CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PLAN
Significance of the study

The existence of 'regional problems', in terms of the differences in the socio-politico-economic indicators, has been the experience of the majority of the countries, developed or developing. Though these regional imbalances may be the universal phenomena, but yet the causes and consequences do differ not only from country to country but also within the country as well.

These glaring regional disparities, in the levels of economic development and the rates of growth of different regions, within different countries, have attracted the attention of theoretical economists and regional planners in recent years. The need to provide economic and social equity to the people, living in different regions of the country on the one hand, and to avoid politically motivated secessionist tendencies and the threat to national integrity and security, arising from these disparities on the other, has led to the adoption of regional plans for the development of different depressed areas or underdeveloped pockets. The problem of socio-economic inequity and the spatial hiatus has come to the forefront in our development policies, emphasising the acceptance of balanced regional development strategy. Thus, the regional development goals
of many countries have been, reduction in regional income disparities, achieving balanced regional growth, provision of special assistance to the distressed areas, etc. This has witnessed marked shift in the attitudes of governments from the traditional macro-economic sectoral approach, to the modern micro-economic regional approach. Regional dimension has been rightly recognised as an inseparable component of national economic and social development strategy by most of the countries of the world, which believe in economic betterment of their masses.

Over the years, there has developed a considerable armoury of theories of regional development. These theories of regional development explain the underlying conditions or factors, which determine the place and shape of development within and between regions. Such theories are necessary not only for the understanding and gaining insight into the existence and nature of regional spatial structure and problems, but also serve as invaluable background and foundations for the formulations of regional policies.

Some of the regional theories, analyse the short-run changes in the regional economy as a whole, stressing the interrelationships of sectors within the regional economy
and the spread of growth impulses originating in any one sector to all other sectors, either directly or indirectly. Some others, explain the long-run regional growth taking into account all those factors - population, wages, prices, resources, technology and the distribution of income - which were held constant in short-run analysis. These theories serve the basic descriptive function and are of considerable importance to the regional planner providing an aid to the understanding of regional change, comparison and further analysis of a variety of unique regions, predicting the implications of economic decisions, and thus serve a useful purpose in the planning process.

But the bitter truth is that, there is no single generally accepted theory of regional development or under-development. There is no such thing as general theory of regional economic development relevant for the problem regions or backward or underdeveloped regions. The regional planners/economists are yet to develop an universally acceptable, useful and a comprehensive theory of regional development. Most of the theories were developed and formulated, taking into account the particular aspect of the overall development of different regions. Even the macro theories, or theories of general development, were concerned
with the development of national economy, as a whole, neglecting the regional aspects of the development. Therefore, the significance of the theories of regional development, taking account almost all the problems of regional development, is being realised in recent years. The need for a satisfactory comprehensive regional development theory, is being felt by many governments, in both developing and developed parts of the world to embark upon regional or area development plan efforts.

In this study, an attempt is made to analyse critically the three theories, namely - Circular Cumulative Causation Theory, the Theory of Central Places and the Theory of Development Poles, of regional development. The study of these theories helps us in the spatial and functional integration of different regions at various territorial levels. Both the Myrdal's Circular Cumulative Causation and the Christaller's Central Place theories explain how a particular region/area develops as a developed region/a central place, exploiting the resources of the surrounding areas/hinterlands, creating inter-regional inequalities, where market forces alone operate. But the Development Pole Theory provides us with a solution, in terms of deliberate state intervention, through the identification and establishment of development poles/centres, with the objective
to systematically establish the forward and backward linkages between and amongst regions of different orders, as interdependent parts of the whole system.

