian economy. The villages which constitute the very heart of India are largely neglected in the development process. The plans and programmes taken up for the rural development have become just farce as they have utterly failed to yield expected results. In fact, they have widened the gap between rich and poor, and have pauperized the large mass of the rural population. We find acute shortage of necessities of life. We notice no provision of pure drinking water supply, no hospital, no schools having all infrastructural facilities, no toilets, no worthy roads, no proper supply of electricity etc. in villages. The few facilities available in the villages are in the worst conditions. It is just the mockery of the rural people. This has given them the feeling of relative deprivation. They have started feeling the injustice meted out to them by the present politico-economic order. They have come to an understanding that agriculture and other rural economic activities have been left far behind their urban counterparts in the development process. For this kind of situation we need to blame our policy makers and implementers of these policies and plans. We have just copying the development model of other countries without understanding the realities of the Indian villages. The implementers are eating the larger part of the cakes of benefits and provisions of the plans and programmes which otherwise should have reached rural
people. The plans and programmes have rather become a means for the development of the people who are involved in the implementation of these programmes and plans.

We appear to be unaware of the ugly realities of the economic situation in the countryside as it has evolved over the years as a result of the growth model we have adopted for planned development. Now the high time has come to open our eyes and to give a thorough thought to the realities of the rural society. Otherwise the growing discontent, tensions, antagonisms and conflicts will take no later but sooner the form of volcano.

The plans and policies need to be developed at the local level instead of at the national level. This is necessary as the problems and their nature change from one area to other area. The involvement of the academicians and the people concerned is must in the framing of the plans and policies. The thorough study of the problems is necessary before evolving any plan. However, just evolving a well thought and befitting plans and policies is not enough. The implementers of these plans and policies should be well trained, well equipped, committed and above all sincere. In India, corruption is one of the significant causes for the failure of plans and policies. Therefore, given the all necessary conditions, the implementers should be largely held responsible for the failure of any programme or policy and appropriate action should be taken against them.
There is an immediate need for the development of necessary infrastructure for the improvement of agriculture. All necessary agricultural inputs should be made available in the villages itself. Financial institutions should be established in villages. Better roads and good transport system need to be developed. Since rural population constitutes about 76 per cent of the total population, proportionate budget allocation should be provided for the development of villages.

The decentralisation of industries is the high need of the time. This will not only stop unwanted migration from rural to urban areas but also reduce pressure of population on land. In study area as high as 56.63 per cent of the total population is in the non-workers category. One of the reasons for this is non-availability of work. So high priority need to be given for decentralisation of industries and for establishment of small scale and cottage industries in the villages.

The pension scheme especially for agricultural labourers and crop insurance scheme particularly for small and marginal peasants need to be introduced. Taking into account the cost of life, the wages of the agricultural labourers should be fixed.

A proper co-ordination between agricultural universities and the countryside, who offer advise, solve agricultural problems and provide information from time to time is necessary. Our study indicates that the Dharwad Agricultural University has not helped peasants in any appreciable way to solve agricultural problems. As high as 54.7 per
cent of the peasants stated that they have not got any help from the University. Therefore, such universities should no longer be ivory towers engaged only in research who are satisfied with the results shown on campus laboratories. The research system should develop more and more of appropriate technologies which do not require capital investment for the benefit of peasants.

Agricultural inputs should be provided at low rate since the buying capacity of the peasants, on an average, is very low. The price of the agricultural commodities should be fixed scientifically.

Such measures needed to be taken to redress the discontent and dissatisfaction of the peasants. The peasant organisations can also play a very significant role in the redressal of the grievances of the peasants. The development of strong and non-political peasant organisations is necessary as they can play an important role in the formation and implementation of the programmes and plans. The KRRS which has emerged in recent years is a right step in this direction. For the effective movement of the KRRS the following suggestions can be made.

1. At present the KRRS is very loosely organised. Therefore, efforts should be made to build up a strong organisation. All posts should be filled up through internal elections.

2. There should not be any ambiguity and inconsistency in the aims and objectives. The aims and objectives should be very clear, and peasants should be made aware of them.
3. It should evolve a clear cut ideology. The peasantry should be fully made aware of the ideology.

4. Decision making should be decentralised as far as possible.

5. It should develop highly committed and dedicated cadre of workers.

6. It should completely give up the electoral politics and strictly be a non-political organisation meant for the realisation of the aspirations of the peasants.

7. It should involve largely the low caste members, agricultural labourers and women in all its activities.

8. Caste, class and force should not be used for the mobilisation of the peasants.

Unlike other peasant organisations, the KRRS has recognised the importance of an organisation in a movement. It is evident from the past that, it has always laid much stress on the establishment of network at the grass root level. Since its inception in 1980, it has largely involved in developing organisation at different levels, and has made considerable achievement in this direction. However, for the effective peasant movement the KRRS need to develop strong organisation. Because the movements developing their own strong organisations are
more prone to success. An organisation is essential to motivate the dormant feelings of the peasants. It is essential to mobilise the peasants. Because, however aggressive, hostile, or angry the people may be they can not be magically mobilised for an action. Apart from this, the peasant organisation can also play an effective role in different spheres as mentioned earlier. Therefore, the KRRS need to develop strong organisation to make the movement successful and to redress the grievances of the peasants.