It is a fact that economic development does not take place uniformly in all the areas or regions of the country for the reasons such as social, economic, political, cultural and so on. There exist both developed and backward areas in the country. The existence of this problem of dualism on the one hand, and the need for reducing economic and social disparities on the other, have called for integration of sectoral and spatial dimensions in the planning process. So far, the spatial dimension of planning was relegated to the background, in both the national and state level planning, focussing attention only on sectoral dimension. If the spatial aspect is also introduced in the process of planning and implementation, greater economic and social benefits can be expected, and more even spread of development can easily be achieved. This has led to the importance of spatial plan or integrated area development plan. The integrated area development consists of location of social and economic activities, over a physical space appropriate for the balanced development of a region.
The concept of integrated area development, is not only based on the idea of selectivity, but also on the idea of decentralisation of economic and social activities, by locating specific functions in specific places. The best method, which can be used to promote integrated area development in rural areas, is through the establishment of growth centres/development centres. These development poles or centres are the central places of different orders depending upon their degree of specialisation. The hinterlands of such development centres, do not necessarily coincide with the existing administrative boundaries.

The community development programme, which embodied a multipurpose programme of rural development, failed to bring about any significant degree of involvement and the participation of the people, at the grass root level in the development process. The programme recognised the functional integration of a region but omitted the spatial integration. India is the first country to include the programme of minimum (or basic) needs in its plans. Decentralised local level planning or area development planning, is an important factor in planning for basic needs. The basic needs, requires planning at grass root level, which is possible through democratic decentralisation or active involvement of panchayats - village or mandal - which offers
the institutional base for planning for basic needs or planning from below.

A bold step in the direction of the democratic decentralisation in Karnataka, was the enforcement of a three tier Panchayat Raj system, by the enactment of Karnataka Zilla Parishads, Taluka Panchayat Samithis, Mandal Panchayats Act, 1983, which came into effect from 1987. The five years tenure of elected members of Zilla Parishads and Mandal Panchayats has been completed. There is a need for an assessment of how the system has worked, and to know whether the mandal imbalances or intra-regional imbalances have been reduced.

So far, the units of development have been, the existing administrative units like district, sub-division, taluka/block and village. A village is an unviable unit for planning and development, as it is too small with small population base and a very meagre resources. Blocks which were considered as units of development for community development programme were not based on scientific study or micro level zones of influence. District is too big a unit of development. These arbitrary units are useful only for administrative purposes. The decentralised local level planning or area development planning, requires a new set of
boundaries based on a scientific delineation of the community and of the region. This calls for the identification of development poles or centres.

Thus, there is an urgent necessity to evolve a methodology, or a comprehensive theory for the balanced regional development. The need for delineation or identification of new set of boundaries or regions for decentralised local level planning, in the light of the application of the theory of development pole or centres in the decentralised planning process of Karnataka is being felt very much.

Objectives

The main purpose of the present study is to develop a methodology for micro-level local planning that could be used in bringing about integrated area development of Karnataka by the application of development pole theory in the decentralised planning process of Karnataka with the case studies of Gokak and Saundatti talukas of Belgaum district.

To serve this purpose, the present study is undertaken with the following objectives.
1. To analyse briefly the selected theories of regional development namely - the Theory of Circular Cumulative Causation, the Central Place Theory and the Development Pole/Centre Theories and their application.

2. To understand the decentralised planning process in Karnataka in general and mandals in particular.

3. To study the application of the Theory of Development Pole/Centre to Gokak and Saundatti regions of Belgaum district.

4. To identify the problems faced in the planning process at mandal levels in the context of imbalances in their development.

5. To suggest suitable measures to improve the process of decentralised planning.

Hypotheses

The concept of development pole and development centre has steadily accumulated a large literature. But there is a vast and immense confusion surrounding these notions. The growth foci hypothesis, derived from the integration of the central place theory, the growth pole theory and the spatial diffusion theory, forms a hierarchy, and vary in size and
functions, to suit the specific regional needs and scale. The hierarchy may be dependent villages, central villages, service centres, growth points, growth centres and growth/development poles at various levels. The size and scale of functions of each of these levels differ. The development pole at the national level differs from development pole at the state level, the district level, the taluka or regional level.

Karnataka introduced a three tier Panchayat Raj system from 1987-88 onwards with the objective of securing active participation of people in planning, implementation and monitoring of economic and social plans and programmes. Over the five years period of decentralised planning, the mandal imbalances or intra-regional imbalances have reduced to some extent.

On the basis of these observations, the study formulates the following hypotheses:

1. The concept of Regional Development Pole differs from the concept of National Development Pole.

2. Decentralised Planning has reduced intra-regional imbalances.
Research approach

Selection of study areas

The present dissertation is based on the study of Gokak and Saundatti talukas of Belgaum district of Karnataka considering each taluka as a region. These talukas are chosen for the study as a matter of convenience. The researcher being in the Administrative Services of the State and having worked as Block Development Officer of Saundatti block and presently working as Tahsildar of Gokak taluka, it was very easy for him to collect the required data and elicit the necessary information from the visits to villages and mandals and acquaintance with the villagers. It was also easy to utilise the available information on record of the two talukas in the offices of the Ghataprabha and Malaprabha Project Authorities.

The two talukas provide challenges to the social scientists. There are no such studies conducted in Belgaum district. Moreover, the talukas exhibit variety of socio-economic problems at village and mandal levels. Both the talukas are partly irrigated, both have sufficiently large tract of dry areas. Although Gokak is agriculturally and industrially little advanced, it is backward in education
and culture. Though Saundatti is agriculturally little advanced, it is industrially backward. Thus the socio-economic and cultural problems of these talukas could be studied at first hand.

Data collection

The study is based on secondary and primary data. A comprehensive inventory of resources of the two talukas were made in the first instance. Valuable information on various aspects were collected from the records, maintained by the various technical and administrative departments, at taluka, district and state levels, more particularly from the taluka and block offices of the two talukas, Zilla Parishat Belgaum, and Planning Department of Government of Karnataka.

Discussions were also held with officers concerned at all levels concerning the various issues involved in the analysis of the data provided by them.

Maps prepared by the Survey of India and used in the Census reports are utilised as base maps for the study.

The main investigation of the study, is to identify the growth centres for integrated area development, and to study
the mandal imbalances. For this purpose two questionnaires were prepared and canvassed covering all the villages (215) and towns (4) of the study talukas regions. (i) A village information schedule was used at the village level and the respondents were mandal panchayat secretaries and the village accountants. (ii) A town questionnaire was used for the towns and the respondents for these questionnaires were the officers of the Town Municipal Councils. For the accuracy, the information obtained from different sources was cross checked by paying frequent visits to the villages, Mandal Panchayats and Town Municipal Councils.

Data analysis and maps

The conclusions arrived at in the study, are mainly based on the data collected from the village and town surveys and secondary sources, which have been manually processed and tabulated.

In order to facilitate the data analysis, several working maps of the talukas have been prepared and presented in the dissertation. Data analysis has been done not only with the help of statistical techniques but also with cartographic methods.
Contribution of the study

In recent decades, the governments of both developed and the developing countries alike have recognised the spatial component, as an inevitable part of the development plan to promote regional social justice. This calls for the identification of development poles/centres for the location of specific programmes in specific areas.

In this study, the identification of the hierarchy of the development poles/centres has been made in Gokak and Saundatti regions, by following a method of ranking of settlements on the basis of hierarchy of functions. For this purpose, a total number sixtyseven available functions have been considered for each one of the settlements of the two regions. Composite centrality score, which is a measure of the importance of settlements, in terms of population, administrative status, amenities and functions, is used for quantification. Four levels of functional hierarchies, have been identified with different population ranges. By giving weightages to the functions and with the composite centrality scores, four levels of hierarchy of centres namely - service centres, market-cum-service centres, growth centres, and growth poles have been identified. In Gokak region, one growth pole namely - Gokak,
four growth centres namely - Mudalagi, Konnur, Dhupadal, and Gokak falls, six market-cum-service centres namely - Mallapur P.G., Ankalagi, Yadawad, Kallolli, Kaujalagi and Khanagaon, and fourteen service centres like Mamadapur, Naganur, Shindikurbet, Kulagod, Arabhavi, Betageri, Masaguppi, Akkatangerhal etc., have been identified.

In Saundatti region, one growth pole namely - Saundatti; three growth centres namely - Munavalli, Muragod, Yaragatt; eleven market-cum-service centres namely Hosur, Ugargol, Hirekumbi, Inchal, Chachadi, Tallur, Hanchinal, Inamhongal, Hooli, Sirasangi, and Kadabi; and fifteen service centres like Asundi, Sattigeri, Yarazarvi, Hcolikatti Madlur etc., have been identified. By identifying the hierarchy of development centres, effort has been made to show how the concept of development pole at the national level differs from the development pole at the regional level. This kind of in-depth study of settlements, for the purpose of identification of development centres, in the context of the decentralised participatory planning process at the grassroots level, is imperative to promote the maximum social justice to the inhabitants.

The three tier planning structure was introduced in Karnataka, by the establishment and constitution of Zilla
Parishads and Mandal Panchayats from 1st April 1987, with the main objective of decentralising the decision making process, by delegating power to formulate development plans for the area based potentialities and felt needs and transferring corresponding funds to meet the requirements. There are 22 Mandal Panchayats in Gokak region and 18 Mandal Panchayats in Saundatti region. In order to know what exactly was the state of Mandals at the beginning of the constitution of the Mandal Panchayats, a composite index has been worked out for both the regions based on 10 development indicators. This gave us the Mandal imbalances in terms of resources.

Mandal panchayats have completed their five years tenure from 1987-88. It was felt necessary to study whether the Mandal imbalances or intra-regional imbalances have reduced. Therefore the hypothesis that the decentralised planning has reduced intra-regional imbalances has been tested in the present study. In order to know the relative position of various Mandals (sub-regions) over a period of five years, two different points of time i.e., 1986-87 and 1991-92 have been selected and 16 indicators, like number of irrigation pumpsets energised per 10 sq. kms., houses electrified as a percentage of total households, number of borewells per 1000 population etc., have been considered.
The composite index worked out on the above indicators revealed that the decentralised planning process has reduced intra-regional imbalances over a period of five years, though the reduction has not been upto the expected level. Based on the composite index analysis the Mandals have been classified as highly developed, developed, backward and highly backward.

It is a fact that the Mandal Panchayats have not functioned satisfactorily for various reasons. It has not been possible to have decentralised planning in Mandal Panchayats in the true sense. An indepth study of how the system has worked and the problems involved in the formulation and implementation of the plans at various stages is made in the study.

Design of the dissertation:

The dissertation contains eight chapters.

The dissertation starts with the introduction and research design and contains the significance of the study and its objectives, hypothesis selection of the study areas, the methodology used for data collection and analysis, contribution of the study and the scheme of organisation.
The second chapter is devoted to the analysis of selected theories of regional development and the state of regional growth theory. A critical review of selected theories of regional development like the theory of circular cumulative causation, the theory of central places, the theory of growth/development pole and development centres, the hypothesis of growth foci is made in this chapter.

The application of some of these selected theories is made in the third chapter, to both developed and underdeveloped countries as well as with reference to the Karnataka economy. The migration trends in Karnataka and the identification of growth centres for area development in Karnataka are evaluated in this chapter.

Chapter four consists of a detailed review of the concepts of decentralised planning, democratic decentralisation, integrated area development, community development programme. It also covers the detailed analysis of the evaluation of Panchayat Raj institutions, statewise coverage of Panchayat Raj institutions in India and the working of Panchayat Raj institutions in Karnataka.

Chapter five deals with the study areas of Gokak and Saundatti regions of Belgaum district. It covers in brief the regional resource scenario.
In the sixth chapter an attempt to identify the development centres of different orders on the basis of the levels of functional hierarchy and centrality scores has been made.

Chapter seven is concerned with the decentralised planning process in the study regions by taking into account institutional infrastructure in the three tier planning process of Karnataka. It specifically studies relative positions of mandals in two points of time on the basis of selected indicators of development. The composite index of development has been worked out to know the intra-regional imbalances in the study regions. An evaluation of the functioning of mandal panchayats in the process of planning has also been attempted.

On the basis of the observations arrived at in the foregoing chapters the concluding chapter deals with the summary conclusions and certain useful policy suggestions.